

## **SECULARISM—A CONSTITUTIONAL FUNDAMENTAL AND SUPRA- COMMUNAL HUMANISM**

If secularism collapses as a casualty of communalism, humanism has no hope of survival as a basic creed of the nation. True, today, textually, speaking, humanism is a fundamental duty under Article 51A of the Constitution. So too is compassion for living creatures. They go together as a global vision. The Preamble to the Constitution gives paramount prominence to secularism in its supra-religious dimension. Independent India has a prolixity of religions; but no savage rivalry or obdurate obscurantism among the several faiths is socially, culturally or morally permissible in this country. Indeed, the tapestry of theological [plurality, marred by terrorist multiplicity, is alien to our traditional liberalism. On the contrary, even atheism and agnosticism flourish among many rationalists enjoying constitutional protection. But certain intimidatory forces rooted in communal competitiveness threaten the unity of India. These diabolic developments politically fuel terrorist antagonisms. Specious spiritualism such violent drunken godist bellicosity and bigoted outbursts corrode people's fraternal co-existence and unitive nationalism. This savage satanism and divisive development disguised in religious drapery is a dreadful disaster since our communities have

been living, without fissiparous fights, in serenity, security and good neighbourliness from time immemorial.

Our militant dialectically dynamic, socialistic democracy vests power in the people, and 'We, the People of India', exercising their franchise decide on the choice of the creative Executive and the social justice-fired Legislature. Who commands more votes and wins more seats rules the country in its humanist stature and federal structure. Inevitably, valid votes vitally matter in the trustful vesting of State Power. An appalling evil vitiates elections. Communal campaigns misleadingly manipulate the minds of the electorate, thereby demolishing the integrity, fraternity, secularity, unity and sovereignty of the nation. Now, a new menace: US Bush—Big Business conditions our economy and foreign policy. Thus the political source of power is polluted by electoral communalism economic infiltration and political pressure and terrorism. Religiosity, with its intransigent intolerance, inflames the feelings of large numbers of looney sects, competing castes and furious followers of fanatic faiths. Secularism cannot but contest this maddening malady. For this purpose, stern legislation and punitive action are firm measures. Indian secularism has a glorious dimension of all-embracing unity and universality, a creative Advaita as majestically proclaimed in the Rig Veda: ***Let noble thoughts come to us from every side.*** Be it the

profound Upanishads, the cosmic Christian commandments, the Islamic world brotherhood mandate or the global wonder of compassion for all life taught by Mahavira and the Buddha and the grand Sikkism of Guru Nanak. The divine oneness of all Creation understood in the larger sense, is true religion, true humanism, true noble materialism spiritually inspired, true commitment to a world order of happiness and harmony—these values are soul-deep secularism. But an aggressive revivalism, a malignant nationalism, an insane godism is rising with terrorist teeth and each religion barks and bites, corners and grabs power.

Ambitious political strategist, hungry for power and lucre, seek a political career and instrumentalize religion as a means of carving social space and economic dominion through indoctrinating crazy believers, particularly when elections arrive and ballots matter. Campaigners and candidates wear apparels of patriotism. Indeed, rampant communalism becomes a rabid force in politics, disguised as nationalism. Communalism transforms itself into a power-grab operation draped in intoxicating patriotic rhetoric. A do-or-die struggle for secular swaraj is now an inalienable imperative. The finest philosophy the world has seen has flourished in India, as Max Muller in his marvelous tribute expressed.

Religious pluralism by itself is not an evil because each denomination projects a certain dimension of the Supreme which is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. Different prophets incarnate saints and seers, with their sublime vision, perceive the Infinite Reality from different angles of perfection, but when religion degenerates into dark and deadly institutional theology, Eternal Light in its luminous glory suffers eclipse and aggressive obscurantists promote cults and sects and intoxicated claims to Truth. Every religion has this insane infirmity. Hindutwa—not Vedanta—is not an exception. So too Islamic monopoly of religiosity. Christian bigotry obnoxiously pretends papal infallibility with communal narrowness. Even Sikhism and Buddhism can wear the apparel militant-extremism although Jesus and Guru Nanak were rare, revolutionary inclinations. Unfortunately, the eclectic culture and noble texture of India's Moral-Spiritual Estate suffered superstitions and fanaticisms when invaded by competing claimants to Godhood. This noxious moral menace intolerance has deadened the divinity, dignity and universality of Truth, Justice and Power. The task of national transformation is to rid every religion of its political robbers and restore the divinity and humanity glowing as the Supreme Light.

Hindutva, Christutva and Muslimitva, with dragon's teeth of discard sown on Indian earth will be the doom and

damnation of Bharat. Already we suffer divisive frailty economically because of the dependencia syndrome we will fall to pieces unless there is a burning realization that secularism and social justice are a revolutionary policy indispensable to our survival or we will suffer seppuku. This is nationalism not the Manmohan brand of U.S. vassal status or Rajnath Singh doctrine of cultural nationalism which fobs off Hindutva masquerading as Uniform Code—a boloney which stultifies Article 43 and the desideratum of a value—based family law fair and uniform for Indian humanity. Nepal is a portent and an event of Hindutva and authoritarianism has its thanatos. People, at long last, will transform the State into truly secular Republic who is a traitor, who a patriot? He who frustrates a secular family law fair and fine and functional in uniformly fraternizing Indians by communalism the cosmic vision which is our inheritance using cultural camaraderie. He who swears by the solemn, sublime, sacred principle of one nation, one family and so one law subject to special exceptions grounded in noesis is a patriot. Differences, difficulties, hassels and hostilities do exist. But we shall overcome—Bharat Mahan shall never surrender!

July 5, 2008

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