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FUNDAMENTALISM IN PAKISTAN

Language has two functions- the informative and the emotive. While the former deals with the scientific use of words the latter deals with value judgements. These are merely subjective opinions to give a chosen intent rather than a factual meaning or referent to words. Feelings, emotions and attitudes are involved. Let us consider the three categories of emotive utterances

1. The laudatory or the positive,
2. The neutral, and
3. The derogatory or negative.

by quoting Bertrand Russell:

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| 1. I am firm. | (Laudatory) |
| 2. You are obstinate. | (Neutral) |
| 3. He is a pig-headed fool | (Derogatory) |

Two more examples are cited from Strawson:

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| 1. I am righteously indignant. | (L) |
| 2. You are annoyed. | (N) |
| 3. He is making fuss about nothing. | (D) |
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| 1. I have reconsidered it. | (L) |
| 2. You have changed your mind. | (N) |
| 3. He has gone back on his words. | (D) |

These instructive jokes clarify that words can have exactly the same description or literal meaning and yet be either moderately or completely opposite in their emotive meaning. William James in his essay 'The Dilemma of Determinism' uses the word Indeterminism for freedom since freedom has eulogistic association.

The purpose of this exercise is to try to gauge the term Fundamentalism. Sometimes it is a smear word, other times a slur word, most of the time a derogatory term. Some Muslim apologists try and use it as a laudatory term but with limited success. They argue that in the Muslim theological idiom there is no such concept as Islamic Fundamentalism. Its source and use may be peculiar to Christian theological discourse. It does not represent a new ideological paradigm within Islam.

In any case a resurgence of religious fervour is a world-wide phenomena. Orthodox Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists all bemoan the insidious secularism that has crept in their societies. In the U.S Ronald Raegan sought an amendment in the Constitution so that schools could cater to prayers. This reversion to faith and belief could have emanated from a disillusionment with science and technology. It may also be the natural consequence of reaching the limits of doubts and scepticism. Probably one needs to reiterate the solace and comfort that faith brings. The swing of the pendulum seems to have gone from faith to disbelief back to faith.

The question is, is the word used with devious intent? Is there a latent, sometimes blatant, animosity against the Muslims who are seen as the threat of the century. It could thus be the perception of western propagandists who could as they say 'Give a dog a bad

name and kill him' or Give a guy a suspect identity and hang him.

It would be in the fittingness of things to remember that the former U.S. Vice-President Dan Quayle while listing the challenges to Western Civilization in a conference in 1990 considered Islam together with Nazism and Communism as challenges that the west needed to combat. And now that there is only a unipolar world and that the 'End of History' (Fukiyama) is here, it is only the threat of Islam, according to that perception, that looms large on the horizon.

This thesis confirmed by the Harvard scholar Huntington (1993) in his article 'Clash of Civilizations'. He maintains that the West faces Islam as if in the Crusades of the Middle Ages. To the Christian the threat seems larger than life because the Muslims are painted as militant in character and their societies as compulsively violent and turbulent. The assumption here is that there are no fascist tendencies in secular nations or secular communities. In 1981 the Pope was attacked by Mehmat Ali Agca. He was branded an Muslim fundamentalist. The organizing Director of the American-Arab Committee James Zogby's response is a case in point. "The National Action Committee (NAP) is not an Islamic Fundamentalist body but a Secular Fascist Party - about as Muslim as the Nazis, the KKK and the white Christian Council are Christians. But even if NAP were a Muslim group, which it is not, that would not indict all of Islam. If we use that logic the Holocaust would become a 'Christian act, and that the bombs that fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki 'Christian bombs'."

Incidentally if Pakistan and Libya have an atomic project it becomes the Islamic bomb. How is the epithet appended only to Muslim enterprise one wonders!

A racist is also sometimes advanced which asserts that the anti semitism of the 1930s & 40s directed against the Jews is now channelised against the Arabs so that the Aryan supremacy slogan becomes the back ground of the negative image.

Is the pejorative image justified regardless of who projects it? Let us look at it from the point of view of one who is a participator in the culture and belongs to the fold of Islam rather than from the eyes of an alien spectator who feels threatened.

