



FACULTY OF JURIDICAL SCIENCES

COURSE: B.A.LL.B 204

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Lecture- 19



LECTURE 19:

Religious Fundamentalism Religious fundamentalism is increasing in the entire world including India. It is rampant in Islamic countries like Egypt, Algeria, and Pakistan. Even China is not bereft of it. Pakistan was created on the basis of religion. Hostilities between two major communities in India is not a new thing. In recent years since the demolition of Babri Mosque feeling of mistrust has increased between Hindus and Muslims. Hindu fundamentalism has also increased due to the aggressive policies and postures practiced by Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Bajrang Dal, Shiv Sena and Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP). Fundamentalism is basically going back to the fundamentals of religion which is really good because all the religions preach noble ideas like universal brotherhood, peace and compassion. But the different religions follow different doctrines. i.e., their paths are different which make the real difference. When historically seen, two world religions, i.e., Christianity and Islam fought crusades for domination having serious doctrinaire differences. Islam was referred as conquering religion. It conquered even India and ruled for five centuries. Mahmood Gazni attacked India seventeen times, destroyed temples and looted the wealth of India. Similar has been the case with Arabs and Israel. They had serious difference. Even the basis of creation of Israel was separate land for Jews based on the religion of Judaism. Whenever the main religion has been in minority in a country, the religious fundamentalism had increased in that country to assert its identity, culture and language. Religious fundamentalism is very dangerous. It propagates the use of violence. It is involved in terrorist violent almost all over the world. Middle East countries are mostly affected by religious fundamentalism. The countries practice the rigid religious practices of purda system. It is the women who suffer the most. They are very particular about the Allah or God. If anyone does not follow the true teachings of Islam, he/she is forced to do. If he/she refuses to do, he might be killed also. People are forced to live life in strict accordance with religious fundamentals. There are lot of restrictions on liberty in this sense. Religious fundamentalists take extreme step of issuing Fatwa if somebody says blasphemous against God. They issued Fatwa against Salman Rushdie and tried to kill him for blasphemy. Iran is a leading country in pursuing the policies of religious fundamentalism. Other countries are Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Egypt, Pakistan, etc. Sometimes the great secular leaders or those who oppose these policies become the easy target of fundamentalists. Turkey used to be very progressive and secular nation but effort have been made towards driving it under the influence of fundamentalist leaders. Ethnicity has also contributed towards religious fundamentalism. Every nation has differences on the basis of race, language, culture. Different identities coexist in various countries. They are heterogenous in nature. If differences start cropping up, it immediately leads to violence. Bosnia, Lebanon are the worst victims. Sometimes it takes such an extreme step that ethnic cleansing takes place. Ethnic cleansing is not a good sign of civilized society. Natural respect for other's religious differences is missing which needs to be taken care of. The countries of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) are no exception. Ethnicity has been on increase and ethnic tensions are quite old. But the religious fundamentalism can be seen in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakistan, etc. due to its proximity with Iran and Afghanistan. In Iran and Afghanistan religious fundamentalism and related terrorist activities are already there which can spread to these neighbouring CIS states. This can disturb the security conditions in south and south west Asia. That is why even Unites States also consider religious fundamentalism to be a threat to security. Its security can be in danger if religious fundamentalism and related violence and terrorist activities increase in third world countries. So it has become a serious security threat for the developed countries. They have started on strategic lines to contain this threat in the post cold war era.

Secularism About The term "Secular" means being "separate" from religion, or having no religious basis.♣ A secular person is one who does not owe his moral values to any religion. His values are the♣ product of his rational and scientific thinking. Secularism means separation of religion from political, economic, social and cultural aspects♣ of life, religion being treated as a purely personal matter. It emphasized dissociation of the state from religion and full freedom to all religions and♣ tolerance of all religions. It also stands for equal opportunities for followers of all religions, and no

discrimination and ❀ partiality on grounds of religion. Secularism in the History of India Secular traditions are very deep rooted in the history of India. Indian culture is based on the ❀ blending of various spiritual traditions and social movements. In ancient India, the Santam Dharma (Hinduism) was basically allowed to develop as a ❀ holistic religion by welcoming different spiritual traditions and trying to integrate them into a common mainstream. The development of four Vedas and the various interpretations of the Upanishads and the ❀ Puranas clearly highlight the religious plurality of Hinduism. Emperor Ashoka was the first great emperor to announce, as early as third century B.C. ❀ that, the state would not prosecute any religious sect. o In his 12th Rock Edict, Ashoka made an appeal not only for the toleration of all religion sects but also to develop a spirit of great respect toward them. Even after the advent of Jainism, Buddhism and later Islam and Christianity on the Indian ❀ soil, the quest for religious toleration and coexistence of different faiths continued. In medieval India, the Sufi and Bhakti movements bond the people of various communities ❀ together with love and peace. The leading lights of these movements were Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti, Baba Farid, Sant ❀ Kabir Das, Guru Nanak Dev, Saint Tukaram and Mira Bai etc. In medieval India, religious toleration and freedom of worship marked the State ❀ under Akbar. He had a number of Hindus as his ministers, forbade forcible conversions and abolished Jizya. o The most prominent evidence of his tolerance policy was his promulgation of 'Din-illahi' or the Divine Faith, which had elements of both Hindu and Muslim faith. o That this was not imposed upon the subjects is obvious from the fact that there were few adherents to it. Along with this he emphasized the concept of 'sulh-i-kul' or peace and harmony among religions. o He even sponsored a series of religious debates which were held in the 'Ibadat Khana' of the Hall of Worship, and the participants in these debates included theologians from amongst Brahmins, Jains and Zoroastrians. Even before Akbar, Babar had advised Humayun to "shed religious prejudice, protect ❀ temples, preserve cows, and administer justice properly in this tradition." The spirit of secularism was strengthened and enriched through the Indian freedom ❀ movement too, though the British have pursued the policy of divide and rule. o In accordance with this policy, the British partitioned Bengal in 1905. o Separate electorates were provided for Muslims through the Indian Councils Act of 1909, a provision which was extended to Sikhs, Indian Christians, Europeans and Anglo-Indians in certain provinces by the Government of India Act, 1919. o Ramsay MacDonald Communal Award of 1932, provided for separate electorates as well as reservation of seats for minorities, even for the depressed classes became the basis for representation under the Government of India Act, 1935. However, Indian freedom movement was characterized by secular tradition a ❀nd ethos right from the start. o In the initial part of the Indian freedom movement, the liberals like Sir Feroz Shah Mehta, Govind Ranade, Gopal Krishna Gokhale by and large pursued a secular approach to politics. o The constitution drafted by Pandit Moti Lal Nehru as the chairman of the historic Nehru Committee in 1928, had many provision on secularism as: 'There shall be no state religion for the commonwealth of India or for any province in the commonwealth, nor shall the state, either directly or indirectly, endow any religion any preference or impose any disability on account of religious beliefs or religious status'. o Gandhiji's secularism was based on a commitment to the brotherhood of religious communities based on their respect for and pursuit of truth, whereas, J. L. Nehru's secularism was based on a commitment to scientific humanism tinged with a progressive view of historical change. At present scenario, in the context of Indian, the separation of religion from the state ❀ constitutes the core of the philosophy of secularism.