

The Spiritual Scientist

An ezine for those who think!

Converter, Convert Yourself!

Question: Nowadays there is a lot of concern over people being allured to convert from one religion to another. What is your stand on this?

Answer: It is a sad fact that today most religions have become highly superficial and commercialized, where overzealous missionaries



imagine that God is their exclusive monopoly and that His grace is their patented product. Often due to their superficial spiritual realization, their sense of security and success comes not from their internal connection with God, but from their external ability to get more and more people to accept their path as the only right path. So they offer allurements to convert people to their religion and thus boost their internal security and external political strength. But such horizontal conversion from one brand of materialism to another brand of materialism does no spiritual good either to the converter or the converted.



Instead of endeavoring to convert others to our path, religionists would do much greater good to themselves and to the world if they took inspiration from followers of others path and used that to convert themselves. This spirit is exemplified by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, a nineteenth century Vaishnava saint-scholar: "When we have occasion to be present at the place of worship of other religionists at the time of their worship, we should stay there in a respectful mood, contemplating thus: 'Here is being worshiped my adorable highest entity God, in a different form than that of mine. Due to a different practice of a different kind, I cannot thoroughly comprehend this system of theirs. But seeing it, I am feeling a greater attachment for my own system. God is one. I bow down before His emblem as I see here and offer my prayer to my Lord who has adopted this different emblem so that He may increase my love toward Him in the form that is acceptable for me.'"



Today, people are being increasingly plundered of their wealth of inner happiness by the common enemy of all religions: atheistic materialism. So they do need conversion, a vertical conversion that goes far beyond the change of religious denomination, cultural lifestyle or social affiliation, a conversion that brings about a fundamental change of core desires from material to spiritual, a conversion that changes them from being a selfish exploiter to becoming a selfless servant of God and all His children. Therefore, let us all look inward to understand and practice the deep spiritual essence of our religious tradition and then look outward to share that essence with others. Then we can do true good to ourselves and to the world.



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