

Matua Faith of Harichand-Guruchand And Its Theology

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Matua faith propounded by Harichand and borne by Guruchand is a great tradition, whose deep-seated root lies in the heritage of theory and philosophy of devotion and knowledge, equality and freedom. It is the continuation of Shraman culture (wanderer siges), it is also the continuation of self-consciousness Chandal caste flowing since ancient times to our presentage. This very entity has got rebirth in the form of Harichand. He preached a new faith in the decadent Hindu society. This faith is based on devotion, knowledge and action and spiritual theology of freedom. Endeavour and dream of Sri Harichand have been materialized in developed form of its inherent valour and power. So, after hundred years of his birth, the great poet Mahananda Haldar wrote in his Sri Sri Guruchand Charit-

Tapshil Jati Madhye Ja Kichhu Hayechhe
Harichand Kalpavrkshe Sakali Phalechhe.¹

That means,

Whatever have been achieved by scheduled castes
Are the fruits of wish-yielding tree like Harichand.

It is absolutely true. Epoch-maching divine incarnation Harichand has become a wish-yielding tree in the history of modern India. He has recreated the ancient heritage. He has recomposed the Indian history with new form and colour, new tradition, new approach. How and for which cause was Harichand described as a wish-yielding tree? Which one tasty wood-apple the tree yielded? In the initial years, common people could not recognized him, misguided by Brahmans' propaganda, considered him nothing but an ordinasy mystic. But gradually the depressed people began to believe in the sage, with

long hair and beard. Having such a sage, devotees' joy knew no bound. The great poet Mahananda Halder has described his own realization in his epic. Harichand is the savior of dalites and depressed masses. In Harichand, we not only observe the tradition of sages, but also he made the worldly affairs meaningful to his disciples and devote Matuas. How he accomplished this tasks, we can know from the emotional narration of Mahananda:

Ainsbhay Sab Jay Pratinindhi
 Tarai Srshikare Deshe Jata Vidhi.
 Ainsabhay Aj Jara Shaktishali
 Ekdin Tarai Chhila Hin Bali.
 Tapshil Jati Bali Jar Parichay
 Mantri Samghe Agragami Namashudra Jati,
 Ei Dale Agragami Namashudra Jati
 Jar Mule Guruchand Agatir Gati.
 Aji Jara Tapshil Jati Sajiyachhe
 Shiksa Chhara Unnati Ki Sambhav Hayechhe.²

That means,

Now representatives go to the legislative
 They enact the laws with full care.
 In the assembly they now enjoy power
 Once, devoid of any power, they were.
 Scheduled caste is their new identity now
 Namashudra, as a minister, is taking vow.
 They deserve this status as we find
 As only refuge of haless, Guruchand is the cause behind.
 Today, schedule caste they call
 Without education was it possible at all!

Before demise of Harichand his most competent son Guruchand introduced the doctrine of devotion, action and knowledge and the principle of equality and freedom. To implement it, Matua Mahasangha and its triangular red banner were his instruments.

Drum-beats of Matua Mahasangha, in cause of time became the triumphant drum of emancipation of vast masses of dalits and depressed people.

Guruchand was none but the incarnation of Harichand's soul and tradition. Harichand's motto was not the emancipation from the worldly affairs. He never ran after Nirvana of salvation like Goutam Buddha. Never he avoided the fight against oppression and misery and to reach an imaginary land of peace and happiness. He did not left his helpless devotees.

After demise, his struggle against Brahmanism continued through the incarnation of his son Guruchand. Srikrishna appeared on the earth professed to destroy the sinners, the Shudras and protect the Brahmans and Baniyas (traders) and so-called holy saints. Srikrishna's arms never inflicted injury on Brahmans, his weapons only killed Asurs, Rakshasas, Danavas, Shudras, and in some instances Kshatriyas. Ashwathana, a Brahman warrior killed five sleeping children of Panchali, but in stead of punishing for such a heinous crime, Srikrishna, by trick saved Ashwathama. Whereas, Harishand appeared for the deliverance of oppressed and depressed dalits, he fought for happiness of vast masses. His life-long struggle against hater and oppressor Brahmans and Brahmanism was uncompromising.

