

HMEC 2017

Namaste. It is my honor to be speaking to you. You are the perfect audience for this subject matter.

Hindus are not prepared to deal with Abrahamic in marriage. My survey shows that 38% of Hindus and 45% of Muslims marry interfaith in America. The big difference is, most of Hindus accept the other faith while most convert to Islam to marry the Muslim.

I have heard conversion of poor and untouchable Hindus in India. However, it hit me hard when I heard some of our most blessed and highly educated children decide to convert to the spouse' faith. I set out in search of truth.

In 2009 I started the web forum InterfaithShaadi and since then have guided to 1200 youths; from all faiths and all over the world. There are some 24,000 views on interfaith marriages and the web site has hits in millions. I have summarized all that I learned in this guide book.

This is the way our youths fall in the trap. It is fashionable in college dorms to say we are secular and pluralist. There is one god so why fight. Some love-Jihadi and evangelical will spend lots of money and give relentless love and that a Hindu youth was probably craving for. After the relationship gets serious, in the second stage, then they bring up the discussion ... who is god? Here the Hindu can't articulate well. They challenge Hindu to explore their faith. Urvi told me that the Muslim lover actually knows more about Hinduism than me. It is not because the guy has true respect for Hinduism but he is looking to make holes in the Hindu belief system. In the end... conversion option is proposed.

What our children don't know is the power of Abrahamic religious institutions. Here, Maya and her Christian boy friend don't believe in conversion but the church demands Maya to convert and sign a pre-nuptial that children will be Christian only. Further they are blackmailing the Christian parents that if Maya doesn't comply, the rights of communion and burial site will be taken away. In the end, the Hindu youth submits to irrational demands to salvage the relationship.

Lets see what we can do...

From child's birth to marriage time... I met Swami Dayanand Saraswatiji. He asked to convey these messages to you.... 1) Be Hindu first and 2) Teach you sons and daughters daily pooja and live a satvik life.

In addition, I am saying it is very vital that you treat your wife well. Never say to your wife "bring water for me." She is not your servant! Let me ask a question to all husbands--on daily basis are you cleaning dishes at home? Be the husband your daughter will be looking for.

Our children are taught so much negative about Hinduism in schools and thus many of our children consider us as racist. Never ever say don't marry to Black Muslim White; you only increase their hate for us. Assume your child will marry interfaith and prepare your child to identify a religious fanatic.

Now let's cover the day of that bomb blast. Mom, I am in love with Muhammad or Day: I love Jennifer. You have to know that your son/daughter is in love for some 1-10 years with a solid

concrete foundation of love. You cannot break it easily. Further, they expected what you will say. And you say it. You lost your case. I am recommending doing exactly the opposite. As hard it will be, tell, interesting! I am sure did your research. Tell me more. Keep your mouth shut and ears open. Go to their mosque/church and meet all relatives to collect facts.

A month or so, propose... No BBS. We do not see logic. If a Jew, challenge your child... Bris circumcision? Is it a science or superstition? Tell Christians that we are born divine and don't need your baptism to wash our sins. We will accept Jesus not the church. Tell a Muslim we will accept Allah but not Muhammad.

Propose your son, like the title of my book, we wish to share and respect two faiths with equality, we don't want 51% nor will settle for 49%. Your son/daughter will respect and agree with you but the Abrahmic will have problem with this equality concept and may walk away.

Lets assume your child already got baptized or start wearing hijab, what would you do now? Arumuga swamiji gave me a good advise. Keep giving lots of love to your child and keep on your side. I would add to remind that this is not a fair deal; we wished equality. Invite them to Hindu activities; even they keep refusing. Try to give Dharmic names to your grandchildren, challenge circumcision, when grandchildren are with you, install Dharmic value and spend money now for them not save till you die!

Madirs can do a lot. The objective should be to stop conversion and not marriages. Wedding officiates should be able to explain legality of interfaith marriages as summarized in my book. Ask them about faith of children. We should set up marriage consultation services. Mandirs should have reach out committee like HAF's the Dharma Ambassador program.

We have to make mandirs more youth friendly. We should reduce rituals and increase sermons. Increase the use of English. We should involve them more in mandir activities. We should have balvihar, yoga, Bharat natyam and other cultural activities.

I am hopeful for outcome of interfaith marriages provided we accept that interfaith marriages are part of our new life. We should teach our children to recognize religious fanatic. If you don't remember anything that I said, at least remember--No BBS. It should be the mantra. Change our home and mandirs fulfilling needs of today youths. Thanks.

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