

[RK Mission Seeks Protection From a Communist Government](#)

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Swami Bhasyananda, 70-year old head of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago, gave the following comments for Hinduism Today in Hawaii on February 6th while on his way to India. Known for his fearless manner and his service among the Indian Hindu community of the Midwest United States for the past decade, Swami Bhasyananda was one of the few monks who would freely talk with our editors on the Mission's new status in India.

Hinduism Today: Why did Ramakrishna Mission seek minority religious status in India?

Swami Bhasyananda: I personally feel they have done it to get the advantage, the same advantage which Muslims are getting and other minority communities are getting. We are proud that we are Hindus. We would not say that we are not Hindus. We are Hindus, no doubt. It was just to get that advantage. If we can get those advantages as a minority, then why should we not do so?

How it came about is that we were harrassed by the Communist government of West Bengal. And in that our hospitals and our educational institutions were being taken by them. We know how we have conducted the activities in these institutions for the last 90 years. They wrote us a letter and said that they were going to appoint the teachers, not us. That would put an axe on the rule. If we do not take care ourselves to appoint proper teachers, qualified teachers, what will happen to the schools? We said "No, we will go to high court and supreme court." Our lawyers argued that we are a minority, therefore we have the right to appoint our teachers.

Q: Many Hindus in India may feel that RK Mission has abandoned them.

A: Some people who don't understand the definition of Hinduism may say that. Dogmatic Hindus may say this, but we will never accept that. We are Hindus, but not dogmatic Hindus. They may be thinking that RK Mission has abandoned them. Nothing doing.

We are staunch Hindus, but we are not fanatic Hindus. We belong to all. And that is what the Vedic dharma is...We want to bring all the communities of the world into the fold of the Vedas. What is wrong then? Then you can say this means we want to make all the people of the world Hindus. Hindu means that individual who accepts the universal laws given by the Vedas. Ultimately people will understand those laws even though everybody is sitting tightly on their own dogma. I say "no," there is no dogma in Hinduism. We are governed by universal law and those laws should be accepted. In the long run it is going to be.

Q: Of the 1400 monks in the Order, do most feel as you do?

A: Yes, I feel so...If somebody asks me questions, I will immediately say, "I am very proud to say I am a Hindu. At the same time I am proud to say that I am a Ramakrishnaite." Because they are not contradictory. They are correlative, mutually helping each other.

Q: Suppose that in Malaysia, a predominantly Muslim country, the Swamis in charge of the Ramakrishna Mission began teaching the Koran, under the principle that Hinduism is all religions. Would you be happy with that?

A: Yes. I believe in trying to understand Koran with the proper interpretation of the Vedas. The Koran is also given by a prophet. And those lines that have got the universal bearing I will accept. Certain things I will not. Vivekananda said, "Mohammed was a prophet but he stumbled on the truth. He did not get an experience." It is because of this that Islam has created a lot of trouble in the whole of the world. And it is not stopping... This fanaticism nobody can tolerate. It has to be universal. All the communities of the world have to be brought together, not with the sense of identity, but with the sense of harmony. You and I belong to the same family, why are we quarreling. I have lived in India. I have seen fighting going on for the last 70 years between Muslims and Hindus. It is fanaticism number one. But the teaching has to be given. I personally feel that Sri Ramakrishna's

teaching at this hour is most important to bring that harmony.

But Ramakrishna Mission remains exactly as it was. No change. Out of the 1,400 swamis and brahmacharis, 1,200 are Hindus. If it had been antagonistic, a trustee like Swami Tapasyananda would never have allowed it. They are top-most people. They are great thinkers. The explanation will come. There are some mischievous people who want to create some disturbance. They enjoy the disturbances.

But I am going to ask them in Belur Math why Ramakrishna Mission had to declare itself non-Hindu. If a satisfactory answer is not given, Swami Bhasyananda may be required to leave the Ramakrishna Mission. But I feel that a satisfactory explanation will be forthcoming. But the emphasis should be given on the minority religion status, and not on "abandoning Hinduism." That's where the mischief is coming.