

# SURVIVAL OF MULTICULTURALISM AGAINST FUNDAMENTALISM

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Immense diversity of human thought,  
values and heredity.

Should it not be preserved?

If yes, then the answer is Co-existence.

# What is fundamentalism?

- An attitude.
- “I have come to the awareness that a humanist personality, reflected in a caring, kind and compassionate attitude might be seen in different people with different ideologies and philosophies. As compared to a humanist personality, some people have a fundamentalist personality that is very critical, judgmental and aggressive. People with such personality try to convert others and get into angry and bitter debates with their opponents” (Khalid Sohail, 2006)

# example

- We find in the Gospel of Saint Luke (chapter 9) a typical and interesting case of a concrete fundamentalist vs co-existence example. We read: “They (Jesus and the disciples) went to a Samaritan village to make preparations for him, but the people would not receive him because he was going for Jerusalem. Seeing this, the disciples James and John said: ‘Lord do you want us to call down fire from heaven to burn them up?’ But he turned and rebuked them, and they went on to another village” (Lk 9:51-55)

# Co-existence

- We are constantly embroiled in conflicts revolving identity.
- But all of us have ambiguous identities.
- Can we co-exist with our ambiguities, or do we have to define ourselves at every corner?

# Historical truths and untruths

- Truths are subjective, interpretive, open to discovery and investigation, circumstantial, constantly changing and ridden with perspective. In fact, humans are the only species on earth that are capable of constructing and deconstructing truths.
- For example, we are a migratory species. Science proves it. Sociology proves it. Yet, we do not accept migration as a human right.

# Concept of Attachment and Detachment

- You expect Neutrality of a Mediator
- You also expect Non-partiality of a Mediator
- But how about developing non-attachment to the idea you are propagating?

# Study of Attachment and Detachment

- In India, there were primarily six schools of philosophy, of which 2 were theist, and 4 ,atheist. Remarkably, all of them have vigorously studied the role of 'attachment ' to a goal.
- The atheist philosophy of Jainism (developed in 800 BC) discusses the principle of 'non-absolutism', i.e, there is nothing absolute; one must always accept multiple points of view to develop non-attachment.



# Attachment

- Buddhism, another atheist philosophy which developed around 500 BCE was very emphatic about detachment, which it viewed as a state in which a person overcomes his or her attachment to things, people or concepts of the world and ***thus attains a heightened perspective.***
- The Bhagwat Gita, a theist philosophical treatise composed in the Vedas , believed to be dated around 3000 BCE , also mentions “One who performs his duty without ‘attachment’ , surrendering the results unto the Supreme Lord, is unaffected by sinful action, just as the lotus is untouched by water.”

# Fundamentalism as an attitude in politics

Some questions:

- If I am a Muslim, can I feel safe only if there is an 'Islamic' political structure at the helm of my civic life?
- Can a Jew only have a homeland in Israel?
- Can political ownership of land be only based on where our ancestors were born?
- If I am a Japanese, am I the same kind of Japanese like my grand-parent who suffered the nuclear holocaust?

# Political Ownership of Land- and the future

Human beings are free and ought to be free to choose the home/land they want to live in. The problem arises when we want to have political ownership of our home, i.e., we want to exclude others, and prevent anyone else from making 'my' home as 'his' home even in the future. The concept of 'exclusivity' of one kind of people to politically own a place is primarily a restriction on human freedom. But, in a world obsessed with human identity and politics, this assault on human freedom goes un-noticed.

- We have to learn to deal with exploitation without identity formation.
- We have to learn to deal with fears without blame.

# World Citizenship

- Martin Luther King Jr. said:  
“Our loyalties must transcend our race, our tribe, our class, and our nation; and this means we must develop a world perspective”

# Can we think like World Citizens?

- Development and Growth of the Human world from a pastoral/agricultural economy to a multi faceted industrial and technological economy has led to a world with fast depleting natural resources. Clean and clear water, pure air, unplumbed oceans and verdant forests are now becoming a rarity. Natural species are becoming extinct, natural food is being manipulated, and nature itself is taking a big turn. In this situation, we, must go beyond our racial/tribal/national identities, and become world citizens, giving our complete loyalty to our preservation as a species, our World and Mother Nature. The concept of World Citizenship has to start taking root in our minds and change our political concepts in the coming future.

