

UNIFICATION THOUGHT'S VIEW OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

By
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Ladies and gentlemen:

I feel greatly honored and privileged to be invited to this Significant International symposium on Unification Thought.

I am very happy to be amongst you all. It is an added satisfaction to be able to share the findings of my Study and research with the participants of this Symposium who constitute the intellectual elite of the world.

I am going to speak on the theme of “UNIFICATION THOUGHT’S VIEW OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY.” Apart from presenting the view of Marriage and Family as expressed in the Unification thought, I will also be discussing these Views as expressed in some of the other religions such as Hinduism, Sikhism, and Islam.

INTRODUCTION

“Today we live in a rapidly changing society in the entire globe is going through a process of fundamental transformation in lesser or greater degrees in all its aspects –Social, economic, political and religious. Twentieth century has been an age of science and technology and there has been an enormous development in these spheres .yet the main stream development has been dominantly materialistic with great emphasis primarily on economic growth all over, including in India”(kapur&Kapur, 2002p.31)

To day there is a great chaos in the contemporary society, Nation, and the World. To-day’s World is full of tensions, Conflicts, unhappiness, confusions, and wars. The contemporary scene presents innumerable problems, vicious happenings such as terrorism, kidnapping, Drug abuse, Alcoholism, Sexual abuse and exploitation, gender exploitation and injustice, corruption and oppression (cf. Kapur, 2002)

As a marriage and Family Counselor also I can corroborate the increasing unhappiness, disintegration and discord in family relationship and loss of mutual love, respect and trust. The tensions, stresses, strains, and conflicts are found not only in marital and family relationships and interpersonal human relationships, but also in intercommunity, Interreligious and international relations. (Ibid, 2002).

There is persistence in socio-economic and sex disparities, social injustice, crimes, violence, corruption and social tensions, the conversion of religion into fundamentalists postures and actions, HIV-AIDS, the crassly hedonistic aspects of consumerism i.e. Production and consumption of goods and items, which have little or low relevance to the real quality of life, and there is all round confusion concerning culture, religion and spirituality. (Kapur&Kapur, 2002,pp.31-32)

Why it has been so? On analyzing the various Studies, researches and observations, it could be stated that this has been so because of the crises of human, ethical, moral and spiritual values and of human character on the one hand, and increasing values of materialism and consumerism on the other hand. This in turn has come about as a result of breakdown and disintegration of marriage and family and the relationships within these. According to unification thought” the reason is that family ethics, which is the basis of all ethics, has become weakened. Therefore the way to save society is to establish a new kind of family ethics. By doing so, we can save families from collapse, and we can save the world”(Unification Thought Institute, 1992, p.208). As Dr. Sung – Bae Jin, President, Unification Thought Institute of Korea rightly points out “...a new philosophy is needed to overcome those materialistic philosophies and show a correct direction. I am convinced that Unification thought advocated by Rev. Sun Myung Moon can meet the needs of the present time.”

In such a state of confusion, unrest, and disorder, the world was searching and eagerly looking for a new vision and new leadership to provide guidance to human beings. It was at that point of time the farsightedness and clear new vision of one of the great spiritual leaders in the guise of Rev. Sun Myung Moon experienced the ideology of UNIFICATION THOUGHT. In order to learn and discuss about Unification Thought’s Views on Marriage and Family, it is very essential to understand what is “Unification Thought.”

What is Unification Thought?

The unification Thought is a System of thought based on the philosophy and teachings of Rev Sun -Myung Moon. It was late Dr. Sang --Hun Lee the first President of Unification Thought Institute who had Systematized not only the sentences and passages within the Divine Principle which have some philosophical Content, but also many other thoughts and teachings of Rev. Moon that had not appeared in the Divine Principle. He had compiled and published it entitled as “Unification Thought,” under the direction of Rev Moon.

According to late Dr. Lee, Rev Moon’s thought was received directly from God as a revelation. As such the Unification Thought is the thought that has the attributes of God as its Starting point, Dr. Lee further pointed out that through revelation God revealed Himself to be the God of Heart and Love rather than that of reason, and ideal of creation consists in the realizing of Love. (Ibid, 1998)

The Unification Thought with its sprit of promoting Love for others is the thought of God with His attributes of Love, Kindness, Compassion, Understanding, Forgiveness, Patience

and Selfless Service to humanity, Happiness, Whole Health, Peace, Justice and equality of Considering each person as an equally worthy human being with latent divinity irrespective of Cast, creed or sex.

