

Essay on Use of Religion in Politics

Introduction

Religion and politics are two much-talked terms from the ancient period of the universe. A great portion of the world's politicians are against the use of religion in politics, and a notable portion is on its half for running the political activities. Again, lots of people are neutral in religious views when a major portion of the world people doesn't want to admit the existence of Allah or God; people within this group are generally called atheists or disbelievers.

Surprising that all sides, political and nonpolitical, pious and impious or believer or disbeliever and neutral, spend countless words on religious discussion; they try to find contrast and comparison between religion and politics; some think these two terms to be ultra paradoxical, some find somewhat similarity while others discard the idea of religion as vague opinion or concept of life and living, they consider it as a stock at the foot of ethics and some of them have termed politics (especially democratic politics) as the last shelter of the scoundrels, and finally they relate politics with religion positively or negatively. In this way, religion, all over the world, has profusely or slightly been involved with politics. Then relevantly admissible that, whether we like or dislike, now religion and politics are the two sides of the same coin. Of course, the involvement of a religion with politics is obnoxious in many cases, no doubt. But in many countries of the Arabian peninsula (middle east) and Africa, religion is directly related to state policy; that means, religion and politics maintain a juxtaposition.

What is religion?

The nature of religion is unlimited though its concept is no less limited as well. In a broader sense, religion is a belief in an invisible existence. In a clear-cut word, to believe in God or Allah or creator means the belief in religion. Again, lexically or religion may mean 'feature' or 'characteristic' of somebody or something. Therefore, to lead a well-disciplined life what man does is his religion. On the other hand, necessary action for leading a universally accepted social life may be termed as religion. In fact, 'many men many minds, doctors always disagree'. Different people and peoples observe religion from different angles. But all believers think that someone has created this universe, and this 'someone' is God or Allah.

What is politics?

Politics is a Greek word derived from 'political'. It is a process in which people live maintaining order. Politics includes almost all the components for living harmoniously in society. Under the political ruling, man has begun to live systematically. In ancient times, men live in groups, but a riot situation lingered among the ethnic groups. In their group, there were some rules and regulations and from such procedures, we have been politicized now.

The conflict between religion and politics

The conflict between religion and politics is an age-old conflict because these have been related to the very emergence of man's civilization. Religious-minded figures want that state life should be directed according to the religious belief of the majority people of the related state. At this, the minority people become displeased; they at a stage begin to protest against the state policy. Again, those who are of a minority group in a country, are the members of the majority community of another country whose statesmen and general

people also take part in the protest. Consequently, the conflict between politics and religion lingers which at last may result or results in ethnic conflicts among different peoples. On the other hand, the present world is housed in the age of science which is contributing now to the development of the world civilization. In many practical affairs of life, there has been found a contradiction between science and religion. For example, the Word (Bible) says that the sun moves around the Earth; but science says that the Earth goes around the sun, and it has been proved through various experiments. But the Biblical opinion has not been proved yet. Worth mentioning that for supporting the scientific opinion about the Earth and the sun Galileo Galilei (Italian astronomer) was given a death sentence by the Catholic Church, though afterward he was set free on the condition for not disclosing his belief. On the whole, there are multifarious causes behind the conflict.

Use of religion in politics

The use of religion in politics is more age-old than the conflict between religion and politics. Its well-defined and clear evidence may be the ancient Greek period whose most rulers and general people had faith in gods and goddesses. The contemporary Greek literature and history support this claim. Socrates had faith in God. Though he did not directly take part in politics, he was a pioneering political scientist. His death sentence was given by the contemporary rulers of Athens. On hearing the verdict of capital punishment, he, standing in the witness box, said, "I to die, you to live; which is better only God knows". Still today this religious political-minded figure is revered with the same solemnity and sublimity of old.

Emperor Ashoka (273-232 B.C. or 268-236 B.C.) led many bloody wars in life to extend his realm. By seeing the blood-shedding scenery in such a heinous Warfield, he changed totally and was converted to

Buddhism. Later, he was both a ruler and a patron (preacher) of Buddhism simultaneously.

Hazrat Mohammed (Sm.) was both a preacher of Islam and a statesman. His conquering of Mecca seconds that he was a ruler. During his lifetime there was no transition of his power. After him came Abu Bakar, Omar, Osman, and Ali to the powerful seat of Caliph subsequently; all of them ruled according to the dictation of religion (Islam).

