

Specific purpose of this communication:

We take this opportunity to felicitate His Holiness on 50 golden years of service to our glorious parampara. We read with interest the recent speech by Periyava to a Harijan group in Chennai as published in Kumudam on the website (<http://www.kumudam.com/kumudam/28-04-03/pg24.html>). We wish to set on record our appreciation for Periyava's efforts over all these years to grant the Harijans their due status in Hindu society. We rejoiced to see that His Holiness is taking a lead in these matters in ushering in a golden era for Hindu dharma. We believe with all our hearts that all other Dharmāchāryas and Heads of mutts will follow the same example.

We were deeply touched by Periyava's allusions to Sri Rāma who accepted all men regardless of their caste as his own brothers. The message came through loud and clear that all Hindus regardless of caste belong to one family and should open out the inner sanctum of their hearts to one another. This instruction we have received with our heads and hearts.

Like an oily stain on gorgeous raiment, social evils perpetrated in the name of caste have tainted our glorious dharma. These social problems have inflicted wounds in the hearts of some members of our society. They have sometimes created rifts between communities. These problems have been used by some to tarnish the image of the Hindu Dharma. We believe that like the squirrels in the Ramāyana, each and every Hindu regardless of jāthis or gender should do his/her own bit towards bridging this rift.

In this connection please permit us to share some of our ideas.

Hindu dharma is indeed a luxuriant field which we have to keep clear of all weeds. The great knowledge received by our Sages and the teachings and traditions established by them for our community need to be preserved. While all of us are deeply committed to preserving the roots of our great ethos, after a lot of soul-searching and prolonged discussions we have come to the conclusion that a certain degree of liberality will not be remiss in order to keep weeds from encroaching upon the very roots we have striven so hard to preserve. We are committed to find the means to get the privileges of higher levels of spiritual learning including the study of Vedas, Āgamas and Mantras for all Hindus including women, the so-called "lower castes" and "avarnas". We firmly believe that all Hindus who possess the commitment and capability must be given the privileges and the opportunity for Dvijaṅma, regardless of their birth or parentage.

We need to provide them with the necessary initiation into our Dharma and, when suitably qualified, to get Brahmopadesam as a dwija. We further feel that all new seekers to the Hindu dharma should also be initiated into our dharma, be welcome into the mutts and temples and be able to receive all these samskāras after appropriate educational programmes. The Navyashāstra group is willing to organize a program to sponsor the training and living expense of a few, well qualified and spiritual, (with promise to follow all āchāram, niyamam) young

students hand-picked for religious studies from all communities including the so called Avarnas. This will also include the deserving boys of priests families as we respect the services made by their ancestors.

Undoubtedly, the Periyava perceives the great symbolic power of an open arm acceptance of all members of our community with equal rights in all our activities. In a single stroke it would bring human dignity and joyous acceptance to several million members of the "lower strata" of our society. More specifically, we desire that all Hindu Āchāryas should welcome them into their mutts. We request the leadership of His Holiness to continue all efforts in persuading other mutts and Āchāryas to provide the facilities to study our Vedas and Agamas with full privileges to all Hindus regardless of Jāthi or gender. We feel that this is vital to strengthening the edifice of Hindu society.

We take this opportunity to welcome Puja Sri Periyava to our forum to bless us and guide our relentless endeavours. We fully appreciate the time constraints but we request His Holiness to please advice and guide us in the discussions on our forum through a representative.

Again and yet again we offer our pranaams and namaskarams.

For and on behalf of all Members :
Members of the Executive and Working Committees.