

SECULARISM CANNOT BE A ONE-WAY STREET

The word “Secularism” was added to the Preamble of our Constitution in 1976 by Indira Gandhi during the Emergency when the entire Opposition was in jail. No discussion in Parliament; no logic offered as to why this was necessary. Think about that.

The actual meaning of the word “Secular” is non-religious. It is NOT EQUALITY OF ALL RELIGIONS. In the Indian context it is implied that the Indian state is neutral and impartial to all religions. But is this true? In the last 50 years we have seen that no Christian, no Muslim is ever asked or even expected to be secular! They are expected to be religious and devout Christians and Muslims. But the whole burden of upholding the Constitution with this mischievously inserted clause of “Secularism” has to be carried by the Hindus only. If any Hindu stands up and says, “I am a devout Hindu”, then immediately he becomes “communal” and a violator of the Constitution! Imagine!

Let us for a moment assume that all Hindus, Christians and Muslims become “secular” overnight. That would mean treating each other with the same respect, right? Treating each other’s religion to be the same and acknowledging that each has his own method and path to God. And whether we follow one or the other, doesn’t matter. Now that would be secularism! Agreed?

But neither Christianity nor Islam believe in the equality of other religions! Period. No ifs and buts! They both suffer from The Superiority Syndrome. Both consider the other two and all other religions to be inferior to their own faith. That is why they both run that huge conversion machinery. If all religions are equal as “secularism” says they are, then what is this “conversion business” doing in secular India? Moreover, theologically, their own religious scriptures do not talk about the equality of all religions. Their

scriptures talk about the inferiority of the other religions and it is their mission to convert others. Of course, they give the logic that the conversions are “voluntary”. Whether they are indeed that, you have to do your own research to find out.

It is only in Hinduism we have the scriptural sanction for the “equality of all religions”. Ramakrishna’s saying: Joto mat, toto path (As many views, so many paths), Rig Veda’s Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti (Truth is one, Sages call it by different names) reflect the equality that Hinduism accords to others. That is why Hindus are not in the “conversion business”. Because Hindus don’t consider others to be inferior. All great Hindu saints have talked about the equality of all religions. But have you ever heard a single Church Father, or an Imam say that all religions are equal and valid paths to God? They can’t say that because their theology doesn’t allow that. So only Hindus have to be secular!

And it’s no use saying that Hindus celebrate Christmas and Eid and that’s because India is secular. Of course they do! Because that is what their religion teaches them. But the day I see Christians celebrating Durga Puja and Muslims celebrating Diwali or Holi, that day I would start believing that I am living in a secular country. Hindus joining an Iftar meal is beautiful. But the day I see Muslims sitting with Hindus and sharing Ganesh puja prasad, that would be secularism. Till then secularism is only a one-way street for Hindus. And after 50 years of this nonsense, they are saying they have had enough! That’s what the noise is all about.