Matua Ideology of Casteless Society

Philosophy of love and freedom is the essence and guiding factor in the lives of Matuas. Whereas, Hindu society has been plagued with the philosophy of caste differentiation, enmity and slavery. Therefore, Matua society is completely free from any discrimination like caste system. Harichand Thakur was born in a Chandal (Namashudra) peasant family, he arrived with the light of love and freedom to emancipate the dalos from the yoke of so-called divine slavery. Therefore, it is amply clear that these two philosophy and doctrines are completely opposite to one another

Thus, Rasaraj poet Tasak Gosain has narrated viviolly in his haritilamrita-

Buddher Kamana Taha Paripurna Janya

Yasobanta Grhe Hari Haila Avtirna.

That means,

To fulfill the wishes of Lord Buddha

Harichand was born in the house of Yasa banta.

According to the poet, to fulfill the purpose of Lord Buddha, Harichand was incarnated in the house of Yasobanta Das in the village of Safaldanga, after 2500 years of Mahaparinirvana of Buddha.

The devotee-poet narrated further-

Buddhadev Bahudin Tapsya Karila

Tate Brahma, Pranavadi Shudrate Paila.

Nich Jan Uchha Habe Buddha Tapasyay

Buddhadev Avatar Je Samay Hay. (Guruchand Chant, p.39)

That means,

Meditated for long years Lord Buddha

Brahma Pranav etc. thought him shudra.

Through waship of Buddha bow-born would be elevated

Because, successor of Buddha incarnated.

Message and teachings of Buddha, his austerity and endeavour emancipated the slaves and established their right to equality. Buddha's philosophy is nothing but the doctrine of pure freedom. Goutam Buddha said, "Atmadipa Bhava', Oh, Ananda! Don't remain dependent on other like satellite moon. Go forward along the path of knowledge independently. Don't rely on anything only as Buddha has said this. Accept the truth only after festing with intelligence and reasoning." Complete and conscious freedom is the essence of the philosophy and path of Buddha. His message is- 'The individual is an end-in-itself.' Means, everyone is eligible in worldly and extra-worldly affairs. Without the

appearance of Buddha, emancipation from slavery, practiced for a millennium was not possible. Again, to fulfill the wishes of Buddha, after 2500 years, harichand was born in British India.

Udar Buddher Niti, Nahi Jane Bhed Niti, Jati Jati Bhag Nahi Kare

Premer Nigare Bandhi, Sabe Kare Kanda Kandi Bhatrbhav Anila Samsare.

(Guruchand Charit, p.28)

That mens,

Principle of Buddha is liberal, does not divide on birth

It bind people in affection, embracing each other, fraternity emerged on earth.

Ekalavya, being an so-called aborigin, ventured in the marital art; for this he was not entitled. Only for this 'offence, his thumb was cut of by trick, as he suspossed the Kshatriya hero Arjuna. Same fate was met to Shambuka, being a Shudra he dared to endeovour in spiritual exercise, and for this 'sin' he was beheaded by Purushottam Ramchandra, incarnation of Supreme Hindu God Vishnu. Hindu religion is unparallel, that it supports and theorizes all such heinous crimes in the name of religion. Actually, this religion is the most effective machinery of torture and oppression, Brahmans are the operators. This is expressed in the following lines-

Brahmanya Dharmete Pusta, Bhedbuddhi Dvara Dusta

Svarthalobhi Brahmaner Dal.

(Guruchand Charit, p.28)

That means,

With their policy of discrimination

Too much selfish Brahmans are and their religion.

As a valiant fighter, Harichand revolted against Brahmanical tyranny. History-conscious poet Mahananda Halder narrates-

Jnan Avatar Buddha navayug Ane

Raja Praja Sabe Mate Ahimsar Gane.

Sabe Ekakar Hala Peye Tar Shiksa

Asamudra Himachal Nila EK Diksa.

Deshe Deshe Samyani to Hala Parachar

Mane Hala Vishvavasi Habe Ekakar. (Guruchand Charit, .101)

That means,

Buddha, incarnation of knowledge brought a new epoch

Kings and subjects praise for non-violence, made a havoc.

With his teachings people dipped in inundation

Whole of India took his lesson.

