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ENLIGHTENMENT, THE HINDUISM AND MARX

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Abstract:

The philosophy and determinism of Marx are very simple and without any serious depth. The thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis of his philosophy and thoughts emphasizing the power and rights to the working-class or the Rule of Proletariats is nothing but the presenting of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* differently. It is born out of the hypothesis of surplus value developed out of chronological and dialectical acquisitiveness. This philosophy already exists in Hinduism long before even Marx was born in the form of “the law of *Karma Siddhantha*.”

Introduction:

For scholars, activists and intellectuals, it has become a modern trend to mock and criticize Hindu philosophy and culture. With this fashion, they try to hide their ignorance and half-baked ideas and try to show their liberal and modern sense and sensibilities. It is their illusion that with their theatrics and ploy, they can diminish the glory and beauty of Hinduism.

Key-word: 1-enlightenment, 2-renaissance, 3-rationalist, 4- Gravity, 5-*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, 6 –transcends, 7- *Atma*, 8-Sanskrit, 9- democratization, 10- Manifesto.

The term, "enlightenment" had been used by some philosopher and artist in the 18th century in Europe and America. It started out of the renaissance age and continued until the beginning of the 19th century. People of this enlightenment era were convinced that they were emerging out, from centuries of darkness and ignorance into a new dawn, enlightened by reason, science, love and respect for humanity. Among the philosophical-rationalist, two prominent names Descartes and Spinoza can be included and among the political philosophers Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and

Marx can be included in this category. Due to the discoveries in the field of science of natural laws, self-confidence also increased in the society, which was also an equally important feature. For example, Newton discovered the Law of Gravity and Galileo discovered the movement of planets, the moons and the stars. This newfound knowledge destroyed the fanatic and blind world of knowledge built by ignorant armies of religious preachers.

However, Hindus used and preached enlightened thousands of years ago in the form of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*.

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (Sanskrit: *vasudhaiva kutumbakam*. From "vasudh?" the earth; "va" = indeed is; and "kutumbakam", family ;) is a Sanskrit phrase that is often cited to assert that the whole world is one single family. The earliest reference to this phrase is found in the Hitopadesha, a collection of parables and is part of all the Hindu philosophies

Enlightenment was more than a set of fixed ideas. It is an attitude, a method of thought also. It was a desire to re-examine and questioned all popular ideas and values and to explore new ideas for the welfare of humankind. Thinkers and intellectuals related to the notion of enlightenment and considered reason to be the most common source. It influenced the thinking of the common person, but most of them believed that the average persons' reason has been influenced or rather corrupted by the environmental influence and especially by the un-necessary influence and involvement of the church and other western religions, in the day-to-day life. Churches were considered the most corrupting of influences and held responsible by them that transcends and corrupts reason.

However, Hindus have a different message for humanity:

aya? bandhuraya? n?ti ga?an? laghuc?tas?m /

ud?racarit?n?m tu vasudhaiva ku?umbakam //

Discrimination proverb "this one is a relative; this other one is a stranger" is for the mean-minded. For those who are known as magnanimous, the entire world constitutes but a family.

The above verse is also found V.3.37 of Panchatantra (3rd century BCE), and in the 1.3.71 of Hitopadesha - (12th century CE).

The account is not just about tranquility and concord among the civilization in the world, but also about a reality that someday the whole humankind has to live together as a family. This is the rationale behind the belief of Hindus that any power in the world, big or small cannot have its individual way, rejecting others.

The enlightened were those thinkers and intellectuals who had escaped religious influence- and those who had escaped the biased and prejudiced judgments of religion. It was only by the exercise of reason that the damaged caused by religion can be undone and one can discover or uncover the true nature that lies waiting to be revealed beneath the layer of prejudices and preferences. Although the thinkers and intellectuals who believed in enlightenment were successful in convincing the people that the church was the principal institution which has enslaved and ruined them, religious preachers, themselves fail to renounce the religion altogether fearing reprisal and losing of benefits. The shift

was not from faith to non-belief but from faith to deism. Deists believed that the power who had created the universe, allowed it to function as a clock without divine intervention. Deists believed that human achievements and happiness should be aimed at this life only itself and not at the unknown life to come in future.

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam is a philosophy that nurtures and promotes an understanding that the whole world is one family. This philosophy tries to cultivate an understanding that the whole of humanity is one family. It is a Hindu philosophy, emanating from a spiritual understanding that the whole of humanity is made of one life energy. If, the *Paramatma* (God) is one how an *Atma* (Soul) can be different? If *Atma* is different, how can it ultimately be dissolved in the *Paramatma*? It is a Sanskrit phrase, spread, and adopted by Hindus, meaning that the whole earth is one family.

