

## Who Owns God and Heaven? A Critical Analysis of Fundamental Factors of Religious and Sectarian Extremism, Intolerance and Terrorism

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### Short Communication

All the people of the world are *momin* (believers) and *kaffir* (non-believers) at the same time. All the people of this world are holy and pure, and unholy, dirty and impure at the same time. They are holy and *momin* in their own eyes, and unholy and *kaffir* in the eyes of their opponents, the people who do not like their faith, sect, race, colour, creed, tribe, caste or even gender. The religious leaders and followers of almost every religion claim that their religion is the only true and heavenly religion, truly revealed by Almighty God, and the religions of other people are false, fabricated, outdated, expired and cancelled by God. Almost all of them criticize the religious books of one another as altered, fabricated, stolen, contentious, discordant and controversial. People of every religion claim that God and Heaven belong to them alone and anyone who wants to enter into Heaven for eternal life must embrace their religion (but Judaism, and Hinduism do not accept outsiders). Why do people hate, discriminate and are intolerant towards the human beings around them on religious, sectarian, caste, colour, creed and even gender basis? This article is an effort to briefly analyze the factors and implications of discriminations and prejudices on the religious and sectarian basis.

### Findings and Analysis

Human beings have made their own Religions the most beautiful and the most horrible phenomenon of human civilizations. The aspects of religious teachings that encourage human beings to become better human beings think good and do well to people around them are the most beautiful aspects of religions and religious teachings. But when religions are used to attack, persecute, insult and degrade, and inflict violence on the people of other religions, sects, schools of thought, then the religions become most horrible thing in the places/parts of the world where this misuse of religions is done. Religions have been used to cause wars and killings of millions of human beings, but religions have also caused a lot of good to humanity by promoting goodness among their followers. Throughout human history, almost every religion has been used as an ideology for political as well as economic gains and interests i.e. for conquering lands, looting wealth and women of the people of the same religion or of the other religions.

### All are believers, all are unbelievers

People of every religion have been indoctrinated and are constantly taught by their religious leaders that their religion and sect is the only true religion and the other religions are untrue, and the believers of the other religions are *kaffirs*, nonbelievers, and unholy, and if they will have any kind of relations with people of other religions, then they will also become unholy and *kaffirs*. Jews are taught that only Jews are true believers of Jehovah/God, are a pure race and the most favourite and

beloved nation of God, and that more than 7 billion people who include Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Jews and Hindus are *kaffirs* and unholy. Muslims are taught that Jews, Christians, Buddhists and Hindus are unclean, unholy, and *kaffirs*. Hindus are taught that Muslims, Christians, Buddhists and Jews are unclean, unholy, and *kaffirs*. Then among Muslims, Sunnis hate Shias and Shias hate Sunnis and declare each other *Kaffirs* and impure people. Among Christians, Catholics hate Protestants and Protestants hate Catholics. Every sect of Christians claims that they are the only true and pure Christians, and every sect of Muslims claims that they are the only pure and true Muslims.

This theory is absolutely wrong that billions of people who do not belong to your religion or sect are *kaffir*, unholy and impure because then you along with you billions of co-religionists also turn out to be impure, unholy and *kaffir* in the eyes of billions of people who dislike you because of your religion and sect. This situation really troubles good and broadminded persons because human beings, who are created by God Almighty in his own image, hate one another only because they have different religions and sects. Billions of people are instantly declared unholy, unclean, dirty and *kaffirs* by the people of other religions and even by the people of their own religion, but with a different sect. Thus religions have become a tool to poison innocent minds of children and for promoting hatred towards people of other religions and those who belong to other sects and schools of thoughts (*fiqah*). So far so that among the people of every religion, people discriminate against their own co-religionists on the basis of caste, colour, creed, class and gender. For example, among Muslims, Syeds claim to be superior blood and prefer to marry their children to Syeds only. Again among Muslims, Arraens claim to be a superior caste and they dislike jatts and all other castes among their own co-religionists.

