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A SIMPLE PORTRAYAL ON SUBALTERNITY

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Subalternity can be referred to Marginalized groups like, indigenous people in various class in the society. These people lack power and are oppressed by the dominant classes. This is found by the Marxist thinkers called Antonio Gramsci. This idea, especially shaped by postcolonial theory.

In the post colonial theory it is said that people who belong to lower class are considered as Marginalized in the society. Generally speaking Antonio Gramsci referred to slaves, peasants, religious groups, women in different races etc. Subalternity never encourages humanity.

Let me refer to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak who being an Indian scholar, literary theorist and a Feminist Critic, speaks about Subalternity. She was one of the Professors of Columbia University, established an Institute for Comparative Literature and Society, speaks on Subalternity. One of her best known essays was "Can the Subaltern Speak?" She analyzed how the British framed a heroic act of "saving the Brown women from Brown Men" by ignoring the women's voices and their agency. She also brings to notice, the Hindu Widow's Sati – the voices of the women themselves were absent, overshadowed by the Colonial and Patriarchal narratives.

In social theory especially in the work of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, refer to people who are socially, politically and economically Marginalized to the extent that they have limited or no access to power and whose voice is often silenced within the dominant historical, political and cultural narratives.

Examples: Under Colonialism - Colonized peasants, tribal communities, enslaved populations.

In South Asia - Marginalized Caste groups, Adivasis, Landless Laborers.

In gender Context - Women Denial

In Global labor Context - Migrant Workers, Informal sector workers. But Spivak's famous question is "Can the Subaltern Speak?" She is not saying that they are literally mute, She means the structures of power prevent their voices from being recognized within the official discourse. This happens in every organization, institutions, politicians, government officials and so on. Well talented persons

opinions, decisions, plans, ideas etc. ignored and not exposed to the society. This is said to be a kind of Subalternity.

Next a person can be spiritual subaltern by practicing indigenous rituals called “Supersition.” Orthodox vs “Folk”, “high religion vs “ magic” “True Spirituality vs Superstitious practices. Many false practices that are existing in the society can never make a person to develop healthy personality. Forced Marriages, Child marriages, Dowry system, Caste discrimination, partiality, untouchability, Gender inequality Sexism, Child Labour and so on, will lead to become a subaltern.

Spivak used the abolition of “sati” as example, and how colonial and post colonial societies represent Subaltern. She argued that British famed the abolition as “White Man save brown women from brown men”there by silencing the Indian women’s voices.

She high lights that situation as “double displacement” and said that voices of women were affected and silenced and their experiences were not heard and mis-presented by the colonial powers and local male figures.

God wants none of us to be subaltern. According to the Bible (Genesis Chapter 1 verses 26 and 27) God took Six days to create this beautiful world and on the Seventh Day , He rested . God created Man and women in His own image to rule and enhance this beautiful world. And He said “Be fruitful and full this world with goodness and have dominion over the creation. (Genesis Chapter 1 verses 28.) Then how did the become subaltern? God never made human being slave. In fact He gave access to His creation. When Adam and Eve listened to the devil ‘ s instruction, they became subaltern to Devil. Because of this act the whole humanity came under the spell of Subalternity. (Genesis Chapter 2 verses 15, 16) God said to eat all fruits of the tree except the tree of the fruit the was in the middle of the Garden. (Genesis 3: 5) Satan cheated them and made them to eat the forbidden fruit. The result was that their eyes were opened and they lost God’s Glory that had covered them. During the test of obedience they become subaltern.

Yielding to Temptation , led to become subaltern. Knowledge is good , but knowledge with selfish motive or worldly spirit, or filthy attraction will damage the real originality of knowledge. Knowledge with prudence will help us make our decisions fruitful along the right path. In the Bible, the Book of Isaiah chapter 30. Verses 21 says “ Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying “This is the way, walk in it” Whenever you turn to the right hand Or whenever you turn to the left”.

The Book of Paradise Lost IX puts forward the free will , obedience and disobedience. The humanity is called by God not to be subaltern but to have access to Heaven. Milton shows the Adam and Eve ‘s disobedience to God’s command had strengthen them to Sin Against God. The poem Paradise Lost Book IX portrays Adam and Eve, emphasizes their humanity exploring their innocence before the fall of Man as well as their subsequent awareness to Sin. Milton reflects the complexities of human freedom and obedience to divine Law and the possibility of redemption. Despite their transgression, the poem ends on a note of hope, and Adam and Eve leave the paradise (garden) with the promise of Salvation through Christ, hope an optimism in Christian Theology and out from the spirit of Subalternity.

THE PROMISE OF THE REDEEMER:

The future history of mankind if fulfilled by the coming of messiah Lord Jesus Christ. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of invisible God, the first-born over all creation. For by him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and

invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through him and for him. (Bible book- Colossians: chapter 1: verses 13 to 16) So the future redemption gives a greater display of God's Love and Mercy towards humanity.

Let us save ourselves by seeking the kingdom of God; as said in the holy book(Bible : book of Matthew chapter 6 verses 33) "For What is man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" so let us think good, feel good ,seek good, love good, live good. So what defiles a man , that what comes out from his heart. True Happiness and peace is not an external location like Eden but internal spiritual state of faith in eternity and virtue and obedience to God and gain victory by acquiring Christ's Spirit.

Let me come to the Spivak's question on Subaltern "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Ofcourse a Sabaltern can speak, when he has the right values and higher Goal in life.

Conclusion: Again I would tell let us not be Subaltern to this passing world but be free children of God. Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up. Love does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, does not provoke thinks to evil and does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth. (Bible; I Corinthians ,chapter 13 verses 4 -6)

Reference taken from :

Paradise Lost book IX by John Milton; From the writings of Gayatri Chakravorthy Spivak; The Bible.