The aim of Unification Thought is to I) unify and harmonize all religions, as the source, or origin of all religions is the same one God, ii) Unify the Various systems of thought, as all thought systems share the common aim of realizing a good and peaceful world; iii) Unify traditional views of value by presenting a standard of goodness common to all human beings; iv) Unify religion and Science as the body and mind are united and harmonized in human beings; and v) to realize one global family under the principles of “Interdependence, mutual prosperity and Universally Shared Values”. (cf. Otani, 2002 p.2)

Thus the Unification Thought as thought of God has the purpose to solve the problems of human tensions, unhappiness, confusions, and conflicts, as also to reconcile warring Nations and conflicting Religions through the True Love of God. In short the Unification Thought aims to dissolve Conflicts, socio-economic and gender inequalities and inequities, considering that all human beings are originally children of God as their Common Parent. It is also called “Godism” because it begins with explaining God as the first originator of the Universe, and proposes a new scientific view of God in such a way so as to be accepted by people of all religions.

As explained by Rev. Moon, the Unification Thought provides the standard through which the traditional philosophies, religions, and cultures could be united, and also provides the key for solving many fundamental human problems. (cf Otani, 2002,p.1)According to Rev. Moon “Unification Thought... is a powerful key Capable of solving any problem, no matter how difficult it may be. When this thought is applied to society various social problems can be solved. When this thought is applied to the world, words problems can be realistically solved.....It is also a principle of integration that can bring different religions ,doctrines, and philosophies into unity. While presenting their diverse characteristics” (cf Otani 2002,p.1)

I mentioned my speech given on the occasion of the inauguration of UTI’s India chapter new Delhi in Aug,2002 that the purpose of Unification Thought is also to achieve the goal of one -world family--a goal, which has been there for the ideology of many faiths, for example the ideology of Hinduism- Visu dhaivaya kutumbh cum—the whole world is one family .Another goal is to realize the ideal world of God’s love for solving the numerous and difficult problems that affect human kind.(cf.Kapur,2002)

The teachings of Rev Moon as expressed through Unification Thought have been found to be having many astonishing Truths that would completely solve the problems of human life.

The Truths and views of Rev. Moon as given in the Unification Thought can become a reality if the thinking and attitude towards these changes. And the attitude can be changed by inculcation of family values of mutual love and respect and the value of caring and sharing. This can be done by healing and strengthening the Marriage and Family relationships as these values originate in the Family .(cf.kapur 2002)

UNIFICATION THOUGHT'S VIEW OF MARRIAGE

Here is the starting point of analyzing and discussing the Unification's view of Marriage, which is both the cause and effect of forming the family, and act and interact, on one another.

What is marriage and why it is important?

“Marriage is important because it is the road to finding love. It is road to creating life. It is road where the life of a man and woman unite into one. It is a place where man's lineage combines with a woman's lineage. History emerges through marriage and an ideal world begins. Without marriage there is no meaning to the existence of individuals, nations and the ideal world....Man and woman must absolutely become absolutely one”.(Rev.Moon,1997,p.27)

According to Unification thought marriage should be based on unselfish and non –egoistic feelings. In marriage husband and wife should love and live for each other's sake with complete fidelity including sexual fidelity admitting that each one's sexual organ belongs to his or her spouse only.” Sexual relations were to be the most beautiful and holy expression of the eternal love between husband and wife but sadly many people think that love is sex and thereby reduce both to a purely physical act. Whereas sexuality can be truly fulfilled only through the sacred relationship of marriage, today love has been so distorted that men and women like to indulge in sex outside the marital bond, because of the misuse of sexual intimacies, celibacy has been practiced in various religions as a means of coming closer to God (Rev. Moon, Unification Movement p.11).All the perfection, happiness and fulfillment in marriage depends upon the harmonious balance among the three elements---husband, wife and God ,living with gratitude and in eternal service to each others spouse.

Unification Thought considers marriage to be based on True Love. But what is True Love??? While explaining the difference between True and false love, Rev Moon points (Lee, 1997,pp135-36) out that true love is “ the love invested and invested again, and given and given again.” It is “the love which seeks to live for the sake of others”, it is “the love which runs straight in the shortest distance”, and the love which is at first small but gradually becomes large”, “the eternal, unchanging and absolute love, the unconditional love, “ the love on the global scale”, and the love to love even one's enemies”. Rev Moon explains that false love on the other hand is “the love of plundering”, the self-centered love “, the warped wicked love, the love which is at first large but gradually becomes small”, “the impulsive love”, “the conditioned love”. “The love which is divided by walls,” “the love which creates divisions,” and the love of harboring hatred or a vengeful spirit.”

Sang-Hun Lee (1997 p.136) points out that love to-day is often a self-centered love which plunders others and the illicit love which destroys families is a warped wicked love”. He continues to say, “ Though all love between man and woman is not necessarily false, elements of false love are always present even in love, which appears to be beautiful” (Lee, 1997,p. 136)

The findings of my study researches and experiences of counseling agree with the concept of love as considered by the Unification Thought and by social psychologists like Erich Fromm (1989).

According to Erich Fromm, most people “ believe that it is a proof of the intensity of their love when they do not love any body except the ‘Loved person’”. But as he has rightly pointed out that “If a person loves only one other person and is indifferent to the rest of his fellow men, his love is not love but a symbiotic attachment, or an enlarged egotism”. Again he says that if I truly love one person, I love all persons. I love the world, I love life” (1989).

