



DIMENSIONS OF FAITH

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Introduction:

The human beings, due to their ability to feel and to think enjoy unique position among other living things on this planet earth. With the help of this ability, human beings have created many wonderful and marvelous things that are responsible for the progress and development of mankind. Among all these thing, the creation of Faith ad its later evolution into organized system is the most wonderful job done by the mankind most importantly, the phenomena of Faith is complex, multidimensional and very difficult to define and to analyses its role in the development of human society. The present paper will throw light on the various dimensions of faith which have been shaping the course of human life as well as of human history. Before we turn to the different dimensions of faith, we should know about its origin and genesis. Moreover, the idea of faith and practice of faith is with mankind since time immortal. All religious tarts, despite of their differences in content and teaching, equally declare that clod has created all living things including human being also. The example of Adam and Eve is apt in this regard.

On the contrary many thinkers and scientists are of opinion that human beings have created an idea and practice of faith, and have also blatantly denied the very existence of the cold, the creator of all things according all religious gospels Charles Darwin's much acclaimed yet controversial theory of evolution in his book Origin of Species (1859) stands for scientific and rational view. Being the students of science, our analysis and interpretation of faith should be based on scientific methods without having any bias or prejudice. Therefore, this analysis must have the ability to put forward a current of fresh ideas, innovative insights in the working of faith and imaginative approach that will aid mankind in solving of faith related problems which have posed a great threat to the peace and existence of this world.

Historical Dimensions of the Faith:

Interestingly, the history of faith is as old as of mankind. Unlike today's man who is master of the nature, the primitive man was the worshipper of the nature Moreover; he was surrounded by hostile nature which was totally incomprehensible to his understanding. Therefore, in order to feel safe and secure in this context, he had started to worship natural things such as sun,

Moon River and mountains etc. Later on, human beings had deified all these things and created the religion with help of rituals, symbols and customs. The archeological studies have strengthened this claim. Moreover, with evolution of human beings, the idea and practice of faith have gone through the process of evolution. More evolved the human society; more is the evolution of the faith. The geographical, political, economical, and social factors played a very crucial role in the historical evolution of the faith. Therefore, we have too much diversity and different feature in the area of faith. In the early period of human history, there was complete absence of government system which organizes and controls our day today life. In order to avoid confusion and anarchy in the society, the place of governing system was taken by the organized religious system that controlled all activities of human beings in their respective society. The Varna system in Hinduism is the classical example in this regard. Soon, the God had turned into “absent governor” and the agents of God (Priest or clergy) had exercised the power of the God. When the political institutions such as state, king, army etc got developed, there was conflict between these two groups whose ultimate aim was to grab the power. Moreover, the human history has witnessed many conflicts between organized faith and state institutions. Most importantly the Buddhism and the Jainism, was the strong religious movement, backed and supported by contemporary powerful state Maurya (Ashoka) reaction against encroaching authority of organized Vaidik religion in every walk of life.

Throughout the human history, there were two trends of the organized faith. The first was about the political power of the organized faith, and the second was about the spiritual well being of the people. Most significantly, these trends were universal, and were shared by all cultures in all ages. Moreover, the first trend was about religious hegemony with the aid of all state apparatus, and second was about salvation of mankind without any help from the state power. In following passages, these trends will be separately analysis.

The religious hegemony, in the past, demanded an absolute power in the name of the God. In this process there were many political arrangements between the organized state and organized faith. This was a real axis of evil that had been responsible for the violence in the human history. Therefore, there were political wars, based on the religious hegemony, called as crusades in the western discourse and Jihad in Muslim discourse. This is the good example of inter-faith conflict and there were intra-faith conflict also. Henry VIII of England had rejected the papal authority and had established the separate Anglican Church for the England in the medieval age. This type of ideology was responsible for forced conversion, massacre and as great misery to the mankind. Most importantly, all religions had participated in this process of sin. The idea and practice of untouchability and of slavery have derived their origin from the organized faith. The unequal treatment to women also had been sanctioned in the religious hegemony. This orthodox ideology was prevalent in every faith. It was based on the exploitation, and was unjust to the individual members of the society. The rights of individual were denied and they had become just pawns in the religious hegemony. In this context, only few enjoyed power and prestige. In short, the religious hegemony, along with respective political power, exploited fellow human beings in the name of God. Names and contexts of religious

hegemony were different but the practice was same everywhere that is suppression, oppression and exploitation. This was very dark side of the faith.

The faith had good side too. The oppressive religious hegemony was challenged by many noble souls who laid the foundations of human and democratic ideas that are major values of today's democratic set of the different countries. Martin Luther King, father of Protestant sect, had taught that there is no need of agent between men and God. He rejected the authority of Pope and Catholic Church, and founded new sect Protestant. Moreover, the same thing was done by Gautam Buddha thousand years ago. He denounced violence, rituals in Vaidic religion, and put forward his "Panchsheel" principles which are democratic in nature. Moreover, his aim was to reform the contemporary religion and society. History has its lessons too; the organized faith has few good things to offer to mankind. Greater the separation between the religion and state, better the mankind.

Political Dimensions of Faith:

The faith is far reaching entity, even reaching to the political area which is traditionally outside form the realm of the faith. Therefore faith plays as very important role in intra-national and international affairs. The power of faith in shaping national discourse is aptly seen through the present condition of Pakistan, and Taliban dominated Afghanistan. In the following passages, initially there will be analysis of role of faith in internal affairs, and later on, there will be analysis of faith in international affairs.

