

HOONDA WILL YOU EAT BEEF

Autobiography of M.H. Panhwar

(First ten years of my life seventy chapters, 250 pages)

I was less than five years old when I was watching a Hindu shopkeeper of our village weighing butter from house next door to ours. Ghulam Rasool, some nine years older than me, from that house asked me to ask the shopkeeper: "Hoonda will you eat cow's meat"? I repeated the words. Hoonda left his balance. He looked at me with anger. I was frightened and ran to thorny enclosure of Ghulam Rasool's house, but thorns would not allow me to move any further. He had pity on me. He picked me up, brought me out from thorny trash and brush and said: "Do not repeat it again". Next he came to our house, I hid behind grain silos, not knowing what was the wrong. After he left, my mother told me: "He is a Hindu and they worship cow as mother. For them slaughtering cow and eating it is like you kill me and eat my flesh." I was horrified. I wanted to apologise. I had learnt to offer apology from my paternal uncle, who for my playing with his things, used to make me touch his feet and then I had to stand with hands folded until he said "I forgive you". So I stopped out-side the Hindu merchant shop and when I found Hoonda coming out, I touched his feet and stood with folded hands before him. He immediately picked me up embraced me, gave me lot of sweet stuff to eat and told me "Now you are a good boy, but Ghulam Rasool is naughty and he made you and he made you say those words."

It was a lesson to respect other religions. Since then for me to disrespect any religion means that I slaughter my mother and eat her meat. This childhood psychological fixation made me read and respect all religions and do the comparative study of them. I have not hated any person in my life for the religion he or she professes. I have also found that in a geographical area old religions have never died, but have changed shape. The new religion for its survival accepts majority of beliefs and customs of older religions. This includes all superstitions deeply embedded in the people's minds.

I read many translation of Holy Quran and its also commentaries. At Mehar High School, to know other religions, I started reading them too, I read Sindhi translation's of Mahabharatha, Ramayana, Gita, Puranas, Upanishads and Vedas to find out wisdom from them. All have many useful advises to give. I also read Sindhi translation of Bible by Mirza Kaleech Beg.

During the college days I also read Old Testament i.e., Taurat and Zabur, Zorostrainism, Buddhism and Tantarism. To understand

primitive religions I read "Religion and Magic" and also "Conflict between Religions and Science." I collected and read most of "Thinkers Library"

publications. However my concepts became clear only after I did study of anthropology on my own, while studying in USA at University of Wisconsin for Masters Degree in Agricultural Engineering in 1952/53 with help of colleague student of anthropology Norma Joyce Diamond, who became Professor Emeritus on retirement at University of Michigan. My deep interest in the subject has given me new approach and extreme tolerance.

Add religion from Hunters to today.

- Hunters.
- Early Agriculture.
- Indus religion.
- Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas.
- Buddhism.
- Pig.
- Non-vegetarian Sindhi Hindus.
- Muslim meat eaters.
- Hindus of desert.
- Machi, Bala, dead animal eaters.
- Eaters of snakes, lizards etc.