How do the Muslims themselves gauge the cry to return to the basics, the so called fundamentals? It would be with reservation provided rigid orthodoxy does not define the parameters too narrowly. When it does however insist on the original letter rather than the spirit it becomes highly questionable for no exclusive certainty to knowledge, whether religious or otherwise, can be granted.

All conceptual paradigms add more insight to the prevailing knowledge thus spreading enlightenment. Every alternative analysis adds to the wisdom already acquired by the explorations of human mind. But when a well knit systematized and consolidated group or school make extravagant claims that they provide the only light and all others are spurious and redundant if not meaningless nonsense there is cause for concern. These monopolistic assertions are alien to the intrinsic spirit of knowledge and may lead to what is called fundamentalism in the derogatory sense. Going back to fundamentals however may refer to an analysis of the independent, autonomous, irreducible notions - the basic categorical concepts. From this angle reverting to the fundamentals may well be a laudatory term.

Unfortunately that is not what the religionists would accept. They do not compromise on the issue. Since the source and the medium are beyond doubt and apodictically clear it is already resolved, they argue, what the Muslims should do - the times and the circumstances do not matter. Adopting different rules and adapting them to certain circumstances and using reason to interpret those principles is not the way they function.

Let us cite two so called Fundamentalist Parties in Pakistan and I've chosen them for their diversity. The heterogeneity between them is indicative of the schism of approach between different groups even within the so called fundamentalist umbrella. Perhaps it is not a monolith after all. We speak of the Jamaat-e-Islami(JI) and the Tablighi Jamaat (TJ) on the issue of religion and politics.

Both these groups have their origin and moorings in the sub-continent and so have the same cultural milieu as their back drop. Surprisingly they both appeal to the same social group and recruit their members from the same base. Hence the hostility between them could be of a competitive nature. The animosity is much more complex. Let us explore the intricacies of the phenomena.

It is sometimes said that Fundamentalism renounces politics for the same reason that Sufism did the emphasis on the spiritual aspect which necessarily reduces the mundane to a much lower level of value. Perhaps the worldly authority is so remote from them that it may be an apology for not being able to acquire power-the grapes are sour when unattainable. This may apply to the Tablighi Jamaat who repudiated politics since no Islamic Political change could occur in

the Hindu dominated state of Mewat near Delhi where it took root in 1926. But the Jamaat-e-Islami does not distinguish between religion and politics or the separation of state and religion. Islam, they maintain, is a complete code of life. It is a '*deen*' rather than a theology for the entire gamut of human activity is compounded in a homogeneous way of life, subservient to the will of God. Thus they clamour for the establishment of an Islamic state on the model of the prophets, an Islamic constitution and promulgation of Islamic penal and family laws making it a political rather than a purely religious enterprise. The Jamaat-e-Islami believes that Islam can not be implemented without the power of the state and that power has to be captured. The question is how ? Maulana Maududi founder of the Jamaat-e-Islami envisages this process as 'nature, evolutionary and peaceful'. Maududi was thus not sanctioning revolutionary techniques and violent methods. But adherence to those principles can not be claimed by his successors. Their methods focus on power as its goal and this legitimizes all roads to power. Even within the jamaat there has been dissent on the subject and the newly formed Jamaat-e-Maududi vows to return to the preaching of the founder.

When the state of Pakistan became the ideal of Muslims of India Maududi was critical of localising the 'universalist ideology' of Islam. He did not encourage the establishment of the nation state of Pakistan. But when he himself moved to Lahore and demanded an Islamic constitution for the same state his credentials became dubious although most people did not question the implementation of Islamic ideals which no one cared to define.

In today's scenario, needless to say, ascension to power comes through elections. In its short political history Pakistan which was founded on the need for

Muslims to have an independent state. The people of Pakistan never voted for the Jamaat-e-Islami to rule. In December 1970 when according to Jammata-e-Islami expectations of their success were high, out of three hundred National Assembly seats Jamaat-e-Islami won only four - two from Karachi and one each from the Punjab and the Frontier Province. In the subsequent elections results have been even less. This resulted in their disillusionment with Democracy and subsequently collaboration with the military regime of Zia-ul-Haq. Primarily their shift was from the Parliament to street power and student power. At the time when the parent body suffered a humiliating defeat in the national and provincial elections the Anjuman-e-Talaba-e-Islam, the Student wing of the Jamaat-e-Islami won elections in all major college and university campuses of Pakistan. This was due to the organizational skill of the Jamaat-e-Islami. Students thus became political pawns in the game of power. Since Maududi's strength was his Islamic scholarship the Jamaat-e-Islami in its inherent character focuses on intellectualism. It thus appeals to students rather than the rustic villagers that comprise 75% of Pakistan's population. Pakistan literacy rate is 21 % (UNESCO Report 1988). Most people can not read or write. Even when they read the Holy Book they do not comprehend a word of it.

