

Interfaith Marriages and Unanticipated Consequences

Dilip Amin, Ph. D.

Former President, Plymouth Balvihar

A father of two sons, ages 21 and 25

Agenda

- Issue
 - Issue is not Interfaith Marriages, but **unanticipated consequences**
- Examples of un-intended religious conversions by Hindus
- Inter-religious differences
- Best solutions?

Typical Cases of Interfaith Marriages of Our Young Adults

- Large number (30%?) of Hindu-Americans marry non-Hindus
- The marriage decision is made in isolation without consulting friends/parents
- Sometimes, the decision includes **un-intended religious conversion**
- Parents find out only when it is too late to change the decision

What Motivated Me?

- Hindu girl, **Diya***, married a Muslim (whose family is open minded and has many Hindu aunties in their family)
- Google searched: Hindu-Muslim-conversion
- Interviewed about 15 Hindu-Muslim or Hindu-Christian married couples
- Talked to about 30 of our young adults of college age

Our young adults don't have enough knowledge of how marriages work in other religions

* Name altered for family privacy

Example 2: Why **Nita** Converted?

- Brahmin girl whose dad used to give lectures on Hinduism
 - Converted to Islam (*Sahadah* oath) before her marriage (*Nikah*)
 - Nita is allowed to keep only a very small Lord Ganesh murti in a closet
 - Now has two kids with *Sunat* and Arabic names
 - Will be buried as a Muslim
- Why?
 - Because she fell in love without realizing consequences

On her first date, did she know that she will be facing all these consequences?

Example 3: Gauri Converted

- Baptism (conversion to cleanse from former practices and later live with Christ forever) then church wedding
- Son Baptized
- The Catholic husband will not enter our temple which is painful to the Hindu parents

On her first date, did she know that she will be facing all these consequences?

Example 4: Shradha

- Five kids
- Why? The Catholic husband does not believe in birth control

On her first date, did she know what she will have to bear 5 children?

Example 5: A Hindu Boy

- Before a *Nikah* with his Muslim girl friend, he took the *Sahadah* oath and Sunat *

On his first date, did he know what price he will have to pay for the marriage?

* Only heard from others, information not validated

Why did they behaved the way they did?

Inter-religious Differences*

*Objective here is not to criticize religious practices of others, but to educate our young adults and help them decide if they want to be part of them

Tolerance of Others Faiths (1/3)

- Hindus, Jains and Sikhs have tolerance for others:
 - Co-existed without religious conflicts for centuries
 - Tolerant teaching: *Isvar Allah Tero nam*
 - Nothing in religious books against other Gods

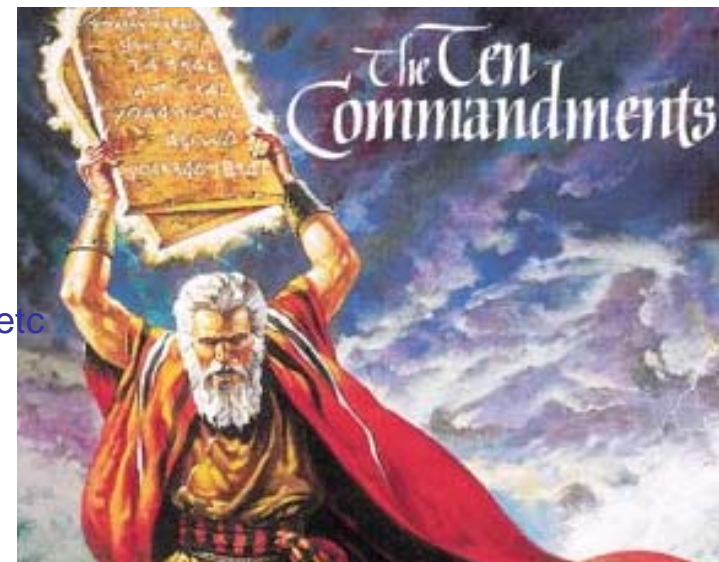


Tolerance of Others Faiths (2/3)

- The Ten Commandments*:
 - Do not have any other gods before me (Exodus 20:3)
 - You shall not bow down to (other God); I am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and fourth generations of those who reject me (Exodus 20:5)

Probably that is why Gauri's Catholic husband declined to take prasad

*References: Wikipadia; Bible-Knowledge.com; Daily Bible Study, etc



Tolerance of Others Faiths (3/3)

- Sahadah declaration*:
 - There is no God but Allah
 - Associating partners (praying others) with Allah is unpardonable sin

Probably that is why Nita is not allowed to keep Lord Ganesh

* Reference: Albalagh.net



The Conversion Business

- Hindu, Jain and Sikh do not believe in proselytism (going out to convert others) and there is no reward system (a ticket to heaven)
- Re-Baptism within Christian marriages (Protestant vs. Catholic; Mormon vs. Luthern)
- Islam will not permit a marriage (*Nikah*) to a non-believer in Allah (and thus a conversion is a must before *Nikah*)

Examples 6: Bollywood Stars



Rhitik Roshan – Susanne Khan



Fardeen Feroz Khan – Natasha Madhvani

**Rich and famous Hindus married without
Sahadah or Nikah**

Example 7: A Proud Hindu Girl

- **Mina** and a Muslim boy were in love
- Mina denied the conversion
- After 14 years of aggravations, finally they got married by a civil wedding

Get facts sooner (14 minutes?) than later

Best Insurance Against A “Love-Trap” By Religious Fanatic

On your first date, ask for....

- 1) Keep religion out of inter-faith marriage
- 2) Let the kids decide his/her own religious fate as adults (no Baptism, Bar-mitzvah or Sunat till age 18)

Before Accepting a Date Offer, Find the Facts First

- Use your head and not only heart (only possible before getting into love)
- Google search
- Ask lots of questions
 - Deny conversion for your self and kids
 - Learn about your partner's family roots
 - Learn about his/her up bringing (divorces in family, activities during childhood)
- Think long term

What are the Best Solutions in Interfaith Marriages?

- Keep religion out of a marriage and life?
- Kids?
 - Raise as an atheist?
 - Teach one of more tolerant religion?
 - Confuse kids with mix messages from contradictory religious beliefs?

Look before you jump into it

Educate others to prevent.....

Un-intended religious conversions

Write to: Dilipamin@yahoo.com