The country, on broad political level, can be divided into three groups which are conservative, liberal and leftists. Moreover, this conservative group defies democratic system and procedures, and shuns away the freedom of expression and debate which are very necessary for the healthy society. When there is no separation between state and religion, then there is birth of combined power of state and religion. Due to this unholy combination, democracy in Pakistan has been suffering and all world views Pakistan as the epicenter of scourge of terrorism. Thus, Pakistan is the good example of misuse of combined power of religion and state. On the contrary, Indian constitution had made reparation between state and religion though having Hindu meanly and brutal experience of the partition. The founding fathers of India had accepted secularism instead of theology as the national creed of the nation. Therefore, India's march towards trust with destiny has been going with the help of democratic values. It is really a great honor to be part of "great experiment of democracy". In India, there are many orthodox groups but unlike Pakistan, they are not supported by Indian people and state. Thus, India is the good example of separation between state and religion. As compared to Pakistan, India is much progressed in every walk of life.

The modern political ideas of democracy aims to empower individual as a citizen without paying attention to his race , gender or religion. On the contrary, faith based ideology divides citizen on the basis of religion, race etc. Therefore, there is always conflict between democratic institutions and religious groups. Most importantly, the static, closed, and orthodox nature of faith is the major reason behind this. Due to these continues conflicts between these two, the unity of

country is threatened , and the country, more than often, becomes easy pawn in the hands of Superpower, who wants to maintain its hegemony intact.

For example, the Shiya-Sunmi conflict in Arab countries is greatly exploited by America to secure its strategic objectives i.e. oil and military base. In this context, the faith becomes Geo-strategies weapon in the hands of superpower who is more than willing to exploit the situation. The terrorism is the biggest threat to the peace of the world. moreover, terrorism derives its strength from the faith. Their aim is to crate fear among the people. They provide along interpretation of the religion, and work for the religious hegemony of the particular religion. Al-Quota is the most notable example in this regard. The countries like Pakistan adopted terrorism as state policy are paying very dearly. It shows that religion based ideates are like fossils in this age of globalization. The western world made huge progress due to the separation of state and church. Mankind cannot make progress without oscine. Most importantly, the science cannot develop in oppressed atmosphere of faith. Therefore, no wonder that most of scientific inventions are made in liberal democratic countries rather than religion dominated nations. Therefore, it would be apt to conclude that faith should have no place in policy formations or in national and international politics. If faith is allowed to operate in politics then, there will be thousands of Holocausts in coming days. Therefore, it is duty of every individual and government to stop this looming disaster.

Economical Dimensions of faith:

The economical problems are more complex to solve as compared to other problems. The well defined properly implemented policies have to capacity to change the lives of people in the society. If these economic policies are based on scientific knowledge and criteria, there is certainty about its success. But on the contrary, if these policies are based unscientific concept like caste etc, then the success seems far away. Most importantly, the economical dimensions of faith in India have created the problem of reservation, identity and caste politics which are dangerous to the sustainable development, democracy, and integrity of the country. The traditional religious order divided the work on the basis of Verna system. Later on this system created the stigma of untouchability. But Indian constitution had outlawed the untouchability, and provided “reservation” for backward castes and classed. But now days that every caste and class is demanding reservation and every caste is the new Vote bank for the political party which are competition with each other to secure vote, offering more resonations to new castes. In the past, the country was divided on the basis of religion. And if there divisive a caste politics is continued, then there will be Balkanization of India. In this context, the economic dimension of faith is playing divisive role. Most importantly, the old ideates are kept to destroy on idea of Indian citizen. Instead of eliminating the caste, now there is a danger of elimination of the nation. The economical dimensions of faith have multifocal roles. The slavery system in United State was based on racial ideology which was derived from the faith. The same was the case with colonialism and imperialism. The study of communal violence suggests that minority religious communities suffer due to the economic jealousy on part of dominant community. Nazi leader Hitler killed Jews for both reasons: economic and religious Shakespeare’s

portrays of Shylock in his “The Merchant of Venice” shows intermingling of religious identity and economical problem. All this indicates that economic interest of the individual should be distanced from his religious identity. Otherwise it will be really difficult for mankind to make progress.

Cultural Dimensions of the faith

The culture is overall, it is generally believed, a sum total of religious and non-religious activities in general. The faith has ability to determine food, clothing, and life style of the concerned individual. If the country has many cultures, then there bound to be conflict between these cultures. India’s is multicultural country, and rights and cultured minority is respected by law in India. On the contrary, many western countries talk about liberal democracy, but these countries often deny basic rights to the minority community. For example now days there is great debate in France on the issue of Burkha wore by Muslim women. Some western countries are implementing very rigid policies about migration. Due to the cultural conflict, the national unity and identity is completely weakened. In this context, old ideas are in conflict with modern issues.

Spiritual Dimensions of the Faith:

The spiritualism is relatively different from the organized faith. Especially, it deals with the inner life of the individual and often seeks the spiritual well being and enlightenment of the individual. Most significantly, it is the only dimension of religion which has the positive outcome. In the age of globalization, the “needy” people are exploited by the “greedy” people. Moreover, there is cut throat competition in every field of life, creating tension and stress in human life. Due to the various ideologies and other things, human beings are fragmented in multiple identities, losing the uniqueness of the individual. Only spiritualism has the capacity to rescue human beings from this pathetic condition. In spiritualism, the salvation of humanity lies, instead of practicing divisive and destructive faith, human beings should embrace spiritualism. Thus, spiritualism can positively contribute to the peace, progress, and overall development of the mankind. To sum up, the faith is multidimensional, starting from history to the spiritualism. But for the progress of mankind, there should be reasonable limitation on the role of organized faith in modern society. The society in general and the state in particular should focus on spiritual “Kingdom of God is within you”.

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