

The World as the Field of Dharma

Svami Sadananda Dasa to Vamandas
in the internment camp in India 16 January 1944

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The fulfilment of social duties as one form to be loyal to one's empiric dharma and thereby serve God indirectly [is necessary] till the further stage of relinquishing all dharmas to serve God directly in expression of one's real or nitya dharma [is reached], i.e. *social* virtues first *well* displayed, though it is only a relative dharma and *then* the higher or real life. The social stage must be either really fulfilled and afterwards left behind for the higher next stage – or the former one is not fulfilled, because the higher one is fulfilled – but not the show of the first one and neglect or show of the second one as in the non-vaishnava society – as expressed in the life of many kings of Indian past (e.g. Bha.VIII.1.7).

The faith in, if not knowledge of, Paramatma and atma has formidable social consequences: social justice, economic balance etc. Where they are missing there was no real living knowledge or faith but simply show and deception, if not of others at least of one's own self. The bad state of the Indian society with its merciless caste distinction and exploitation and suppression of the socially and economically inferior groups, the economic distress, the widely spread illiteracy, the low moral standard of brahmins, advocates, doctors, the low spiritual level of priests and mahants and so on are due to *the lack* of that knowledge.

India and any other society in the world can either progress to the vaishnava status of varnashrama dharma or fall back to the stages of material social justice as established or intended by the communistic system of Russia. Everything between is hypocrisy and illusion (cp. sanctity of family life in the West; cp. my lectures in Sindh on the rights of women).

The programme of socio-religious reconstruction would be the elaboration of the following points:

- 1) Everybody *must* work; *nobody* needs to starve.
- 2) Everyone gets the chance to be loyal to his own self, nobody needs to do what he does not like (prostitute for money).
- 3) Selection of ashram and varna according to disposition.
- 4) No illegitimate children but people will be urged to live to their respective dharma. (If there is freedom of the selection of the profession it will be seen how many people of the brahmin and other varnas will take up the real brahmin life, when there will be no material benefit but rather increased obligation of service and self-sacrifice.)
- 5) Equal education up to twenty of Hindus, Muslims and other groups respectively with the purport of leading everyone up to the minimum, i.e. the standard of the vaishnava brahmin regarding external mood of living and attitude towards life.
- 6) No private capital, only trustees.
- 7) Collective system of agriculture.

All this [based] on the understanding that the aim is to utilise everything as a trustee and to serve and please Krishna or Kodha [Mahaprabhu] in the degrees of one's ability. If men could be induced to chant the Name of Krishna with *all the consequences* there could be no defect in the society. But as this is not possible the socio-religious system and programme outlined above must be enforced by the council of state, consisting of really enlightened people. There is however little hope of achieving that aim because there is lack of such people to guide the society.

I prefer that no artificial interference of any sort should take place but every effort be made to make as many people as possible chant the Name of Krishna. In the degrees this is done society will be reformed. (The Bhagavatam established spiritual equality as to the chanting of the Name irrespective of social and economic standard. It gives also the outline of the consequences of the chanting of the Name within the society). It would be foolish however, to dream of the success of such an effort. The success or the degrees of the success depend entirely on the degrees of the prakrit- and aprakrit-sukriti¹ of the individual

¹ The degrees of predisposition (sukriti) to be influenced by maya (prakrit) and cit (aprakrit).

members born as members of the Indian society. But as the vaishnava is charged with the inability to put forward a solution of the social, economic and political problem of present day India, the above outlines may suffice to prove the discharge is completely false.

If the opponent argues that you fail to believe in the possibility of really establishing a steady society of your type then the vaishnava would reply: “We certainly do not pretend that our solution can be carried out but we are not hiding this fact”, whereas it is the ridiculous illusion and delusion of all social reformers that they imagine that any other solution on a materialistic or pseudo-religious basis can be carried out with the prospect of any success. This does not mean, however, that the vaishnava will not try his utmost for the solution in his lines; but he does it with the heroic attitude of a man who fights with his whole heart, though he knows very well that he will not succeed. The vaishnava considers this world as karma-kshetra [field of karma] to be dharma-kshetra [field of dharma] with all the consequences of that knowledge. His efforts are done exclusively to carry out the will of Krishna and to please Him thereby, making the best use of everything by relating it directly to Krishna or God and not for the satisfaction of men, i.e. for diverting everything to trishna [desire].