Jamaat-e-Islami is primarily urban based. It may well be noted here that the Tableeghi Jamaat's appeal on the other hands is to the common folk at the grass roots level. In Tableeghi Jamaat there is no stringent requisites for study. Only seven essays constitute their basic source material,. 'Kitab-ul-ilm' or theoretical discourse, takes the believer away from action they assert. Knowledge is imbibed by praxis or 'Daawa' or preaching and converting. The Tableeghi Jamaat is necessarily expansionist with no structures or hierarchical orders competing for position, status or

authority or acquisition of political power. The Tableeghi Jamaat could thus claim to be a religious revivalist movement. On the other hand the Jamaat-e-Islami turned into a political party needed to and did make compromises for political expediencies like a joint front with secular or left wing political parties. Also the scene of the so called religious resurgence for Jamaat-e-Islami was never confined to the mosques or madrassas i.e. traditional centers of religious institutions but seminars, conferences and research institutions.

It is interesting to note that the Jamaat-e-Islami professes no right-wing leanings. It perceives itself as the healthy mean between the two excesses of Western Capitalism and Soviet Marxism. The Islamic alternative that they offer does not appeal to the cultural Hindus converted by Sufi Saints to Islam and so although the Jamaat-e-Islami is visible and make the loudest noise their popular appeal is negligible. this reinforces using coercive measures at least in their strong holds i.e. the educational institutions which so far they have been able to guard jealously and zealously. At the University of Karachi however the Muhajir Qaumi Movement, (MQM) an equally volatile and thus a virulent ethnic group has routed the Jamaat-e-Islami.

Influences of this major so called fundamentalist group if we may say so, is misjudged and exaggerated. No one can deny its nuisance value for it can call strikes and processions at a moment's notice and thus be able to dictate. However it is more the fear rather than the actuality of the threat.

The diversity within these two so called fundamentalist groups is evident from the focus of the Tableeghi Jamaat on the individual in sharp contrast to the political manifesto of the Jamaat-e-Islami which emphasizes state power. Maulana Ilyas (1885-1994) the

founder to TJ enunciated a six demands formulae for each person. These were:

1. Recitation and meaning of '*shahadah*' (testimony) and its implications for every day life.
2. The obligation of '*salat*' (prayer) as an act of submission to the Almighty.
3. Ritual remembrance or *dhikr* of God.
4. Accordance of respect and dignity to all Muslims.
5. Inculcation of religious consciousness in self as a pre-requisite for preaching.
6. Realisation that the intention is the glory of God and not self-aggrandisement.

Perhaps that picture seems to ignore the terrorist activities that have become associated with religiosity. Militancy and resort to violence is indeed a counter phenomena-the ugly but all too visible side of obscurantist religious resurgence. Perhaps the resort to drastic measures is itself an admission of defeat of the programme. Strong measures to exhort and impose become necessary only when it is admitted that the ideology is not powerful enough to convince. Weapons become necessary when words fail. If the idea was fascinating enough or relevant enough it would be lapped up by the population without coercion of any kind. Secularization of the world indicates that radical fundamentalist religion has outlived its utility. Secularization of the world indicates fundamentalist religion has outlived its utility. Secularism has been alien to the Muslim world so far except for the Turks.

However the dichotomy within different strands of society shall continue to permeate and perplex.

The dilemma is: how can religion at gun point entice? Perhaps it is not enchantment with religion but disenchantment with the socio-political economic systems that have failed to improve the lot of the common-folk in Muslim countries. Governments are corrupt and impotent. People are on the verge of despair. Under these circumstances Muslims seek to explore an authentic Islamic identity - one that would restore their original honour and dignity even if it does not revive their lost glory.

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