Referring to love of a couple, a theologian, philosopher, and anthropologist named Pierre Teilhard de chardin states: Love is the working of the three terms i.e., man, woman and God. All the perfection and fulfillment depends on harmonious balance among these three elements” (1985). According to Unification Thought “ True love between man and woman is not a small love which seeks happiness for two alone. It is love on a global scale, which embraces humanity, transcendent of race, culture, and society. By living for each other’s sake, man and woman build the kind of love; a horizontal love which is based on the vertical love of God” (Sang -Hun Lee, 1997, p.137) Referring to True Conjugal love as the key to the solution of all problems, Rev. Moon said, “when a true man and a true woman are completely united centered on true love of God, they can find the way to solve all problems concerning life, the Universe and God” (Sun Myung Moon, 1972 and 1985, p-77).

Rev.and Mrs. Moon strongly feel that since most of the people of to-day measure love while choosing or selecting a life partner “by race, nation, family, education, possession, external appearance and social status”, creating several barriers, to overcome these barriers officiating the Holy Blessing (a Joint International Marriage blessing Ceremony) held by the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification embraces man and women of all races, nationalities and faiths. This sets forth universal ethic, which is selfless love and its immediate manifestation is in the family –love in family –the source of which is God.

UNIFICATION THOUGHT’S VIEW OF FAMILY

A family according to Unification Thought is the outcome of True Love in marriage. It is the Conjugal love that creates family. It consists of true conjugal love, based on God’s love, parental love, Children’s love, brothers, sisters love. Such a family will love all people beyond the family members. As Rev. Moon effectively explains that all the dimensions of love—relationship of male—female of elder and younger, of brother and sister and of the generations do not exist in the individual, but rather these appear first in the family (Rev. Moon 1997,p.viii) According to Rev. Moon the family is very valuable because it is in the family that parents can carry out their most precious responsibility “not only to rear their children externally but also to offer them life elements of True Love that can perfect their spirituality” (Rev, Sun Myung Moon, 1997,p.7)

As a family sociologist I am convinced that family is the pivot around which the whole society revolves .It is in the family that in the lap of the mother and father the human entrant into this world learns the first lessons of life, of true love and living righteously as

such it is in the family that these family values can be learned and in turn can be inculcated into children.

A true family according to teachings of Rev. Moon is one in which God's love blossoms at all levels; parental love- between parents and children, conjugal love between husband and wife, filial love –of children for their parents and brotherly and sisterly love among siblings. In such a family each member lives for the others and the whole family lives for other families in the society. Thus a harmonious and peaceful society, nation and world can be generated from a true family (Rev. Moon, Unification Movement, p.8). It is further mentioned that the strength of society lies in the strength of its families. Its only healthy family that can build a healthy society.” If a society denies the sanctity of the traditional family. ... and becomes increasingly beset by divorce, free sex, homosexuality then this society inevitably declines. This is because the prime victims of permissiveness and dysfunctional families are the children and they are the ones who will decide the future of our communities, nations, and world (Ibid, p.8).

Dr. Chung Kwak, Chairman of World Culture and Sports Festival 2000 in his Congratulatory Remarks affirmed the sacred signification of marriage and family, demonstrating the commitment to the holy ideal of God-centered families that manifest true love. He said, “Our motto to-day is Building a culture of Peace, Heart and True Families.”

He further echoed my firm belief based on studies about the families in these words,” The True Parents have taught that the family is the beginning of, and foundation of love, personality and all life. The most fundamental aspects of human heart and personality are formed through the relationships of love shared among family members in daily life”. (Kwak, 2000, p.2)

Dr Kwak further remarked, “The basic unit of a society and nation is the family. Without the perfection of ideal families, World Peace cannot be realized.” He said we move towards the ideal ‘The world is one Home, Mankind is One Family’ based on God's true love. This reflects truly the spirit of Indian philosophy, tradition, and culture. The concepts of ‘VASUDHYVA KUTUMBAKAM’ (the world is one family) and ‘SARVEJANA SUKHINO-BHAVANTU’ (Welfare of the entire mankind) have been part of India philosophy since ages.