Qurr'an clearly says that best among you are those who have best morality and ethics. Gospel says best are the ones who are humble, who love and serve their fellow human beings regardless their religion, sect, caste, creed, class and gender, and those who bring peace and harmony on earth, and those who sacrifice their belongings and even lives for others. The original Islam and Christianity do not allow any kind of discrimination on any basis whatsoever. But people of all faiths discriminate not only people of other faiths, but also against people of other sects of their own religions. Both holy books, Qurr'an and Gospel have insisted that only those will enter into eternal life that have fear of God, good deeds, and love for fellow human beings. None of the holy books said that you should only love people of your own faith, sect or caste. So far so that both Holy Qurr'an and Holy Bible agree that God created all human beings in His own image. None of the Holy Books says that only Muslims, Jews or Christians were created by God in His own image.

This writer has lived in different countries and dealt with people of different religions, castes, races, and cultures in several countries. This writer's observations and experiences are that there are good and bad people among every religion, sect, caste, community, biradary, region, race, colour, society etc. There are Muslims and Christians who are so decent and pious that they are like angels, and there are also evil minded persons among both communities who are more devilish than the Devil. Same is true about the people of every religion. You will find angels and devils among Christians, Hindus, Jews, Buddhists, and Jews etc. So people of every religion are full of angels and devils. But people are used to generalizing the people of other faiths i.e. Muslims would say all Hindus, all Christians and all Jews are unholy, bad, unreliable and kaffirs. Similarly all Muslims are declared bad, dirty, filthy and dangerous by Hindus and Jews.

Thus the theory of declaring people bad, unholy and kaffirs on the grounds of their different faiths, sect, caste, colour or creed is absolutely wrong and makes people of the whole globe bad, dirty, unholy and kaffir.

### **Interfaith marriages**

Another attitude of almost people of all the faiths and their sects is about inter-faith marriages. All of them prefer to marry or forcibly take away beautiful women of opponent faiths and sects, but do not allow their own women to have love affairs or marry the men of other faiths. They declare that women of other faiths are halal (permitted, pure, clean and holy), but the men of other faiths are haram (prohibited, impure, unclean and unholy). In many cases if a girl of faith 'X' falls in love with boy of faith 'y', the people of faith 'X' either kill the boy of faith 'y' or they kill both girl and the boy. The question is: If a boy 'A' and girl 'B' are children of the same parents, then how can girl 'B' be pure, clean and holy, and boy 'A' unclean, impure and unholy? This purely is a tribal mentality wherein the women have no voice and are treated like cattle and when in the past tribe 'f' attacked tribe 'm', tribe 'f' killed all the men and boys of tribe 'm' and looted women and property of tribe 'm'. Although original Islam allows inter-faith marriages of men and women to the men and women of 'ahl-e-kitab'. The Gospel allows both men and women to marry not only to 'ahl-e-kitab' but also to the non-believers. But here in our society, both Muslims and Christians would not allow their girls to marry even 'ahl-e-kitab'

Very often men and women develop excellent fondness, understanding and love for each other, but they are not allowed to marry because of religious, sectarian, caste and class differences. This kills many true lovers and they are forced to marry to the person of their own religion, sect, caste, class etc. against their will where they have to suffer for rest of their life.

This writer strongly believes that no person is holy or unholy because of his/her religion, sect, caste, colour or creed. A person is holy or unholy, dirty, and good or bad because of his thoughts and actions. If a person thinks good about people around him, if he does good to people around him, if he is not a danger to the dignity, life and belongings/property of people around him, if he has fear of God in his heart, if he keeps his or her mind and heart clean and pure, if he looks after his or her physical hygiene then he or she is clean and holy and is liked and loved by God. But if a person always thinks about looting and becoming danger to the dignity, life and property of others, and does not have fear of God in his heart, then he or she is dirty, unclean, and unholy and even a kaffir.