Message of fraternity spread to land after land

Seemed that humanity started to expand.

But this noble mission did not succeed in this country. Brahmins left no stone unturned to the vast the great cause.

Kutil Kalir Chakra Bujha Basa Day

Brahmanya Dharmer Chhale Se Kal Danrhay.

Himsa, Dves, Dandaniti Ane Ghare Ghare

Arya Malo Hindu Hala Virya Gela Mare. (Guruchand Charit, p.III)

That means,

It is difficult to understand guile cycle of time

The cycle raised in the guise of Brahmanic humn.

Violence, malice, stripe became order of the day

Arya died, but Hindu rose and valour subsided away.

A fierce crusade against Brahmanya religion started. It was called 'Kali Yug' or Kali era. The poet narrated the brief to Matua warriors-

Machachin Japanete Jata Jati Ray

Buddha Niti Mane Tara Vir Parichay.

Nijadeshe Bouddha Dharma Sthan Nahi Pela

Paradeshe Viryagune Nrpati Sajila.

Buddha Dharme Kukti Mantra Tara Sab Pay

Brahmanya Dharmer Tale Bharat Ghumay. (Guruchand Charit, p.112)

That means,

Nations living in China and Japan

Are brave and follow Buddha's mission.

In its native land, Buddhism ceased to exist

Under the kings of other lands, it flourished.

In Buddhism they found the path of liberation

Under Brahmanism, India is asleep in isolation.

To make India free and valorous, Guruchand gave clarion call for Independence struggle. His mission was to fulfill the vision of Buddha, emancipation. Was between the

two principles, between to communities of people has been going on since time immorial, this war is eternal. So, Matuas are not only complacent just to hold aloft their triangular red flag, but also they attach a spear-blade at the upper end of their banners, it symbolized readiness to fight.

Caste system of the Hindus are supposed to be created by Hindu Gods. And on this foundation, super-structure of Indian society, economy and governance have been built. Harichand's onward march could not be resisted by Brahmans on Manu's injunctions. His basic principle is-not by birth, but by action, a person must be known. Guruchand also preached the same-

Samajik Niti Sab Shone Bhaktagan

Jatibhed Pratha Nahi Manibe Kakhan.

Jatibhed Kare Bale Balitechhi Tai

Janmagata Samajik Bhed Jaha Pai. (Guruchand Charit, p-570)

That means,

Dear devotes, listen to my sermon

Never follow caste division.

Tell you, what caste system means

An identity based on birth ever since.

Guruchand gave his clear-cut but strict instruction-Never obey Chaturvarna system created the by Hindu Good Srikrishna. Matuas flatly defied the last two Ashramas (Stages of life) – anchorte's life (Vanprastha) and mendicancy (Sannyas). Guruchand boldly asserted-

Sattvah Rajah Milanete Garhasthya Jivan

Mor Pita Harichand Karila Gathan.

That means,

Domestic life comprises of energy and virtuousness

My father established the truth that lies at the base.

It is said that, Buddha was in standing posture at birth- Just after birth, he assured the distressed creatures. Harichand also from early childhood rose in revolt and began to attack immoral and wicked activities of Brahmans.

Being oppressed by hatred, exploitation and torture of Brahmans, low-born Indians became so demoralized that they began to take refuge under the banner of Islam, as it was more liberal, fraternal and devoid of any caste division. Though their hope was not fulfilled. Brahmans of Kali Yug appeared on the scene to check this flow of conversion. Sri Chaitanyadev of Nadia, a Brahman scholar got down on the street to allure the dalits and untouchables, He gave some fake promises for their upliftment. He launched a novel device-Nam Samkirtan, mass prayer and chanting in the form of rolly. Actually all his efforts were aimed at protecting Brahmanical order. Untouchables were not allowed to enter in the Hindu temples, therefore deities would be defiled, that is, stone images would be deseoreted at the touch of human being. But it was necessary to keep the low-borns within the fold of Hinduism. As they could not be permitted in the temples, therefore Shudras had to be consoled on the streets. Through such a device, shudras were befooled. Chaitna never discarded or opposed scriptural injunctions- 'Chandalohpi Dvija Shrestha' (Avija or Brahman is superior to Chandal); 'Janmana Jayate Shudra, Samskarena Dvija Uchchate' (Shudra is lower by birth, Brahman is higher by refinement). Dvija means not only Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya are also included. It can be called that Chaitnya was loyal to scripture, all he preached was oral tradition. However, Chaitnadev's endeavour was successful. Hapless dalits forgot their sufferings and humiliation just with his consolation and empty assurance. It was very natural, because a pure Brahman Pandit was assuring them. Like others. Yasobanta Das also forgot. Harichand's family was Vaishnavite. Vaishnav Gosains used to come to their house. But Harichand was exception. Since his boyhood, Harichand began to protest, on occasions his mode of protest seemed odd and unceremonious. In the words of poet-

