

Analysing Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's Views on State and Nation

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Abstract

This paper examines the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's Views on State and Nation. He illustrates his views regarding society in a very comprehensive way rather he presents his views on society in a different perspective from the scholars in the said context. He contended that the view that people had brought the society into being was basically wrong. In his view society turned into self-born and organic. Thereafter he illustrates his views regarding social mentality which evolved over a long time. Separate historic traditions and associations brought about styles of uniformities in different parts of the world which had been instrumental in nation building. Thereafter he discusses about the soul of the nation. He called it chiti (consciousness) which is the innate nature of the nation. According to Upadhyaya, the soul of the nation, i.e., chiti (national culture) was absolute and remained unaffected by the course of history. Then the concept of dharma rajya has been explored. Thereafter Upadhyaya's opinion on the nature of the Indian state has been explained. Thus this paper examines the views of Deen Dayal Uphadhaya on state and nation.

Key Words: Chiti (National Culture), Dharma, Historic, Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, Nation Building, Rajya, Traditions.

Individual and Society

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya examined the problem of relationship between the individual and the society. Like a natural social logician he asked, "How society did came into existence¹?" He remarked that this view is totally wrong that people have brought the society

¹ Upadhyaya, Deendayal, *Integral Humanism*, Jagriti Prakashan, Noida, 1968, p. 36

in to existence. According to him “ society is an entity with its very own ‘self’, its very own lifestyles and it is sovereign being like an man or woman. It is a natural entity².” Upadhyaya considered society as a living being with body, mind and soul. He held that it had its feeling like an individual. But these feeling are not similar to individual feelings. Upadhyaya held that the intellect, feelings, energies and strength of a group have been in reality fundamentally distinct from those of individual.

Upadhyaya was, of the opinion that society and social mentality evolved over a long time. Separate historic traditions and associations brought about styles of uniformities in different parts of the world which had been instrumental in nation building. However, Deen Dayal did not accept the view that society or country originated from mere co-habitation. If that had been like this , ancient nations could not have disappeared. The various nations had disappeared like The Greek, the Egyptian, the Babylonian and the Syrian³”. In his opinion, “It became the reality that there were differences among the people that brought about the downfall of these nations. It is clear, therefore, that the source of national feeling is not always in staying on a specific piece of land, but is in something else.”

According to Upadhyaya , a nation was constituted of people living with a goal, and looking upon a particular piece of land as motherland. The two main components of a state - an ideal and a motherland- had been equally vital⁴. Upadhyaya held that the ideal of the nation was its soul. Just like a person without a soul, a soul less nation could not continue to exist.

Deen Dayal coined a term for the soul of the nation as chiti which is the essential for the nation⁵. According to him, the soul of the nation, i.e., chiti was absolute and remained unaffected by the course of history. He remarked the culture of a nation was continuously changed and enlarged by historic circumstances. But the chiti or soul of the nation was fundamental. Chiti determined the direction where the nation needs to advance culturally.

² Ibid,p. 37

³ Ibid,p. 38

⁴ Ibid,p. 40

⁵ Ibid,p. 41

According to Deen Dayal chiti was yard stick to measure the advantages and disadvantages of a specific action. Deen Dayal remarked chiti was the only premises upon which each action of a nation was to be examined. According to Deen Dayal, “.It is on the basis of this chiti (soul) that a state arises and becomes strong and virile. And it is this chiti that is manifested in the actions of every incredible man of a nation⁶.”

In justifying his standpoint Upadhyaya also took the help of Darwin’s theory that living beings develop organs as per the necessities dictated by the situations. Just like the living beings nations also produced specific organs as means to achieve national goals. In Upadhyaya’s opinion these organs like family, caste, trade union, property etc., were institutions established to fulfil the needs of the nation⁷. One may feel a bit amazed that Upadhyaya considered the caste system as an instrument to fulfil national dreams. He did not consider the caste system as a tool of social stratification and human subjugation; he regarded it as an ideal organ of the nation. Upadhyaya did not support the view that the caste system involved struggle. On the contrary, in his opinion, the four castes have been nothing but different limbs of Virat-Purusha — the great imaginary man who symbolized the Hindu society. Upadhyaya held that if conflict was essential, the body couldn't be maintained.