Now some countries of the Middle-east and Africa are being ruled according to religious dictation. A profound religious influence works in Iran, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Sudan, Morocco, etc. In India, ., a religious political party, ruled for 11 years and in the upcoming Loksobha Election, they are the main rival or the nearest rival. Therefore, it is clarified that religion and politics are historically interlinked this or that way.

Bangladesh perspective

There are some political parties related to religion such as Bangladesh Jamat-e-Islam, Islamic Oikka Jhot, Bangladesh Khilafat Moslis, Khilafat Andolon, etc. Among these Jamat-e-Islam is more predominating and voluminous. Some other leaders of another Islamic party have been represented in the National Parliament. Moulana Motiur Rahaman Nizami and Ali Ahsan Mohammed Mujahid fulfilled the two portfolios of our cabinet during the BNP-led government. But all these parties are alleged by the Awami League and some other equivalent parties that they do politics in the name of religion; that they confuse the general voters by intimidating religion; that they take the chance of illiteracy and dogmatical ideas of the commoners. Now, the Awamileague-led government is trying to see the religious political parties at bay with the application of various

machinery such as forming of the Special Tribunal to bring anti-human criminals of the war of liberation in 1971 under trial, change of party constitution, and so forth. The main reason behind such doing of the Awamileague-led government is that from their observation they have found the Jamat-e-Islam as a confusing political party, and they are not Islamic. From this Awamileague viewpoint, it can be argumentatively said that Awamileague knows about Islam more or less. But it is an irony they are not following Islam! Past political records of Bangladesh say that the subject matter of religious politics comes into focus when Awamileague goes to power. During their regime, the minority remain under pressure comparatively more and for this, they bring a charge against the opposition parties, especially Islamic or religious-minded parties.

Again, Hefajat-e-Islam, a nonpolitical platform, has convened the government to protect religion from the blasphemy-like remarks of some atheist bloggers (Gonojagoron Stage activists). But alas! The Awami League government has responded to the religious leaders by assassinating them like birds; BGB, RAB, and police fall upon them like a hyena with innumerable lethal weapons at dead of night of 6 May 2013. Hefajat-e-Islam does not partake in politics. But still, Awamileague sent many of them out of the earth forever. And side by side with this very butchery incident, two TV channels, Digonto TV and Islamic TV have been banned. The UN Secretary-General Banki Mun has been stirred at this heinous action of the Bangladesh government. Then what is undoubtedly clear here in the light of the above discussion? It is clear that Awamileague itself does politics with religion, and it is over sure, damn sure because they dare not defy the ., an Indian fundamentalist party. The religious-minded parties are doing politics in the light of the religious dictation, and so they do politics by applying a religious view. Again, the Awamileague and the equivalent parties also do politics by opposing religion. It is, therefore, proved that all political sides of Bangladesh use the

name of religion for gratifying their self-interest.

Merits and demerits of religion in politics everything has its merits and demerits. The use of religion in politics has advantages and disadvantages as well. The due use of religious ideology in political thoughts is an advantage, in a word. Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait are a glaring example of it. Napoleon was converted to Islam from Christianity though he was a politician. Here it is lucid that religious life can soothe the pain of politicians. The case of the emperor Ashok is the same. Again, the objective and deliberate use of religious ideology in politics must massacre the rule of law of a state or country. That is why, the unnecessary trend of 'fatwa' must be ceased in any ruling, govt. or non govt.

Conclusion

The world superpowers, especially the USA and the UK, are mainly against the countries whose ruling system is related to religion. They generally call these countries fundamentalist. Afghanistan, Sudan, Pakistan, Mali, Iran, and others are in their bad book, especially for religious thought. But they regard Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Kuwait, Egypt as their friends. Egypt was literally under a military regime for 40 years at a stretch; Saudi Arab and Kuwait do not follow democracy; in the name of democracy now Kamal Pasa's Turkey is being governed by the Muslim Brotherhood. What is the matter? What is the reason? Interest? Oil interest? NATTO interest? If it is so, then where is our fault if Bangladesh wants to conjoin religion with politics? The capital-ist countries are always on the move of gratifying their self-interest; it is no matter to them whether we use religion in politics or not; they are glad to us if we meet their illegal demand. To conclude, though religion in personal life or politics is not a must, it is nohow noxious in any case.