

PARADISE LOST

*“Farewell happy fields,
Where joy forever dwells:
hail horrors, hail Infernal world,
and thou profoundest hell,
Receive thy new possessor”*

The petrifying Satan's soliloquy in the timeless epic Paradise Lost, has been churning our collective intellect since the morbid narrative of deglobalisation has become a catastrophic reality. Angel Raphael had prophesied the fall of man which, it seems is recurring. Mankind, like the fallen angel is expelled them from the Garden of Eden aka Paradise to languish in hell. Seduced by the forbidden fruit, shackled to hubrical sins, mankind is once again on the slippery slope of capital vices... Avaritia, Superbia, Ira, Invidia. Needless to mention abyss is the destination.

Yes, you got me right, the year 2016 witnessed two shocking events that will cast cascading effects on the future of mankind. It started with the exodus of United Kingdom from the European Union aka Brexit, following a referendum held on the 23rd of June 2016. Next was Donald Trump's stunning victory. His victory has left the entire fraternity of philosophers, liberals & utopian ideologues equally bewildered & clueless.

The new order of deglobalisation and xenophobia has begun and is likely to stay.....seems 'Intolerance' is back. Intolerance, it appears is an ageless monster. The civilised society may claim to have sung endless requiems over its grave but the fact remains, it's still alive and kicking. "Resurrected" from the grave, reincarnating in a different form each time, from 'Intolerance' to 'Racism' to 'Bigotry' to 'Fanaticism' to 'Nationalism'.....Intolerance has celebrated many Easters & Paschal Triduum.

World War-II was perhaps the most shameless sanguinary genocide mankind had ever witnessed. It had left both mankind and humanity equally wounded and scarred, pondering over the futility of war and irrelevance of nationalism and intolerance. Post war endorsed an era of fledgling democracies that embraced the open world order. Hallowed Constitutions were laid, Protocols were rewritten that upheld the taller ideals of liberalism, tolerance, multiculturalism and pluralism allowing global trade & immigration to transcend the humble national boundaries. Globalisation was resurrected. Slowly it generated abundance, prosperity and opulence. Populace gained affluence worldwide celebrating liberal ideals and opulence en-masse in joie-de-vivre. Economic disparity started decreasing. This was in affirmation to Kuznets's hypothesis. Simon Kuznets's magical 'U' curve hypothesis that inequality would innately decrease in advanced phases of capitalist development seemed to be true.

Subsequently, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Francis Fukuyama in his magnum-opus "The End of History and the Last Man" had prophesied that the advent of liberal democracy may harbinger the endpoint of mankind's ideological evolution and its universalization as the zenith of human governance. The post-war liberal order that fecundates human dignity & universal brotherhood would be recorded as 'The Paradise' in the annals of human evolution.

Unfortunately, today, these two optimistic theses of Kuznets & Fukuyama seem to be largely illusory. The proverbial utopian end of history seems to be a far cry of evangelists. Far from the end, history seems to be repeating itself. The somber prophesy of Marx in his commentary "The Communist Manifesto" seems to be a blatant reality. Marx in his narrative had berated the divides in the society.....the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the rich & the poor, the capitalists & the labour, finally reducing a large mass to labour, a commodity governed by commodity fetishism.

Today, 'Xenophobia' is the new gospel, 'Bigotry' the commandment and 'Fanaticism' the new pontiff. Intolerance walks tall over the pantheon of utopian ideals. Humanity genuflects before intolerance in veneration. Liberals perhaps, have lost their plot. So where is the fault line? Well, probably there is no absolute answer to this, albeit the long narratives by eminent thinkers.

Often the intellectual debate about the ideal solution to globalization & tolerance is based on an abundance of prejudices and paucity of facts and analysis. Well, it's true that globalization as an utopian ethic is under threat. Equally true is the fact that democracy has lost its narrative. It has been hijacked by the shameless mathematical algorithm of numbers, where the crass and myopic number game is being used to expunge liberalism & pluralism. It has lost its moral fabric of liberty, equality, fraternity & brotherhood. It's a tool in the hands of supposedly Holier-than-thou, 'Messiahs', aka politicians to promote crony capitalism

that replaces meritocracy by nepotism. It has become an elite's rhetoric, who lost in the hubris of their illusory self-righteousness have rendered themselves irrelevant to the common populace. Mankind, perhaps need to revisit & redefine democracy in its real sense. Needless to say globalization and liberal democracy have to co-exist. Globalization without liberal democracy is a hallucination. Swami Vivekananda in his address on the 11th of September 1893 at the 'The World Parliament of Religions', Chicago had hailed to America "Sectarianism, bigotry, and its horrible descendant, fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful earth. But their time is come; and I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning in honor of this convention may be the death-knell of all fanaticism." His words today are more relevant than ever before.

Well, can my xenophobic American brethren hear the harrowing lament of **Libertas**, the Roman goddess, whom the **Statue of Liberty** actually represents? She holds a torch above her head and is seen welcoming the immigrants at the New York harbour. A plaque on its pedestal reads Emma Lazarus sonnet that welcomes the refugees and immigrants,

*"Give me your tired, your poor,
your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
the wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"*

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