

Exclusivism; Threatening Humanity, Faith and Equality

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Every Human being in this world is equal by birth and at death. Thereby every human is bound by duty, to preserve humanity's longevity and goodness. In this due course came faith; giving rise to human spirituality and religious sentiment. Every faith and philosophy promoted positivity towards one another. Created hope for equality and inclusiveness. It was religion that promotes humanity, hope and love. Every spiritual leader became an idol of peace. Their teachings were considered the manuscripts of humanity. Faith enriched humans with love, equality and hope. The tradition of inclusivity passed down from a generation to another. This cycle was preserved through culture for millennia; until the rise of 'exclusive religious superiority'. Modern ideologues of extreme beliefs sowed the seed of extremism and exclusivism deep within religion. Which embedded a tumor of religious violence and hatred. The same faiths once taught love and equality; were morphed into teachings of exclusive dominance and superiority. Humanity thus lost its need for equality; where faith slowly lost its urge for equality.

Exclusivism grows in isolations. A mind that associates a mono-ethnic community; grows fond of its belief. Such belief corrupts the human mind, seducing the mind to seek comfort in their faith, without diversity. A mind which grows in isolation can run wild with thought. Opposing notions to their thought aggravates them, giving motif to violence and hatred. This observation is recognized by eminent scholars, psychologists and theorists; who believes 'Exclusivism' is the first stage of terrorism. Elaborating on the theological concept of one's religion being superior to another; they criticize the concept of a superior god in religious teaching. Believing in the thought of a superior god; disciples of one faith can easily radicalize themselves into extremists. People who'd preserve their beliefs at the cost of humanity. According to Professor Rohan Gunaratna "a mind that grows in isolation radicalizes itself, gives birth to an extremist. And extremists give birth to religious terrorism". This statement provides clarity to the grey area on how violence is born out of exclusivity. Therefore, justifies how religion creates terrorism, irrespective of race and belief and idol.

Sri Lanka stands a prime example in exclusivism leading towards terrorism. Generations of violence and conflict, led by radical politics; promoted exclusive ideologies within the nation. The Official Language Act No. 33 of 1956 was the first major spark of exclusivism in Sri Lanka's modern history; implicating the idea of ethnic superiority. Followed by the tensions between Sinhalese and other ethnic groups; a radical seed of separatism and exclusivity came to bear fruit, leading to a 30 year-long Civil war in the country. The nation suffered at the hands of those who

wanted a separate state. The cost of conflict burdened the nation heavily and detrimentally; laying waste to a millennia-long inclusive culture. The war was later followed by the Easter Sunday bombings in 2019; proving yet again, that there was a problem deep beneath the social layer. The threat after the war was hibernating under religion; until we realized it too late.

In Sri Lanka's context; Zahran Hashim grew up in isolation. A typical mono-ethnic Kattankudi, never showed Zahran the beauty of humanity and ethno-plural coexistence. Velupillai Prabhakaran who led the 30-year long Civil war, wanted a separate nation limited only to his nation. Prabhakaran is a result of radical and exclusive politics, which sought after an elusive separate state. Ganasara Thera, who wanted Buddhism to be the only supreme belief in the country; brainwashed the youth and the clergy into hate-blinded nationalism. The reverend Thera's self-convinced campaign was motivated by the preservation of his beliefs. Therefore, it is approximate Sri Lankan culture includes extreme believers. Ones who seclude a community by provocation and manipulation. A community who isolates into exclusive religious practice; growing and grooming to become believers of an extreme ideology of religion.

Exclusivism is now being taught in Sri Lankan schools, disguised in the curricula as fundamental thought. Relevant authorities have recently come to light of such curricula, which are diverse and threateningly impactful. Attention shall too come towards the reclusive communities living in their religious realms; irrespective of age, caste, gender and status. There needs to be immediate counter-action, to lessen the effects of exclusivism preachers and their hate philosophy. The Easter Sunday tragedy became an eye-opener to this blatant misconduct. It must be ensured for the future; to not let such tragedies mark our history with blood. Humanity should be our race, equality and love must be our religion. Only then shall we conquer the vague thoughts of exclusivism; to a harmonious future.



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