

We Hindus regard both Shiva and Vishnu as the same and this is evident from the fact that in the ecstasy of our devotion, whether we are alone or are in groups, we exclaim "Haro-Hara" and "Govinda-Govinda", which (whose) names come to our lips spontaneously. The holy



days of Shivaratri and Janmashtami are divided from each other by exactly 180 days, and this seems to indicate that God in His aspect as Shiva protects us during one-half of the year, and in His aspect as Vishnu, in the other half. The traditional

practice of boys and girls

collecting oil for their vigil on Shivaratri and Janmashtami nights, singing in chorus a song which means that Shivaratri and Sri Jayanti are the same, is another pointer to the identity of these two manifestations of the Divine. Apacharanivritti must precede Anugraha -

eradication of sins must precede blessings. So God as Hara destroy the sins of His devotees, while as Govinda, He protects them from harm. The expressions Hara-Hara and Govinda-Govinda come to children effortlessly. It is significant that Sri Shankara composed Bhaja Govindam when

he was a child and Sri Sambandar sang that Hara naama should envelop the world, when he too was a child. The Upanishads speak of God as Uma-sameta-Parameswara, and it is worthy of note that all children refer to God as Ummachi, which is obviously a contraction for Uma-Maheshwara.

Thus, in the language of children, there is no difference between Shiva and Vishnu. The sense of religious toleration is not a modern conception. It can be traced to very ancient times. The Kural proclaimed that all teachings referred only to one Porul or Object. Sri Shankara and

Sri Sambandar saw the same God worshipped in the six systems to which they referred. Arhat, the name by which Jains call the Supreme Being, is a Vedic name identified with Siva. Other religions also speak of one God. All troubles in this world start only when attempts are made to

wean away people from their native religion to convert them to a new faith, by holding out the temptation that people can attain salvation only if they embrace that new faith. This is more than what any sensible person can swallow. Since every religion speaks of God, to ask a

person to give up the religion in which he is born is tantamount to asking him to give up God and is a sin against God. It is the duty of every person to follow the religion of his ancestors. If a non-Hindu finds that he had Hindu ancestors, it is up to him to revert to Hinduism

after performing the prescribed Praayaschitta (purificatory ceremony). While there is propaganda for other religions, there is none for the Hindu religion. Propaganda is a prescribed duty for other religions, while in respect of Hinduism, it is enjoined that one should not tell

unasked-Ma Aprshtah Kasyachit Brooyat. It is noteworthy that some may continue to profess Hindu religion even without preaching and propaganda. The cause of the stability of Hindu religion is that each practised his prescribed Dharma. If each person does his appointed duty, then

our religion will be strengthened both in its Vedic foundations and in its ceremonial practices. It is only that way the Vedic religion has survived down the ages.

"Acharya's Call"- invaluable speeches given by His Holiness Sri Sri Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi Mahaswamiji

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Sarvam Sri Krishnarpanam ■■