Rev. Moon rightly observes, “Our families are collapsing, east and west, north and south, under the weight of post-modern, deconstructed life” (Rev. Moon, 1997, p.8) Rev. Moon further points out that the collapse of the family brings about multiple personal and social problems, As such there is urgent need of ‘Universal ethic’ based upon the family. For this the family has to be restored and for this restoration, there is need to begin with a “spiritual regeneration” within our marriages and family. (Ibid, viii)

In his keynote speech on the occasion of the inauguration of UTI India Chapter held at New Delhi, India on August 29, 2002, Dr. Sung-Bae Jin President Unification Thought Institute (UTI) of Korea also pointed out that the problem of modern age is the crisis of the confusion of values. He emphasized that the ‘values are over turning, and the meaning of life is distorted primarily because the relationship between God and human beings has been

dismantled. A person who has lost sight of God can only see spiritual barrenness, existential emptiness, and the meaninglessness of life.” He further said, “ only where God is served at the center, can the true and ultimate meaning of human beings and the Universe be restored, and the meaning of life and foundation for absolute value found (Jin, 2002,p.4)

As rightly suggested by Dr. Sung-Bae Jin that the philosophy to lead world civilization must have: I) firm moral root; ii) must be able to make a new creation out of the Integration of the spiritual civilization of the East and the materialistic civilization of the West, laying stress on the ethics of the heart and iii) must discover God and adopt absolute Values centered on God as its foundation. He further says that for all this, it is urgent to teach a new God-centered system of values from the University level (jin, 2002, pp 5-6). But I would say that the teachings of God-centered system of values must start from the family itself, which lays the foundation of the value system in a person

Dr Jin further points out that the best equipped philosophy to lead the world civilization of the future is the new system of philosophy of the Unification Thought advocated by Rev. Sun Myung Moon. This philosophy brings ‘proper order to the relationship between God, human beings and nature. In this, we come to discover the true position of God, the meaning of human existence, the social meaning of relationship, and harmonious order of human beings and nature” (Jin, 2002,p.6).

ISLAM

Professor S.A.Ali, an expert in Islamic studies points out that ‘ISLAM comprises a total way of life.’ It attaches equal importance to material and spiritual aspects of life’. Islam’s ‘approach is integrative’; as such ‘the entire human life is included within the ambit of religion’.

According to Professor Ali the aim of Islam is to establish a society which is ‘free of malice and hatred, disruption and imbalance, inequality and disparity, in which man could live in harmony with his creator and His Creation”. (Ali, 1981,p.58).

The ideological basis of Islam is the concept of Oneness of God (tauhid). Its believer is required to completely, surrender to the Will of God “ which means the carrying out of every single command of God and His Prophet” (Ibid p.56)

The Quran – the Holy Book of Islam—comprises of the legal and other injunctions as also the traditions of the Prophet. ‘Islam is against the formation of group or communities on the basis of sex, race, tribe, blood, place, region or country. It establishes equality in status between man and woman in absolute terms’ (Ibid p.57). It also gives equal cultural rights to men and women. The sets of morality as also the moral standard to be attained are same for men and women. Both of them have an equal spiritual status. The Islamic virtues like faith in God, devotion and service in life, truthfulness, patience and constancy, humility, charity and chastity in thought and in deed are to be cultivated equally by men and women and are equally necessary for them and both of them “shall get what they strive for and shall

receive equal treatment for their deeds good or bad” and the penalties for the violation of moral laws are the same for both of them (ibid, p.57)’

ISLAM’S VIEW OF MARRIAGE

In Islam in order to preserve and perpetuate ‘family as a permanent institution marriage is vigorously Encouraged and positively enjoined, while stressing the necessity of marriage the Prophet said “To live in marriage is to observe my way. He who turns away from this way is not of me.” (cf.1981.p.59)

In Islam agq – the term meaning ‘contract’ is essential for the validation of marriage. For entering into this contract some of the essentials conditions are: mutual consent of the spouses; the payment of dower by the husband to the wife, fidelity of the wife to the husband, and the fair and kind treatment of the wife to live as equal partners, one complementary to the other. The Prophet admires those husbands who are kindest to their wives. Islam commands complete chastity for men and women before marriage, and entire felicity during marriage, and prohibition of all forms of sexual relationships outside marriage –pre or extra marital relationships are considered crime, and specified stringent punitive measures against violation are proscribed .Besides this ,Methods have been evolved to curb or reduce temptations towards sex outside marriage; some of the methods are; I) the Prophets advise for all to get married. I) Modest dress for women, iii) banning of such situation in which pre-or extra marital relations may develop. It is the virtue and not other extraneous factors that should determine the choice for spouse.

The dissolution of marriage – the right to divorce – can be invoked either by the wife or the husband but only after all efforts for reconciliation have failed. However the Prophet pronounces that “of all the thing permissible the most displeasing to Allah is divorce”

In Islam though more than one wife is allowed, it is seldom practiced because of the concomitant is godly condition for the husband to treat each wife with perfect justice and equality with regard to affection and material care.

ISLAM’S VIEW ON FAMILY

Islam gives full recognition to the family as the basic unit of society, the primary institution of civilization “by protecting its integration and ensuring its smooth development”(Ali,1982,p.56).The importance of marriage in Islam is indicated by the fact that the numerous traditions (hadith) of the Prophet and almost one third of the legal injunctions of the Quran relate to family and its proper regulation.