The aim or purpose of religions and religious teachings should be to help people to become better human beings and improve their character, behavior, and dealings with other human beings, but unfortunately the different religions are being used for gaining economic benefits and political powers and promoting hatred against people of other religions and even people of different sects of the same religion. A kind of competition of promoting their own religion and insulting and degrading other religions and other sects of own religion is going on among religious leaders of all faiths. They and their followers do not act upon the values of their own religion, but prefer to use their religion for promoting hatred and bloodshed.

Two brief incidents are being presented here to prove that religious and sectarian hatred can kill humans and their passions instantly: Mr. Ahmed, a Sunni Muslim got married to a Shia woman named Fatima. They had nice and happy life, had 4 children. Mr. Ahmed got retired from his Government job and began going to the mosque of his locality. His Imam masjid (head of Mosque) and other members of the congregation began indoctrinating him that he had made a mistake by getting married to a kaffir woman and that his children were also illegitimate, kaffir and unholy so he should divorce the woman immediately. Mr. Ahmed began fighting with the wife and the children on daily basis and labelling them as kaffirs, thus making lives of himself, his wife and children who were in their twenties, miserable. Ultimately the whole family was ruined and the children and their mother was forced to expel the old man from the house.

The second incident is about the famous Indian film actress Meena Kumari. Meena Kumari got married to Kamal Amrohvi, the famous film director. Kamal Amrohvi was Shia and told Meena Kumari that she did not have the permission to become pregnant and give birth to the child of Kamal Amrohvi because she was not a Shia. This almost killed Meena Kumari and she lost all interests in life and for rest of her life, lived a life of a slave of Kamal Amrohvi.

So this is how religious and sectarian hatred can kill human beings. It can dehumanize the hater and the hated at the same time.

Religions, sects, castes, creeds, colours and gender is being used to poison the mind of the innocent children/people.

Billion dollar question is: Can God is so unjust that he categorizes his own creatures, the human beings, the sons and daughters Adam and Eve as holy and unholy, clean and dirty, etc. etc.?

### **Religion a Trillion Dollar Business**

Religion has become a trillion dollar business particularly in underdeveloped societies, which have poor literacy rates and extreme economic poverty. Mullahs are collecting billions in the name of promulgating Islam and Quran and for waging jihad, pastors are collecting billions in the name of organizing healing crusades and conventions, and pandits are earning in the name of expelling Muslims and Christians from India and for stopping Daalats (the people of 4th caste according to Hindu religion) from leaving fourth caste of Hinduism and converting to Christianity. Feudal lords and capitalists in societies like India and Pakistan won't pay their taxes, but would donate billions to extremist groups like Shiv Sena and Taliban.

### **Implications Religious Intolerance**

Religious intolerance and hatred ultimately developed into extremism, sectarianism and terrorism and made lives miserable for millions of people in societies like India and Pakistan. First our

churches, mosques, temples, imambargahs were made insecure and we were forced to offer our prayers under tight security, and now our Schools, Colleges and Universities have been made insecure and our children are denied all kinds of cultural and recreational opportunities and our children have to continue their education in a situation of constant fear. This is an outcome of our blunder of sowing the seeds of religious and sectarian extremism. Taliban, Shiv Sena, and Daesh (ISIS-Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) all of them are outcome/product of the philosophy of religious extremism-those who are not from our religion or creed are our enemies. We are reaping what we had sown.

Religious extremism and sectarianism is the most potential, most serious and major threat to human civilization. If it is not stopped, it will eat up the whole of human civilization and human beings will continue to spend most of their energies and time on hating one another instead of doing something positive and constructive because a person who hates others never thinks positive and never does any good to people around him/her.

Hating human beings on the basis of religion, sect, colour, caste, creed or gender is an insult to God or Allah who is creator of every human being and of the whole universe.

This is a dangerous and bad aspect of religious and sectarian behavior of people, but the parts of religions and religious teachings, which tell us to love others, care for others, i.e. the rights of human beings around us (haqooql abad) is the best part, but it is not being paid enough attention and is not highlighted by the religious leaders in our society as well as in many other underdeveloped societies of the world.

