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Published by Anonymous on Mar. 02, 1990

We Need a Better Example

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Hindus in Mauritius do not know where they are going. We are just following the trend of the whole population, accepting the values and culture of the Christians without really asking questions about our own religion. We not know what our religion is all about. Even our parents are not qualified to answer our questions.

What is more, generation after generation we are sinking into the abyss of Christianity, adopting their way of living, their fashion, their music and even their way of thinking. Are we really ashamed to say that we are Hindus and that we do pujas at home? There will immediately be an outcry of denial to these questions. But to whom are we lying? We are lying to ourselves.

Almost every Hindu youth has another vision of the future. When the topic of marriage is brought upon the table, there is a divergence of views about whether one ought to marry someone of the same religion or not. Most youngsters will argue that all that matters is love, nothing else. So you can marry anyone you want, be they Christian, Muslim, Chinese or Hindu. We can't blame teenagers for thinking the way they do, but we ought to point out the consequences of such a union. By doing so, we are denying our own religion, culture and our own identity if we are prepared to convert to another religion, culture and our own identity if we are prepared to convert to another religion. The little we have in terms of religion, culture and identity will be squashed out even though we don't understand what this is all about.

We must also think about the future, our children who won't have anything to be proud of. Do we really have the right to snatch away their identity, the sense of belonging to the Hindu religion of which they are a minute derivation?

As Mukta Chandora [My Turn, Sept., 1989] pointed out, "Christians have their churches and Sunday school where they learn about Christianity." I will add that our Muslim brothers have their mosques and are reputed to go to prayers every Friday. And I'm not talking here of only one category of Muslims, but all go to their prayers, be they children or adults, rich or poor. But what about us? Are we so devoid of pride that we can't take a move toward awakening our own people? In Mauritius, there is no need to "build schools and have educated teachers to teach us about what we really are" [as Mukta proposes]. Everything is there. What we lack is some kind of motivation from the authorities (temples, Hindu clubs, etc.) to increase the pace of our religion. We only hear from them when it is questions of donations for setting up new temples. You don't even hear from them when it is time for inaugurating those new temples. It is only through the media that you are made aware of such things. Wouldn't your really be fed up with such mentality and start criticizing your own religion and contrasting it with other religions?

It is very easy to put the blame on the back of the authorities, but one must face the fact that the blame should also be shared by the Hindu society as a whole. When it comes to socializing, myriads of Hindus are present, some of whom you didn't even know existed. But when invited to attend a religious function, the same old pretext comes out, "Oh, you know I'm very busy, I don't have the time. "On the other hand, our non-Hindu brothers will always make an effort to attend a religious function.

If we really want to stop this religious myopia, we ought to cooperate in such a way as to erase any discrepancy which might cause the young to today and adults of tomorrow to pick their own ideals and discard their beliefs in the Hindu religion.

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