FAMILY REFLECTION PAPER

Religion and caste have a very important impact on one’s life, particularly in a society like Pakistan. Caste system is dated back to the pre-independence time in the sub-continent. It was common among Hindus, however now it also exists among Pakistanis. Castes have much influence on social lives of people, particularly on marriages of the people living in the sub-continent.

I belong from a Syed family and from an Islamic perspective, it is an honor being a Syed because of our descendance from Imam Hassan and Hussain (AlaihumSalam). Syed is an Arabic word which means ‘Chief’. Syeds are considered as the most respectful family among Muslims because of their affiliation with Holy Prophet (Sallahu Alaihi Wa-alihi Wasalam) and Hazrat Ali (Karam Allahu Taalla Wajhahulkareem). It is a tradition to put the name ‘Syed’ in the start of the name among our family. My parents are from the same family because from religious point of view, Syeds are discouraged to marry outside their family. My ancestors came to the Sub-continent in Punjab before 12-13th century because I found the names of some popular Islamic saints of Punjab in my family tree including Hazrat Bahauddin Zakria Multani (Rehmutullahi T-alla Alaih).

My identity as being a Syed is more important for me than being a Pakistani. But my religion does not stop me from calling me a Pakistani and my nation does not stop me from placing my religious and family identity higher than my national identity. Infact, they are embedded with each other. Because Pakistan was created on the name of Islam and Islam teaches the love for your nation. I have cousins in Army, my grandfather fought in 1971 war for Pakistan. From a very young age, I was taught to love our motherland in schools and colleges. I, myself studied in an Army institute till my college which further inculcates national spirit and love into me. It was my dream to go into the Army but, I ended up being in one of the most prestigious university of the country.

My grandfather, besides his services, also belonged to a Peeri Silsilah (chain among Soofis that transfers after the of one Peer to another). I grew up in a religious family where Islamic virtues are given much importance and discussed almost in every aspect of life in my household. From my childhood, what I learned in my home and outside my home, especially in masjid, is that being a Syed is a matter of pride (but one should not boast) and people around in society used to give me respect because of my family.

Despite of my all the love and affiliations with my nation, my family identity weights more for me than my national identity. My nation and my national identity is very little and short in front of my vast and old family history and background. What makes my choice more dominant is that I grew up in a Pakistani Muslim family in a typical way where it is taught to love religion more than any other thing in the world. To me, my family heritage and its religious history takes precedence over my national affiliation. In conclusion, my identity family identity is more important to me but without neglecting my national identity and will always keep these both affiliations high and will work for Islamic and national ideology to create the name for my nation and my family.