

Religion & Society:

The Business Of Religion'
(A Reflection On Contemporary Society)
by Dr. Sagar Mal Jain

These days religion also is like a business;
it is a business, no doubt, but it is sightless.
This business involves bargaining - give and take;
here even God is part of bribery - no mistake.

By making an offering of a coconut and one rupee,
the devotee is guaranteed success in an examination.
By establishing partnership with gods and goddesses
of merely one or two percent,
the votary obtains their sufferance
to exploit the society to his heart's content.

A box of sweets is presented to the Lord,
with the expectation of getting Him on our side.
Later, on achieving the desired goal, He is passed over,
with the pretense of applying sandalwood paste on the image.
The offerings such as sweets are dubbed God's blessings
enjoyed totally by the privileged segment of society.

Under the banner of religion and
wearing the cloak of religion - righteousness,
the unscrupulous, unethical, conniving swindler
operates the shop of self glorification
to fulfill his/her selfish motives.
Using the labyrinth of misleading language,
he/she accumulates considerable material wealth.

With the fraudulent miraculous shenanigans,
the knave amazes and dumbfounds unsuspecting followers.
Offering a ticket to heaven
and scaring them with visions of hell,
the delusive scoundrel robs his/her clientele.

¹ English adaptation of the poem 'DHARM KA DHANDHA', published in the prestigious journal 'Tirthankar' of July 2007.

The Business Of Religion

This business of religion is the best of all;
requiring no capital or investment at all.
One can acquire high position and command respect;
also accumulate material wealth with little effort.

Little else is to be said about this vocation;
it is a direct path to open an account with heaven.

The spirit of this undertaking is indeed defiled and stained,
but its outward appearance is shimmering, bright and lucent.

Well, remember that you can dupe, trick and defraud others,
but not the self that dwells within and watches everything.
He is your 'God' who knows all your maneuvers and capers.
Indeed, God is inner self - not any external entity.
Therefore, deceiving one's conscience is deceiving God.

In fact, religion is not business or occupation;
religion involves service to humanity - humanism.
Genuine religion does not indulge in the exploitation
of unsuspecting masses but nurtures selfless submission.

One does not expect any material gains;
instead one offers and does not mind dearth or privations.

Service to humanity and dedication
result in contentment, peace and relaxation.
Sacrificing the self and boundless devotion
leads to the state of godhood - self-realization.

All are adopted and embraced, without distinction,
no difference between individual self and alien.

Sensual pleasures and desires are renounced
and the pristine soul within is envisioned as God.