The family, according to Islam is a divinely inspired and ordained institution. It is an extended family consisting of sometimes even three to four generations:-

- i) It provides a secure home for growing children as also for aged parents;(ii)it serves as a breeding place for human virtues like love, kindness, mercy etc.(iii)It behaves like a guardian of the natural erotic desires of men and women, and(iv)It protects family members against troubles inward or outward. IN Islam, the family, forms,

the nucleus of the total Islamic social order. Adequate protection has been given to indignity of women by divine prescription of severe punishment for all those who slander them.

In order to promote smooth functioning of the family different roles have been assigned to the male and female members. The women have the right and obligation to look after the house and its inmates. The man has to earn for providing material means for the family. The husband and wife have to jointly undertake the divine obligation of upbringing the children and take care of the basic needs of their children, educate them the principles of religion and make them righteous.(Ibid,p.60)

God has decreed that his believers should worship none but Him, to be kind to their parents and address them with honor and respect and treat them with all humility and kindness.(Ibid , p.61)

The mother in the family has special position. According to the declaration of the Prophet ‘ the paradise lies at the feet of the mother, that mother deserves the best care than the father and then other relatives in order, and that paradise eagerly awaits those who show kindness to their mothers (Ibid,p.62)

A wide range of mutual rights and duties has been ordained by God to evolve balanced relationship between all, to promote harmony and to look after the needs of those who lack means of subsistence, God's approval is there for every act or thing that encourages integration of the family and his strong displeasure is there for that which lands to disintegrate the family .

Thus, the Islamic family is under divine command to take care of its entire member old and young-for the well being of the family.

The Prophet's words constantly remind a Muslim to contribute materially and otherwise the welfare and well being the entire family. The processes of integration are inbuilt in an Islamic family when has ‘a strength and vitality to stand up to contemporary pressures and absorb stresses and strains’”(Ali,1981,p.65)

SIKHISM

Sikhism is one of the most profoundly moralized faiths, without claiming any formal system of ethics. The Sikh teachings are embodied in the Guru Granth Sahib ji that comprises poetry of deep mystical intuition and fervors as uttered by six of the ten founding Gurus. Faith and Love are its principle motives. Belief in god – The One God – with various manifestations is the primary dynamic of Sikh living, which believes that all roads leads to the same lord. In the words of Guru Nanak’’ truth is higher than everything, higher than truth is ‘true living’’. Truth according to Sikhism is achieved by living life of faith ,charity, chastity and courage. IN Sikh scripture a perfected being is described as’ one who rebels in doing good to others’’. In the scheme of values, altruistic action and righteous character take precedence.(cf. Artar Singh,1996,Forward). However altruistic action and righteous character develop according to guru Nanak Dev for one who gives spontaneously the love

of God; “Abide in the Pure one , amid the impurities of the worldly life ,then thou shalt find the way to achieve the true yoga—Guru Nanak in Suhu

According to the Guru’s thinking the state of ecstatic rapture could very well be reached through of the love of the Name, and when it was reached , the whole life was turned musical”.

Sikhism is built on an essentially ethical principle. One important concept in Sikhism-higher ideal in Sikh ethics is the concept of SEVA – a deed of love and selfless service – serving human beings and the community with labor of one’s own hands. (Pruthi&Sharma,1995,p.206)

The Sikh moral imperative could best be summed in the maxim moral to labor for one’s living to share with others and to practice the repetition

However altruistic action and righteous character develops according to guru Nanak dev. For one who lives spontaneously in the love of God.’ Abide in the pure one, amid the impurities of the worldly life, then thou shalt find the way to achieve the true yoga”- Guru Nanak , in Suhu.

Gurunanak” believed in the synthesis of cultural, communal harmony, and reconciliation of religions, on essentials. He was quite clear that men could unite only on the basis of mutual acknowledgement of differences. And then could be no exclusiveness about any culture”(Narain Singh, p.9)

The Guru envisaged such a global society, which was united by the basic bond of love and tolerance despite variety. He preached that God was one and all the world was one and same One Reality and that all Roads lead to the same god (Ibid, p.10)

SIKHISM’S VIEW ON MARRIAGE

In Sikhism the marriage is not a sacrament or a Contract. It is an act of spiritual union that gets religious sanction, it is embraced voluntarily and consciously both by the girl and the boy in the solemn presence of the Granth Sahib (The holy book).

The mental condition of religious preceptors the Yogis twisted concept of renunciation and of considering marriage and married life to be a great evil, and sex satisfaction as ignoble leading to a man’s ultimate ruin was prevalent at that time. The guru reacted very sharply against these views. while explaining the importance of body, he stated’ Pure becometh the body ,that Singeth the Lord’s Praises ,and knowing his self, attuneth it to the Lord”- Guru Nanak in Asa.

