

LEADERSHIP-ESSENTIAL QUALITIES

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Leaders make history, but before that, they are made by history. In fact, two factors make history: objective and subjective. The objective factors consist of the economic, political and cultural environment in which the leader finds himself at a particular moment of history. The subjective factor consists of the leader's thinking, feeling and striving. The objective and the subjective factors are dialectically linked i.e. they act and reach with each other.

The objective conditions must be mature for the historic event to come to pass. But the event will not occur by itself. The leader must grasp the opportunity offered by objective conditions and act appropriately to bring forth the event from the womb of history. When objective conditions have matured, the role of the leader becomes crucial.

This is precisely the role of the leader. He is an instrument of great historic forces on whose currents he rides to his place in history. Owing to the specific qualities of their minds and characters, the leader can change the specific features of events, but they cannot change the basic general trend of the historical force.

What is leadership if it is not the capacity to inspire and mobilize people to struggle for the historically ordained change.. the change which brings more freedom, democracy and social justice, replacing the old order by a new one.

The dream of a new order inspires of people to heroic action and sacrifice. No leader can ever lead people without having a vision of the new order for which power is sought. No leader is infallible. Every leader needs to be reminded of this harsh fact at regular intervals.. Unquestioning submission corrupts leaders and demeans followers. "Great men exist", says Emerson, "that there may be greater men."

A true leader affirms the hopes, aspirations and yearnings of his people. The fight against reactionary, undemocratic forces are often thankless. Yet, the true leader continues to struggle against the tyrannical gods. He justifies his role insofar as he ultimately succeeds in destroying the hegemony of the old gods.

Pakistan has never needed great leadership more urgently than it does at this critical hour. And leadership has never more urgently needed the collaboration and criticism of an ardent and informed people. We can avoid catastrophe only if leaders listen to followers as carefully as followers listen to leaders.

The true leader must never lose touch with the people and he has every chance of winning the final battle.

Woodrow Wilson said: the nations are renewed from the bottom, not from the top; that the genius which springs from the ranks of the unknown is the genius which renews the youth and energy of the people. The utility, the vitality, the fruitage of life does not come from the top to the bottom; it comes, like the natural growth of a great tree, from the soil, up through the trunk into the branches to the foliage and the fruit."

The march of history is not linear i.e., history does not move along a straight line, always in a forward direction without any setback. Nor is it circular i.e., history does not repeat itself. Man is not doomed to go round and round a circle. History moves along a spiral – a curve which seems to be going down, but actually goes up after a short downturn. History moves two steps forward and one step backward.

All great revolutions had a spiral-like evolution. They started off with a tiny spark. They gathered momentum so that the spark set a prairie on fire. Every movement has to face downward, dull and dreary periods. But, if the movement has the force of the masses behind it, it always emerges triumphant from an apparent defeat.

Blessed are those who do not lose heart at the downward trend of the spiral but keep an honest eye on the inevitable upward trend.