Grhete Vaisnava Yadi Asta Kakhan
Sagosthi Sakale Mili Karita Pujan.
Pitar Adeshe Seva Kare Bhai Chari
Harichande Niye Bate Golayog Bhari.
Pada Rajah Dure Thak Dandavat Nai
Prahar Piran Kara Yathapuna Tai.
Duranta Ashanta Putra Pita Dey Danda
Kende Bale Harichand Vairagira Bhanda.

(Harililamrita, p.51)

That means,

Any Vaishnava used to come whenever

The whole family worshipped him on the altar.

Four brothers served him at the order of father

But with Harichand, trouble happened further.

Lying prostrate was too far, no reverence

Spill adamant even after being beaten.

Arogant son was punished by father

Weeping son uttered, humbugs the Vairagis are.

Whether Matua faith is originated from Hinduism or not, it is matter of debate. But it is clear from the description above, Matua faith is a complete, independent, and self-dependent religion. 'Matua' 'Matua Mahasangha' – the words were not found in Bengali vocabulary, these words were newly created to denote some new entity. So it was written-

Buddher Kamana Taha Paripurna Janya

Yasovanta Grhe Hari Haila Avatirna.

That means,

To fulfill the piety of Buddha

Harichand was born in the house of Yasavanta.

Though Harichand followed Buddha, yet he invented a new way to fulfill Buddha's ultimate goal. He gave birth to a new religion, a new doctrine so that untouchables dalits can achieve erudition-worldly and extra-werldly.

Now, it is amply clear that Matua faith did not originate either from Hinduism or it is a branch of Hinduism. Harichand was born in a Namashudra family, preached his message emong them. By origin, Chandals or Namashudra were very very natives of Indian sub-continent. They had never any common features regarding life and religion with that of foreign Aryas, rather their inter-relations were always antagonistic. Harichand straighly disobeyed spiritual injunctions of Brahmanical Hinduism. So, the Brahmans also availed of every opportunity to heckle and oppose Harichand. They used to say sareastically-

Thakur Sejechhe Bhari Hari Hari Bale

Jata Beta Bhandu Jute Dal Bendhe Chale.

Brahman Vaisnava Bhakti Mote Kichhu Nai

Divaratri Haribole Sejechhe Gosain.

Ved vidhi Nahi Ma ne na Mane Brahman

Nishchay Karite Habe E Dale Shasan. (Guruchand Charit, p.94)

That menas

Dressed in the garb of god, chant Hari Hari

Walk in groups, they are humbugs very very.

They have no regard for Brahman or Vaishnava right

In the saintly guise, chanting day and night.

Do not obey Vedic Brahmanic rituals and rule

So they must be brought under rule.

Mahananda Haldar has summarized the essence of Matua faith in the preface of Sri Sri Hari Lilamrita, Maguas are only materialist, they are worshipper of power, embodiment of brave soldiers to destroy immoral and unjust acts. They must bow down to that power, wherever may be seen. Do not that is why, it is called the doctrine of universal faith – 'Manusete Nistha' (faith upon human being). There is no system of ritual of initiation in this faith. They have only one motto – 'Ek Seva Advitiam' (Seva or service is the only motto.)

Matuas do not believe in idol-worship. Harichand never worshipped any Vedic deity, never he thought to do so. So, they have not erected any temple. Harichand was born in 1812 and Guruchand departed in 1937. During this long period, not a single temple was built. Rather they built more than thousand temples of education schools.

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