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The Civility Of Toleration



REPUBLICAN DOCUMENTS

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The Civility of Toleration

The following is a very dangerous statement to have come from such an influential leader of the people, Mr. Basdeo Panday, former Prime Minister and leader of the Opposition.

Quote, *"It is not enough to tolerate. I hate this statement that Williams created: 'Discipline, tolerance and production,' he (Mr. Panday) said, referring to the late Eric Williams.*

'Tolerance! No; you don't tolerate. Tolerate means that I am prepared to put up with you. That is what that means. I think we have to go further than tolerance. We have to go into understanding. We must not only tolerate other people's religion we must understand it... There are still some people who are fanatics who believe they must force other people to join their religion, and so on.' Panday said in a modern world of shrinking borders an individual could not call himself a civilized person until he appreciated the cultures of all peoples." Panday wants more than tolerance..." **The Trinidad Guardian, Monday 29, November 2004, p. 8.**

What is the meaning of tolerance? It certainly means more than what was said by Mr. Panday.

"Tolerance - the ability to endure; the disposition or willingness to elevate or allow; the permissible range of variation...

Toleration - the act of tolerating; the allowance of what is not approved; the liberty given to a minority to hold and express their own political or religious opinions" **The Wordsworth Concise English Dictionary, p. 1046.**

This word "tolerance" takes into account the following real facts about the world:

- Different people have different beliefs,
- Some people reject the beliefs of other people to be not true,
- Yet each person has the *Constitutional right* to create and hold their own beliefs,
- Where, according to an individual's conscience, it is not possible to accept or appreciate the beliefs of others one holds to be wrong, the best he can do is to tolerate it.

This is the civilized way to deal with undesirable belief systems

in a plural society. And this assures the individual, freedom of speech to criticize the belief he objects to without *forcefully seeking to stop it from being publicly expressed.*

Thus, contrary to Mr. Panday's belief, it is civilized to be tolerant, it is a manifestation of a mature conscience.

However, this is what the word appreciate means.

"Appreciate - to estimate justly; to be fully sensible of all the good qualities in; to estimate highly; to perceive; to raise in value, to advance the quotation or price of, as opposed to depreciate, to raise in value." **Ibid, p. 45.**

As used by Mr. Panday, this would mean that one must do the following to all cultures (or religions) of all people.

- To be fully sensible to all the good qualities in all religions,
- To estimate all religions highly,
- To raise the value of each religion in one's estimation.

If doing this is civilized then Jesus was not civilized, since He saw all other religions as thieves and robbers. Jn.10:7-9. Jn.14:6.

His disciples were also uncivilized because they saw Christ alone as the only way of salvation. Acts.4:10-12.

Only the doctrine of Christ alone was deemed true, all others were evil. Thus Christ and His disciples would be logically uncivilized. 2 Jn.9:10.

If it is fanaticism to get others to join one's religion (from another religion) then Jesus' command to the church to convert all nations would mean that He was a fanatic and encouraged all His followers into fanaticism. Matt.28:18-20.

This would mean that the spread of Christianity by Paul against false religions (Hindu-like religions in Asia and Europe) were acts of fanaticism, Acts19:18-20,23-27.

This man who said such folly is therefore not fit to be a leader of any people. Such a person should not and cannot be trusted. Ps. 146:3. Isa.2:22.