# A story

## THE GREAT AMERICAN STORY.

- “It is the year 2030. By a sudden stroke of luck, the Native American tribes come into a lot of
- gold in the reservation lands that they own. The gold is of sterling quality, and mining rights
- alone fetch them enough money to sustain the budgets of 30 countries in the world. They are now
- rich, richer than all their compatriots and neighbors. They start having discussions in their
- Council of Elders about what to do with this money. The Council decides that they want
- ownership of their forefather’s lands. They offer money to many middle class homes and farms
- and businesses in America, to buy their lands and properties in outright sales. There is a new
- buzz in America. Many Americans discuss the offer with their families. They were waiting for a
- good offer, and this couldn’t be better. They are, anyways, tired of living the same middle class
- life, and paying heavy taxes and living a life that moves from one mortgage to another. So they
- begin imagining what they can do with all this money and their imaginations take them high.
- They can go to countries where living life is cheaper, food is pure and healthy, weather is good
- and life is more relaxed. They can buy Villas in Florence, Apartments in Cancun, Chateaus in
- France, Farm houses in India, Hutongs in China, Forest resorts in Kenya, Tea estates in Sri-
- Lanka, Ancient mansions in Moscow, Chalets in Switzerland, and begin new lives , new trades,
- new work and new businesses.

# STORY CONTINUES.....

- Many people go away, taking the money and shifting to Africa and Asia and South America and Middle East and Europe. (No conflict). It's a free world, and people are free to do as they like. All transactions between humans are on the basis of free and voluntary trade and barter, and there is no compulsion to do anything you don't want to. But a lot of other Americans resist it, and don't like this aggressive buying of land by the Native Americans. They are afraid that if the tribes become owners of a majority of the land in America, they will impose their tribal laws on every-one. (Fear- The First motivation). These Americans call a meeting, organize themselves as 'The Righteous Americans', and declare that this is now their country and they won't ever sell their land. They tell their Congressmen to pass a legislation which prohibits any American settler from selling his land to the Native American Tribes. ( Political Ownership -the beginning of First conflict). A legal issue arises-If we are a capitalist economy, and free trade is our right, then every piece of land is open to a negotiated sale. Can a free Sale be blocked by protectionist tendencies? The American society debates and many feel this is not what 'free America' means. But 'The Righteous Americans' are politically powerful and manage to have a legislation passed that blocks sale of lands to all Native American Tribes.



# CONTINUING.....

- The Big Wide World divides into two sides. One takes a position with the Native Americans,
- stating that they were the first settlers on this land called America, and it is their rightful land
- and nobody can block them from buying land if they want to do so. The Other side favors the
- new American settlers (The Righteous Americans) and says that they won this land in a war, and
- through sheer hard work they built this new world, and so it is their land. (The Second conflict a
- philosophical issue-Who is the owner of the land? The Man whose first ancestor was born on
- it? Or the Man who won it/bought it, settled on it and has worked hard on it and added value
- to it?)
- Names are thrown at both parties. Slogans are raised. “Colonizers vs Sons of the soil”, “Peace
- mongers vs. War-mongers”, “Pagans vs Christians”, “Status Quo-ists vs. Change makers”. All
- kinds of Religious, Ideological, Philosophical, Economic and Political opinions and debates
- start spouting from the world’s intellectuals.
- The Native Americans say that somewhere in our old prophecies, it is mentioned that we will get
- our lands back from those who cheated us. We are being fair and are ready to ‘buy’ our own
- land. But these ungrateful settlers, they are intent on a fight. This is crude behavior and we are
- justified to use any means to get these Settlers out. The Native Americans therefore get into a
- secret deal with the Chinese, and a secret shipment of Chemical weapons is received by them.
- (Third conflict---Justification of violent practices on the basis of religion/book/god/prophesy)
- The new Righteous Americans call this shipment of Chemical weapons illegal and immoral. They

# The end of the story

The new Righteous Americans call this shipment of Chemical weapons illegal and immoral. They say that our civilization is in danger. The world of merit is being overtaken by the world of hierarchy. We must fight those who do who do not respect and believe our modern ethics. This is a war against our enlightened ethos, our modernization, our world, our civilization. We will not give an inch of our land back. It is our hard work that has made this land prosperous. If you dare use chemical weapons on us, we will destroy you with our nuclear weapons. And then, they give their final war call-----Remember, if the land cannot be ours, we will not let you have it too.

And the land of America is destroyed forever.”