The idea of the Supremacy of the soul over the body was very thoroughly infused by the Guru’s teachings in the minds of the Sikhs. He propagated that the real fact of life that it is only in the world of action that the character of mind is put to the test and that it was in the family life where contact with others provided opportunities for knowing weaknesses and for remedying them (cf.Narain Singh, p363)

With this approach to life, marriage acquires not only a healthy significance but gets sanctified too. In marriage both man and woman completes one another in life's journey. Woman has to be honored in the same way as man. Mentioning about sex, the Guru and Sikhism believe that sex instinct is a natural phenomenon and is not to be annihilated. For moral and spiritual health, sex possesses great potency. Never the less the uncontrolled expenditure of sexuality cannot but prove harmful, but unnatural repression is also most injurious or moral and spiritual wealth.

Guru finds nothing unholy in the sex life, provided it is controlled, regulated, and sublimated. Marriage and marital partnership can be help rather than a hindrance, in life's journey (Ibid,p.363)

SIKHISM VIEW OF FAMILY

Family, according to Sikhism is a school , where lessons of love ,sacrifices, and self-denial are learnt. In the family the members are frequently called upon to subordinate selfishness because of love of the family and children. The renunciation of selfish motives is practiced in the family and it's taken as God centred. The family life with all its various aspects has to be sanctified with the loving touch of humanity (Ibid,p.369). For a true seeker there is no choice but to accept God-centered family life and work there in for the good of all. Love of god should form the basis of life, on earth.

The Guru regarding the householder's life as necessary to make life complete for its final fulfillment wife and children are also a necessary part of family life which should be based on God-centered love and responsibilities.

According to the Guru ,human warmth, satisfying emotional psychic life, harmony and equilibrium is not possible to enjoy in the absence of social and family environment .It is in the family that one can have the satisfaction of carrying out one's duties and obligations and by doing so experience the happiness of doing things and living for the sake of others. It is in the family that the parents can take care of children, children can love and respect parents, brothers and sisters can express their affectionate relationships and the duties towards grandparents-elderly duties can be carried out by all the younger family members. Guru Nanak declared his conviction---Sikhism's conviction---that it was not only possible but also much easier to realize God for a householder than for an ascetic .The love of family with all responsibility it entailed would restore balance. It is in the family having both the mystic and the mundane aspects of life that the human personality is complete and fulfilled. He further said that' the body too was to be considered as the sacred temple, where the Lord himself resided''. Again he empathized 'the body should be fed properly, so that it way live, function well and serve it master, the soul, in its effort to realize it's goal.' — Guru Nanak in Asa (Narain Singh,p.351)

Family life according to the Guru could be linkered to a fort, one could fight the enemy better ,form within than from without.

According to Guru Nanak'' Living amid wife and children would one attain release''. A truly religious person did not retire from the world but' battle[d] in open field ,with one's

mind perfectly in control and with one's heart poised in love all the time". (Pruthi and Sharma.1995.p.205)

HINDUISM

Hinduism meant the faith of the people of Indus land. The Indian thinkers called their religion –“Hinduism by the significant term Sanatan Dharma which on being translated into English is ‘Eternal religion’. and expresses the truth that religion as such knows no age. It is the food of spirit in man. Hinduism is also known as the religion of the Vedas – the fundamental scriptures of the Hindus .’ Veda’ means God-knowledge or God science .Vedas contain the religious experiences –or revelation of the ancient sages of India. Dharma is a Sanskrit word for religion and it is a philosophical concept focused on Unity. The fine element of dharma are; Non violence, an attitude of equality; peace and tranquility ,a lack of aggression and cruelty ,and an absence of envy. The essence of Hinduism is Vedanta which contains the metaphysical reality and the philosophical portions of vast Vedic literature, ‘Hinduism both as philosophy and religion, is not so much a way of thought as a way of life’ (Mahadevan, p.16)

As I have pointed out in my Chapter on “The Principle of Fundamental Oneness” (cf kapur, 2000,pp12-13)

The five cardinal Principles of Vedanta are:-

- i) Unity of the existence- a single Force permeates the whole Universe;
- ii) Divinity is inherent in all existence including the potential divinity of human souls;
- iii) The entire human race is one extended family (Vasudhaiva Kutumbhkaam), It is the bond of spiritualism that binds persons belonging to different parts of the human race together despite their differences;
- iv) The essential unity of all religions – the interfaith understanding that pluralism of Vedanta espouses is very much the need of the day; and
- v) The welfare, progress, development and happiness of all – which is indicated by the Vedic prayer ‘May all be happy, healthy and participate in and be the recipient of welfare, progress and prosperity. May none be unhealthy, unhappy and ignorant’. (CfKapur,2000,p.13)

Vivekananda pointed out that the principles of Vedanta, which is both a philosophy and religion, are applicable not only in India but throughout the entire world and that Vedanta has an important part to play in the life of modern humans . The Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita has also great temporary relevance in solving the problems (kapur&kapur 2000). It provides them with apart from other values, a philosophy of social service so much lacking in modern society. Vivekananda believed, as I also do, that religion properly understood can be applied for solving both the mundane, as well as the existential, problems of humanity (cfKapur,2000,p-13)

One of the greatest pronouncements in the Rig Veda --the Magna Carta of religion – which provides the fundamental philosophy of the Hindu Faith is; Ekam Sat Vipra Vahuda Vadanti i.e Truth is One, Sages call it by various names. The acceptance and assimilation

of varieties of faiths by Hinduism has emerged from the underlying truth eloquently expressed by the Vedic pronouncement mentioned above (cf. kapur, 2000,p.16). As in Unification Thought so is in Hinduism God is One, the only unchanging and eternal one.