As mentioned earlier, the first word is made up of three Sanskrit words - *Vasudha*, *Eva* and *Kutumbakam*. *Vasudha* means the earth, *Eva* means emphasizing and *Kutumbakam* means a family. It means that the whole earth is just one family. The concept of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* originates from Hitopadesha. Hindu writers and scholars like Jaidev, Chanakya, Manu, Maharshi Ved Vyas, Goswami Tulsidas, etc., can be kept in this category.

The wave of changes that swept Europe also influenced the religion. The supremacy, power and prestige of the church and the Pope were also questioned and challenged. People no longer believed in God's blessings in human affairs. Prior to the enlightenment principle and before the discovery of natural laws, people believed that event and thing that happened on this earth was the direct blessings of God. However, when scientists and scholars like Marx, Charles Darwin etc., established that it was not God but nature itself caused changes, man's faith in God, declined and religious obligations were no longer the important concern of the people. People who believed in the enlightenment focused only on man instead of paying any attention to God and the Church. Famous poet Alexander Pope wrote a beautiful couplet on the changing attitude of man, "Know then thyself presume not God to scan."

Marx believed that with the faith in enlightenment and increased and changing knowledge would increase man's production powers. Even machines were not merely tools of production but a powerful idea spreading enlightenment that could transform the nature and defeat scarcity. Marx and enlightenment thinkers supported the democratization of knowledge and importance of the spread of knowledge for the forward movement and growth of society. Knowledge should be used to wipe out ignorance and abolishing the division in the society. The spread of knowledge should encourage, creating a deep-seated democracy, in which everyone has an equal share of political and economic rights.

"What may have pleased him a lot is that over three-fifths of his recommendations in The Communist Manifesto are already in place in most actually existing democracies. Progressive income tax, national central banks, state-run communication services, cultivating waste lands, right to work, eradicating town and country differences, providing free education and, finally, banning child labour comprise the bulk of "communist" policies advocated in the Manifesto. Are we all then Marxists, at least three fifths?"

(‘We are all Marxists: Liberal Democrats have understood The Communist Manifesto better than communists’, Dipankar Gupta, Times of India, Edit Page, India, June 16, 2018, 2:00 am IST.TOI)

In the works of Karl Marx, some basics of enlightenment, self-realization, modernity, humanity maturity of mind through motivation and struggle towards freedom can be seen. He saw capitalism as an evil system that exploits and repress labour for individual profit and denial to man basic and human rights from a productive force through the individual control and ownership of means. He further assumed that the bourgeois class and capitalism were a step necessary in the movement for man's self-realization toward communism. The conflict between the social and economic formation of capitalism helps the enlightenment belief of self-realization, believed Marx. It is through the creation of polycentric class concerns, with the use of human reasons in understanding the nature, causes and source of exploitation as private ownership of the means of production that the workers can create for themselves, free from all type of exploitations. In Marx's concept of exploitation free world, there is no place for state and state powers and people are enlightened to govern them. This is nothing but Hindu concept *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, perhaps lifted by him.

Communist regimes failed Marx. Perhaps Democrats are more Marxist than Stalin's Russia, Mao's China, Tito's Yugoslavia, Ceausescu's Romania, Castro's Cuba or Hoxha's Albania. This is because, unlike these communist regimes, which used faction, conspiracy, massacres and bloody coup, Marx supported in engaging over the workforce through arguments. In The Communist Manifesto, Marx said that communists should not shape a separate political party different from other working-class parties and not set up the sectarian ideology of their own. If one were to observe this parameter, strictly it would debar all communist systems and most communist parties too.

The legacy of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* defines in totality to guide the political and moral doctrines of modern-democratic and secular society. All the branch of learning such as art, politics, moral values, literature, racial relations etc.,hasbeen influenced by its upshot. Enlightenment philosophers were the first and the most vocal ones to work for *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* knowingly or unknowingly that it was a Hindu concept and subsequently dignity of human rights. Before the arrival of such thinkers, in Europe, in the social hierarchy, men occupied positions by virtue of their birth. Enlightenment thinkers like J.S.Mill, Rousseau and Emmanuel Kant stressed the need for a change in the way people were governed. These ideas sowed the seeds of the idea of democracy in the United States, Western Europe, India and non-Islamic countries of Asia and Africa. Although Marxist thinkers denounced these democracies as "bourgeois democracies" because the democracies rejected Marxism but they were successful democracies, where the ballot and not the bullet decided the power and delivered enlightenment.

Friedrich Engels (Marx's closest associate and analyst) said in 1895 that Marxists should understand killings, street battles and gunfights are not acceptable. Elections are the best system to achieve the enlightenment. The bullets,as the formula adopted by communists, cannot be allowed. This clearly promises loyalty to the elected voting system, which was for long rejected by recognized communist regimes in the name of the so-called bourgeois challenge to avert attention from class struggles. Actually, communists rejected Marx but adopted by capitalists.

