

## **In the Depths of God's Mind**

### **Fr. Varghese Paul, SJ.**

I often read the magazine of rationalists entitled "Vivekpanthi" (meaning Rationalist). In it I get often inspiring articles about blind faith and about make believe things in the name of religion. When I read "Vivekpanthi" I feel that only three types of rationalist people write in it: atheist, believing rationalists and those rationalists who hold that they can not know anything about God; let us call this type agnostics.

With apologies to rationalists let me say that some of the articles in 'Vivekpanthi' seem to me childish to say the least. A writer in the June 2013 issue of 'Vivekpanthi' says "A concrete truth is that even if there is a god, he does come to give sight to your blind daughter and even if God does not exist, your beautiful and intelligent daughter will have no difficulty to find a job or a life-partner".

The ideas or the thought pattern of the writer is very clear. "There is no god". But it is not full stop. There is doubt. So he says, "If there is god ....." Here the writer's idea of god is clear. In the words of the writer, god is nothing more than the private property of man! A god is one who dances to his tune and if god does not dance to his tune, then, there is no god!

Let us put aside the challenges and the questions of the atheist rationalists. Even then we see that there are no cogent arguments, no logic in what the writer says. For, his knowledge or idea about god is illusory, nothing more than the thought or imagination of a man's limited intelligence. When a basic premise is wrong then there is no possibility of faultless arguments or of right conclusion. Still this types of rationalists claim to have knowledge of everything. Let me clarify my point with a concrete example.

M. Scott Peck is an American writer and psychologist. The name of his book is "People of My Lai". In the book written after much research the author has narrated the story of merciless massacre in a small Vietnam village called My Lai.

During the Vietnam War there was an attack on a group of American soldiers. The Americans suffered heavy losses. According to the information which the American commander got, the attack on American military personnel came from My Lai village and the ordinary folk of the village have fled away. American military personnel entered the village and mercilessly butchered anyone and everyone they met in the village and finally they burnt down the whole village!

During the investigation Scott Peck learnt that the Americans had actually observed the My Lai Village for the attack and according to the information gathered, the guerrilla combatants of Viet Cong were in the village and others have fled from the village. But later investigation proved that the earlier findings were wrong. Most villagers have not gone away from the village. So in destroying the village, the American army has butchered many innocent people in the village.

Scott Peck meeting the American soldiers who have returned from Vietnam War learnt that the Americans destroyed the entire village so that there may not be any reprisal from the village. The

Americans believed that even the children in the village could be soldiers with bomb attached to their waists.

Scott Peck's investigation conclusively proved that based on the information later received, the American Army's observation and the information received were totally false. All the same, commands were executed and innocent people including children and women were massacred and the village burned down.

Now, let us come to our point. The real situation of the My Lai is one thing that ordinary people of the village were leading fearlessly normal life. But the secret information received by the American Army Commander was totally different information and hence his decision to totally destroy the village. A decision taken on false information proved to be wrong and consequently the mass killing of innocent people took place!

Now those like the atheists and me who speak about god have specific knowledge or understanding of god. The American commander believed that the secret information received by him to be true and took his decision to massacre the people of My Lai. Similarly the atheists on the basis of their understanding of god as true make statements about god. I also deny the existence of the god about whom the atheists speak and write about. God cannot be limited within the walls of the atheists' intelligence. God is beyond all talks of man. God is beyond not only of atheists' words but beyond even his/her wildest imagination. We can speak about god only one thing for certain that, we cannot know God with 100% accuracy and truth.

Whatever we speak about God with our intelligence is limited to our human language. Bible says through prophet Isaiah: "My thoughts", says the Lord, "are not like yours, and my ways are different from yours. As high as the haven are above the earth, so high are my ways and thoughts above yours". (Is 55: 8-9).

The rationalist atheists are not prepared to accept what the Bible says that, human words and thinking are totally different from God's ways and action. For, as stoic philosopher Epitetus has said, "It is impossible for a man to learn what he thinks he already knows". A rationalist atheist cannot accept the fact that beyond the horizon of rationalism there is an existence, a power, a Being. The rationalist atheist is not ready to accept a reality of a divine being called God or Bhagvan. Hence the rationalists believe in themselves as being as all knowing god!

All who believe in one or other religion hold that God is LOVE. When we say, "God is love", it means first of all, as Bible says, God loved us first. Accepting God as love leads us to our love for God and for one-another. In other words, our love is born from God's love for us. We human beings cannot add to or detract from God's love. For God's love is infinite, unlimited, unconditional, and eternal.

A child may go away from the love of his/her parents. Similarly a human person in the name of rationalism can with the god-given freedom may wander away from the unconditional love of God. A rationalist may think that he/she is not within God's love; but is far away from God's love. But his/her love and good will for others keep him/her pulling towards God.

Changed On: 16-03-2017  
Next Change: 01-04-2017  
Copyright Fr. Varghese Paul, SJ – 2017