According to Upadhyaya there is place for caste orientation of the society. The caste system had been cause of domination, subjugation and reaction not only at the times of Aryan civilization, but also in his contemporary times. There is one aspect to ponder over why Deen Dayal glorified caste system in the society. However, Upadhyaya considered the nation superior to the state. He opined that the state was an institution created by the nation to fulfil its goals and needs. He considered state and nation cannot be equated. The state took birth to protect dharma. Deen Dayal gave the example of the Mahabharata, according to which, there was no state or king during the ancient times. The society was a self-sustaining entity following only dharma. This dharma, in turn, helped the society to remain united and protected.

According to Upadhyaya , later on dharma was declined due to the domination of greed and anger in the society. As per his opinion the ancient guardians of dharma, the rishis, were very

⁶ Ibid,p.42

⁷ Ibid,p.43

disturbed over these developments. Therefore they created a political authority through a contract. This political authority or the state was assigned the duty of protecting the society and guiding it as per dharma⁸, Thus Upadhyaya seems to have advocated a single contract theory between the civil society and the state. In Upadhyaya's opinion the state was one of the many institutions of the nation. It was not superior to all others. He held that it would be dangerous to the society if the state turned into all-powerful and dominant. This would result into a complete centralization of power⁹.

Deen Dayal never considered state to be sole representative of the nation. He argued that in India even during foreign rule, the national life continued uninterrupted and he presented examples of the Pathans, the Turks, the Mughals and the British who ruled India for many centuries. But they could not control the course of the national life. In his view :“Those nations whose life cantered in the state were finished with the end of the state. On the other hand, where (the) state was not believed central to its life, the nation survived in spite of the transfer of political power¹⁰.”

Dharma Rajya

Deen Dayal sated state must have some specific goals. Further the goal should be more important than the state. Upadhyaya argued that as a watchman was not considered greater than the treasure he was supposed to protect, so was the case with the state. The state was created to safeguard the nation and to produce such environment in which the ideals of the nation would be achieved.

As stated earlier, in Upadhyaya's opinion, the ideals of the nation constituted chiti that was synonymous to the soul of an individual. The laws which were essential for maintaining and the soul of the nation were termed by Upadhyaya as dharma. He argued it was the supreme repository of the nation's soul. “If dharma is destroyed, the nation perishes”, remarked Upadhyaya¹¹. However, according to him, dharma is more important than religion. Worshiping God was only a part of dharma. According to him, wars were fought in the West

⁸ Ibid,p.44

⁹. Ibid,p.47

¹⁰. Ibid,p.47

¹¹.Ibid,p.49

in the name of religion. He considered battles 'of' religion and battles 'for' dharma, the two different things. Religion, to him, was a creed or a sect. On the other hand, "that which sustains is dharma," remarked Upadhyaya¹². Upadhyaya held that the basic principles of dharma were eternal and universal. He, however, opined that the execution of these principles might differ according to different time, place and circumstances. These principles should be adapted to changing scenario. Upadhyaya remarked that even democracy should be under dharma. People should work in accordance with the 'innate law' of the nation¹³.

The contradiction in Upadhyaya's thought could be found in his conceptualization of the Dharma Rajya and in his opposition to the concept of secular state. Upadhyaya mentioned that Dharma Rajya is not like a theocratic state. According to him, a theocratic state was the one where a particular caste or religion and its prophet ruled supreme. People belonging to the minority group were treated as secondary citizens. He held that the Holy Roman Empire was based on this concept. In Upadhyaya's opinion, a Dharma Rajya was an ideal system. There was complete freedom to worship according to one's own religion. The freedom to follow one's religion necessitates tolerance for other religions. Upadhyaya held that Dharma Rajya provides religious freedom and it wasn't a theocratic state. In his opinion: "Dharma Rajya accepts the significance of religion for peace, happiness and progress of (the) individual. Therefore, the state has the responsibility to maintain an environment in which every individual can follow the religion of his choice and live in peace¹⁴." One wonders how could Upadhyaya with such an idea of Dharma Rajya oppose the idea of a 'secular state'. Upadhyaya considered secular state only an imitation of the western thought. The religion was equated with dharma. Upadhyaya opined that this was a wrong conception. According to him state could not exist without dharma and even it could not go against dharma. He never supported the idea of secular state. Moreover he contended that secularism and state were antithetical to each other.