Enlightenment also helped communism to grow. Marx wrote the Communist Manifesto in the 1840s, which was adopted by many governments. Ironically, communism was responsible for crushing democracies and human right. Erstwhile USSR and some east European countries and China adopted communism. However, baring China communism failed everywhere. Even the disintegration of USSR and East European countries were the result of cruelty and violation of human rights in the communist rule or not adhering to *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*.

Besides political ideologies, struggle for human rights, the enlightenment thinkers were also responsible for big success in the field of psychoanalysis. For most of the modern psychoanalytical theories, credit goes to Sigmund Freud. However, Freud, Nietzsche and Marx who do not belong to the age of the enlightenment but they tried to implement the enlightenment legacy. Nevertheless, the contribution of Marx was unique as he advocated the right of common man.

Although Marx was a bitter critic of Hinduism, he very intelligently stole a number of ideas from Hinduism. Enlightenment is one such philosophy stolen by Marx from Hinduism. In Hinduism, this philosophy is named as *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*.

Many of today's self-styled 'enlightened thinkers' have actually had little regard for the others' freedom of conscience and principal of autonomy that underpinned enlightenment thoughts. Actually, the concept of enlightenment thought was very strongly advocated in Hinduism in the form of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*. As mentioned, the concept of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* was first time discussed in "Hitopadesha" a collection of Sanskrit prose and verse, written by Narayan, in 12th century A.D.

In the name of enlightenment, 'the notable shifts in the recent history of the world' as various accounts put it, has positively had its misuses, which use it from the pogrom to senseless consumerism. It now has an out-and-out army of self-styled activism. Militant secularists, new secular atheists, human right champions, Non- Government Organizations, environment activists turned terrorists ...each in turn, draw explanation from the logical emanations. In addition, each in their turn will deceive it.

However, all these enlightened, from the obsessively anti-religious but obsessively, were pro-science. Marx pretended to follow scientific knowledge, but had become the prisoner of freedom itself, that vital enlightenment inclination has been recognized as the foe of the people.

Enlightenment thoughts of Marx and others continue, stand in denial to such oppressive, debilitating tendencies. Our freedom of ethics, to our freedom to choose, how to live - which often lies, ravaged. Lip service duly paid, he suggests some corrections. Marx's confused and beguiled argument, smuggled under enlightened grab, is not distinctive. We are not rational a persistently erratic set of barely aware interest, neither can we trust ourselves, nor can we be trusted. However, enlightenment cannot be separated from the social struggles underpinning its triumph at the end of the eightieth century, so its degeneration - the 'destruction of reason' as one thinker was to call it - cannot be separated from the history of bourgeois reaction that succeeded it.

The Communist Manifesto was appropriated and claimed to be adopted by Stalin and others of his breed. Consequently, all the crimes and sins of these leaders were shifted to Marx, as if he was the original sinner and their teacher-mentor. Even a scholar of John Maynard Keynes's fame lost his scholarly strength on account of the wrongs of these communist dictators and criticized Marx in a very violent way.

For example, he compared Marx's Capital to the Koran as being "dreary and out of date".(Dipankar Gupta, *idem*)

He does not include the Bible in that category, giving the notion that the Christian holy book rests much higher than Islamic senseless sermonizing and Marx himself was a Christian. He further wrote that Bolshevism was a result of the "strange disposition of Slavs and Jews". Marx excites hate because Stalin, Lenin Mao, Castro and such like, swore in his name.

"Marx never knew Stalin, Mao or others like them and yet their errors are heaped on Marx's grave; a clear case of the sins of the sons visiting their father." (Dipankar Gupta, *idem*)

Conclusion:

The aim of the intellectual, scientific, literary and reformist movement of the fourteenth to nineteenth centuries was humanism and equality. This movement aimed to connect and influencing every branch of knowledge, learning, culture and philosophy with classical antiquity and this branch of knowledge was clearly Hinduism. Christian Humanism, Marxism humanism, Literary humanism, Cultural humanism, Political Humanism, Religious Humanism, Reformist Humanism, Marxist Humanism etc aim at the welfare of humanity but long before them Humanism of Hinduism was doing and preaching much more than these new floating humanism.

Ramarajya or *Gramarajya* or *Karmikarajya* or *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* or *Karma Siddhantha* etc also aim at humanism and nobody can deny that they are the oldest principles and philosophies of humanism and influenced all movements of humanism. The struggle and fight for humanism are never-ending and continuum. It appears repeatedly in different forms and names. The enlightenment of Marx was also a new name. It was just like the old wine in a new bottle. But he very intelligently gave the message that his philosophy is a struggle aiming at enforcing humanism and enlightenment. He very wisely camouflaged that his enlightenment is scissoring of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*.

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