### Religious Intolerance, a Threat to Human Civilization

The promotion of religious and sectarian extremism and intolerance has had serious implications for human civilization. Many societies in the world are extremist and intolerant societies due to the policies of their ruling elite. Such societies are ruled by ignorant persons who have intentionally and deliberately promoted religious, sectarian, caste, colour, creed and gender based hatred, discriminations and violence in their societies because it suits them. The ruling elite of such societies are promoting ignorance and they are keeping people of their societies divided on the basis of religion, sects, school of thought (firqa) caste, colour creed, communities (biradaris), regions etc. etc. The undereducated and poorly educated religious leaders are being used for this purpose. Religions are being used by ruling elite for promoting hatred among people. It is not being used for promoting love, peace, and harmony among human beings. Ruling elite divides people on religious and sectarian basis so they can continue to fight on these basis and never get united to demand their political and economic rights, and the ruling elite can continue their loot of the resources that actually belong to the masses.

### Conclusion

- Followers of all faiths hate followers of other faiths and even their own co-religionists on the basis of religion, sect, colour, creed, caste, gender, class etc.
- All of them consider themselves superior, as compared to the followers of other faiths and even other sects of their own faith.
- Religions has been used to do a lot of good as well as misused to do a lot of harm to humanity.

- Positive use of religions transforms human beings into finest persons like angels, and its misuse eliminates humanness of the human beings and decreases them to the level of beasts and devils.
- Those who hate other on one or the other basis belittle themselves and their faiths in the eyes of the persons that they hate to.
- Religions, sects, castes, creeds, colours, class and gender are being misused to poison the mind of the innocent children/people.
- Religions have become trillion dollar businesses, particularly in underdeveloped societies, which have poor literacy rate and have high economic poverty because poor and illiterate persons can be easily motivated to use aggression in the name of religion and sect.
- Religious intolerance and hatred ultimately develops into extremism, sectarianism and terrorism.
- Religious extremism and sectarianism is the most potential, most serious and major threat to human civilization.
- Hating human beings on the basis of religion, sect, colour, caste, creed or gender is an insult to God/Allah who is creator of every human being and of the whole of universe.
- Those who promote religious and sectarian hatred and discriminations end up working against their own religion and sect because their actions are contrary to their claims that their religion teaches them to love all human beings.
- The current situation of terrorism on national and international levels is a byproduct of religious extremism and sectarianism and intolerance, which has made lives miserable for us in our mosques, churches, Imambargahs and now our children have to go through educational activities in a situation of constant fear.
- We promoted extremism and intolerance against other faiths and sects and now the serpent that we raised is ready to swallow us all.
- Taliban, Shiv Sena, and Daesh (ISIS-Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) all of them are outcome/product of the philosophy of religious extremism-those who are not from our religion or creed are our enemies and must be eliminated.

### Recommendations

- Since home, mosque, church, temple and schools are transferring negative attitudes towards people of other religions and sects, thus it must be stopped by these institutions and they must be trained to play a positive role.
- A campaign must be launched to educate religious leaders, parents and teachers so that they could educate children that by insulting the religious and sectarian views of other people, we end up promoting hatred against our own religion. How can we have respect for our own religion, sect, colour, creed, caste and gender by insulting other people on anyone of these basis? Respect is an investment that we make on other people to be returned to us in many folds.
- We must promote a mindset that people of all religions, sects, castes, colours, creeds, culture, genders, and regions must be respected and no person or group should be degraded and insulted on any basis whatsoever.
- Only State has a right to have an army, therefore, forming sectarian and extremists groups or preaching hatred should be punishable by law and laws should be implemented strictly and the state must play a strong role to eliminate the mindset of extremism.
- Like Indonesia, we must encourage interfaith marriages and train our children that instead of insulting and mocking the religious

- rituals and holy books of other faiths we must participate in the rituals of our neighbors who belong to other faiths.
- If we want our societies to be peaceful and progressive, we must teach our children that loving and caring for all human beings is the highest prayer and worship to God Almighty and if we do not love human beings around us, all our worships are zero.
- We must teach our children that those who hate anyone on any basis whatsoever, belittles himself/herself thus they must avoid doing so.