

## Theravada Buddhist Opinion on Religious Fundamentalism

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### Introduction

The religious fundamentalism is a broad concept and this term has been assigned different meanings. However, we can understand at the beginning of religions, religious phenomena have been controlled by human thoughts and belief. Here, the important point to note that religious concepts provide great contribution to the oneness of human society. As a matter of fact, in the cause of time, religious concepts have become a great tragedy to human society. Today what we experience in the name of religions, it is only about religious tension and religious fundamentalism. It would be reasonable to say that each and every religious tension precedes some sort of psychological problems in human mind rather than the issue of religious thoughts. To assume that, the Buddha points out upādāna (clinging) is the rigorous psychological agony in the cause of psychological distress of man. We can understand early Buddhist texts very often take into account the term; *idaṃ eva saccaṃ; moghaṃ aññiṃ* (this alone is true, all else is false). In this regard, Buddha accepts the facts that cling to any thoughts, ideas, opinions and personal beliefs that will lead a person for religious bigotry. Hence, in this research, we will discuss the important of Buddhism as a form of religion that does not turn to fundamentalism throughout its history. However, support the view of Pali discourses and secondary sources, the main attention of the research is based on the investigation of religious fundamentalism. In this regard, the study takes into account how psychological issue turns to fundamentalism rather than problem of religious principles.

### Research Problem

The previous researchers have paid attention to religious fundamentalism. However, they have discussed, basic protocols of religious fundamentalism base on one's own race, nationality, ethnicity or political ideology... (Karunadasa. 2013.159). Moreover, Ercan Yilmaz accepts religious fundamentalism manifests itself in two ways: nonviolent intolerance and violent intolerance... (Vol.2.2006).

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in the face of such opinions, we can understand religious fundamentalism is a very complex issue. Nevertheless, it is possible to understand among the scholars have not common agreements on the root cause of religious fundamentalism. However, the present research will take into examining the psychological tension of mind works as root cause of religious fundamentalism.

## Discussion

As a matter of fact, teaching of the Buddha is liberal. From the history of Buddhism, Buddhist teaching has been divided to different traditions; Theravada, Mahayana, and Tibetan so forth. In accordance with the history of Buddhism, we do not find evidence which asserts Buddhism has been flourished under the influence of fundamentalism. According to Buddhist discourses, we can observe, Buddha constructively shows the erroneous thoughts in non Buddhist religious traditions. Nowhere, we will find any supportive reference where the Buddha asserted his charismatic leadership in the name of convert the people. The Buddha's position on religious concepts and opinions has been taken into account in Kalama Sutta (AN.1.188). However, Buddha admitted the importance of ethical basis of religious principles. According to Kalama Sutta the Buddha asserted the importance of critical thinking and critical observation for the progress of life. It is further we can find another example in Majjhimanikāya parable of the raft. Here the Buddha explains the purpose of his teaching is to eliminate suffering and realization of Nibbāna. In the same discourse, Buddha further shows the uneducated person learns his teaching for worldly purposes (*moghapurisā dhammaṃ pariyāpuṇanti... itivādappamokkhānisamsā* (MN.1.133)). Here, we can understand root cause of religious fundamentalism psychologically generates in the mind. Then, it effects to the society. In this regard, Karunadasa suggests that the Dhamma taught by the Buddha has only relative value, relative to the realization of the goal (2013.160). Another interesting point, Buddhism accepts the oneness of people and their diversity at the cultural level. We do not find any evidence where the Buddha compares his teaching with other religious teaching. Aforesaid evidence suggests Buddhism has not given any support for fundamentalism.

## Conclusion

We can argue that we are living in a multicultural society, where there is pluralism. When we live in a multicultural society, religious harmony and religious coexistence is an important psychological need. As we already explained, grasping views and thoughts (especially in religious context) would lead to tension among the people. To battle against religious fundamentalism, wise thinking and wise reflection on the other religious opinion is important. Nevertheless, in short, symptoms of fundamentalism psychologically generates in the mind.

**Keywords:** Fundamentalism, Psychology, Buddhism, Coexistence, Buddha

## References

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