HINDUISM VIEW ON MARRIAGE

Marriage is necessary, as an individual living alone tends to be self centered, even egocentric. As a ritual, marriage is ancient. The word marriage is derived from the Latin word *maritare* meaning Union under the auspices of the goddess Aphrodite Mari. The Vedas also exhort –“United your resolve ,united your hearts, may your spirits be one, that you may long together dwell in unity and concord.” The Vedas have also stressed that ‘ the mutual spiritual unfolding of husband and wife is the central purpose of marriage .Man and woman are soul mates who, through the institution of marriage, can direct the energy associated with their individual instincts and passion into the progress of their souls.’” (Jacob and Shukla, Nov 2002,p.21)

Dr. Radhakrishnan described the Hindu ideal of marriage as;-“The Hindu ideal of marriage is essentially a fellowship between a man and a woman, who seek to live creatively in partnership for the pursuit of four great objects of life—“dharmarth, Kama and moksha.’” (cf. Devanandan&Thomas,1960,p.7)

It is further mentioned that marital relationship is so deep and binding that thought of a second relationship is a sacrilege. Rig Veda describes a woman as comrade of the husband and the ideal love and harmony between the husband and wife have been described as ‘the fulfillment of all the desires, a veritable treasure, the very life itself – all these is a husband to the wife and vice versa’”. (Ibid 1960,p.60)

All problems of existence are essentially problems of harmony. Marriage according to Vedic philosophy is considered as one of the powerful means of training in the science and art of harmony .A steady austerity that marriage imposes in attaining mutuality of relationship provides varied contents of the path that must lead to harmony.

The Vedic philosophy of marriage underlines the lifelong association and continues partnership of equality in every activity of life .It is a Union of soul and body mostly arranged by the elders with the blessings of God.

In Hinduism and for that matter in most of the other religions also the elaborate and complex rituals associated with the ceremony of marriage show its importance and significance .In the Vedic marriage ritual both husband and wife take some vows. The very first declaration of the bride and bridegroom in the marriage ceremony underlines the Vedic philosophy of marriage.” Let all the cosmic powers know that we are accepting each other voluntarily and pleasantly and our hearts are concordant and united like waters. Let the King of Love, let Fashioner of relations, let the Guide of secrets keep us united [Rig Veda 10.8.47]

This Vedic Hymn or declaration of the bride and bridegroom impose life-long responsibilities to be discharged under the sacred sanction of the supreme Lord--God. The

ritual of seven steps in the presence of sacrificial fire is the ritual of seven vows some of which are for close union of friendship, of mutual love, mutual respect and of faith trust and sexual fidelity. The ceremony of seven steps is concluded with hymns offered to Waters of Life so that they may irrigate activities with happiness, prosperity and perennial Health.' Marriage vows taken by the couple also emphasize that they would invariably co-operate with each other in the realization of their aims and ambitions in all spheres of life, wealth and spirituality''(Devanandan &Thomas 960,p.9). Social consciousness is outraged if a couple does not live up to marriage vows. Thus, with the help of the Mystic Fire, the bride and the bridegroom are blessed to ascend on the different journey that will ultimately give the highest delight of divine love--- Soma.

The concept of god as Ardhanareshwara(half male and half female)has been explained in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad—1.4.1-3.In the beginning Self Alone was there, He did not have satisfaction in His isolation. He felt the need of someone to second Him. Again his form was a combined one of man and woman in one. He divided himself into two—into female and male. This is how man and woman as husband and wife came into existence as one unit . Mark tully was once asked what is the secret of your happy married life. He answered” of course it is to select and have the right type of partner, but more than that it is to be the right kind of a person—a person who is able to love, respect and have faith in oneself and. in others. To this I would like to add’ faith in god ‘as well, this is extremely important in making a marriage successful. This is what I found in my experience as marriage and family counselor.

Right speech ,right thought in right action are insisted by every school of Hindu thought ,this is what one needs to do—to take care of one’s morals – in order to be the right kind of a person.

HINDUISM’S VIEW OF FAMILY

The view of the family in Hinduism is that it is a basic social institution which is God-centered .It is the one which provides physical ,mental ,emotional ,economic , social and psychological security ,satisfaction and happiness .In the family the spirit has to be there of True Love-- unselfish love--of corporation ,of caring and sharing ,of sacrifice ,of doing things for others with devotion and love.