The logic of Dharma Rajya revolved around the belief that such a system would provide freedom to all religions. Although Upadhyaya explained it differently. A secular state could never be a state that was opposed to religious practices or dharma, From this apparent

¹².Ibid,p.50

¹³ Ibid,p.55

¹⁴ Ibid,p.56

dichotomy it seems that Upadhyaya was not very clear what he meant by dharma. Perhaps he actually meant Hindutva by dharma. Upadhyaya held that in a Dharma Rajya, the state was not absolute powerful. It was subject to dharma. Sovereignty was in dharma. Upadhyaya opined that dharma was superior to all the institutions of the state, i.e., the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. He argued that the judiciary had to work according to dharma¹⁵. Upadhyaya opined that dharma was also superior to the people of the state. People had no right to oppose dharma. He held that if the government allowed people to go against dharma then that government was a government of 'thieves'. "Even the general will cannot oppose dharma" maintained Upadhyaya¹⁶.

In this manner he put everything below dharma. Even he said if a government went against the concept of dharma then it was not needed. As per this logic he opposed the idea of plebiscite in Kashmir. According to him, "National unity is our dharma. A decision regarding this cannot be made by plebiscite. This decision has already been taken by Nature. Elections and majority decide as to who will make the Government. What the Government will do will be decided by dharma¹⁷." Even he remarked if the people of Kashmir wanted to leave India it would go against dharma.

According to Deen Dayal Upadhyaya dharma was not always with the majority. He remarked that it was not right to consider that that democracy meant government of the people, for the people and by the people. What is the good of the people would be decided by dharma. Upadhyaya opined that a government for the people meant a Government for dharma. It was the responsibility of the Government to maintain and establish Dharma Rajya¹⁸.

Nature of the Indian state

Deen Dayal remarked the constitution of India did not generate the feeling of a nation therefore he advocated complete revision of this constitution. He held that Indians were the product of one nation and one society. They did not enjoy any special rights on the basis of .language, province, caste, religion and others. He said as there are states but there is single

¹⁵ Ibid,p.57

¹⁶ Ibid,p.58

¹⁷ Ibid,p.59

¹⁸ Ibid,p.60

citizenship in India. States were not given the right to separate from the Indian union. Even the power to demarcate and redemarcate the boundaries of states and to select the names of states is vested with parliament of India. Upadhyaya held that, despite all these arrangements, the Indian Constitution contained the federal structure. He opined that in a federation, the Constitution should consider the states as fundamental powers and the Centre as merely a federation of states. According to Upadhyaya, an ideal federal Constitution of India is contrary to the unity and indivisibility of the nation. The nation was considered as a composite unit. It was not composed of autonomous and independent parts. Therefore Upadhyaya opined that the Indian Constitution should be unitary instead of federal¹⁹.

According to Upadhyaya a unitary state did not mean autocracy and concentration of all powers at the Centre level. The various local bodies at the state level would also have sufficient powers. In unitary state decentralization of powers should be there. Upadhyaya considered such an arrangement very helpful in maintaining dharma. Moreover he opined state should not interfere in the working of local self governments. As there are so many historical evidences which clearly show that Indian rulers never interfered in the affairs of such type of institutions. Thus it is evident that he supported a limited state²⁰. Thus this paper examines the various issues related with individual , society state and nation.

¹⁹ Ibid,pp.52-53

²⁰ Ibid,p. 63

References

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6. Ibid,p. 42
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- 8. Ibid,p.44**
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