The most famous Hindu epic--- Ramayana----is the best example demonstrating the ideal family relationship between the different members of a True family, as also of showing how good is awarded and evil punished.

In the family children are considered as blessings of God and as such they are to be enjoyed with love and care not only by the parents but by the grandparents as well.

Marriage or family is valuable in itself without reference to children but children belong to the fullness of the parents. Family is not merely a social institution in which children get their nourishment, training, and their very being, but a living unit of society in which the elders and the younger grow together and contribute towards binding them together through their mutual love ,mutual respect, and self-surrender.

For Hindus the fulfillment of sexual desire within the boundaries of marriage is also part of the sanatana dharma. Thus it is clear that people in society should be guided by the sexual morality---no sex before marriage and no extramarital sex.In Hinduism the regulation of life has been carried out by laying down the system of four Ashrams --phases of life.

- i) **Brahmacharya**-- life of studentship in which complete celibacy is prescribed,
- ii) **Grasthashram**---life of a householder in which the duties and responsibilities of being a life partner ,parents, siblings and grandparents and of a member of a family are carried out with happiness
- iii) **Banprasth** Ashram--life of a person who has fulfilled family duties and has been detached and is leading like a person spending time in meditation
- iv) **Sanyas Ashram**---- life of a recluse.

The aims of marriage and family are; **dharma** (duty), **praja** (progeny) and **rahi** (pleasure)Out of these three, **dharma** is of supreme importance which conveys religious duty and duty towards family and community . As such, one marries and forms a family, not only for fulfilling ones individual needs and pleasures but for the sake of entire family (cf. Devanandan, 1960, p.34)

The traditional joint family is in which two or three generations live together. It is also an institution that provides security to the aged widows and orphans. In Hinduism one's family and kinship have been mainstay against all odds." In an extended family,ideally,all the members care and share, have mutual love and respect ,take responsibility for and cooperate in maintaining and furthering the welfare of the family. These ideals can be extended to provide models of behavior for each individual towards the rest of the human race"(Kapur, 2000,p.12)

Among the Hindus marriage is not between two persons but between two families .Fidelity is still the fundamental contract or understanding, tried to issues of honesty and faith. Thus ,as mentioned earlier it is in the family that the foundation of a person physical, mental , spiritual, emotional and personality is laid. It is here that the human and spiritual values like those of love, love of God, kindness acceptance, forgiveness and of sharing and caring as also welfare of the entire family are inculcated among the family members right from childhood onwards.

Bhagvad Gita (I.40) points out" when the family declines the spiritual foundations for life are lost..... and society is plunged into chaos".

The concept of **VASUDHYVA KUTUMBAKAM** (Universal family)---whole world is one family---expresses the ideology of universal family-unity, and the concept of **SARVEJANA SUKHNO BHAVANTU** (welfare of mankind) and the Vedic prayer like the one given below sums up the Vedic philosophy of God –centered marriage and family.

**“May all be happy
May all be free from disease
May all realize what is good
May none be subject to misery”**

IN CONCLUSION

On analyzing one finds that in theory many fundamental principles or beliefs in each of the Faiths studied and presented in this paper are the same .For example, the fundamental idea that God is one as the only unchanging and eternal one is found in Unification Thought as also in Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism.

Hinduism’s one of the fundamental beliefs that there is one all-transcending Spirit usually referred to as God (Ishvara) is the source of all beings and whole and sole cause of the Universal (cf Mahadevan,p.23),is also shared by other Faiths.

Similarly the concepts of Marriage and Family and the necessity and Aims of these institutions, as also the duties, responsibilities and ethics of married and family life and interpersonal relationships within these are also basically more or less the same.

Nevertheless, in practice there are various problems facing marriage and family in the contemporary society and world.

The present situation mentioned earlier calls for a review of strengths and limitations of Hinduism as also of other philosophies, traditions and cultures in order to evolve new vision and universal philosophy which would ensure the spirit of” One Family based on True Love and of “welfare of mankind’- living for the sake of others.

Dr.Sung-Bae Jin, in his welcome greetings in International Symposium on Unification Thought –A new vision for the new millennium and unification thought 2000--expressed similar sentiments.” Regardless of religion, race ,nation, or situation ,we can come together and make a new vision for an ideal society of interdependence ,mutual prosperity ,and universally shared values with practical solutions” of the numerous problems, stresses and strains and of cries of human character . Rev. Sun Myung moon’s ideas ,principles and solutions with regard is the contemporary situation has been expressed earlier in the Paper Unification Thought is certainly drawing attention as a system of thought that can address these problems and save human kind .

We hope, wish, and pray that people of all Faiths working in corporation and love with one another will be successful in bringing about a very healthy, happy and loving future for human kind.

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