

POLITICS OF THE FUTURE

SALIENT FEATURE

Ideological Direction:

A new direction needs to be given to the politics of Pakistan. We should, at the present stage of history, take a decision to hold the present in our hands and exert to make our future pleasant and worth living. In order to do so we will have, first of all, to reject downright all the political philosophies and methods adopted by the politicians, civil and military servants during the past fifty-six years and have to devise a new political concept, re-encompass our direction, reframe our strategies in the light of our own understanding based on sound concepts, and start upon the journey with a firm commitment and resolve, and frame a foolproof plan of action based on wide and thorough consultation with the people.

We will have to start with a firm belief in the reality of our existence as human beings and determine a definite purpose of life in this world. We must fully understand that we have been born in this material world in compliance with certain pre-determined laws of nature. But the question arises immediately is who has caused these laws to be formed which are in existence since the coming into being of the universe and would continue till its end. These rules themselves point to the existence of a Being that has made these laws that govern the working of the whole universe. This Being is named as Allah, God, Parmeshwar and other names. These facts, however, require that we remember Him always and express our profound gratitude for the bounties provided by Him to us. His remembrance should run in our veins.

Such a belief in God generates in us a sense of determination to work with zeal for a worthy cause under His guidance with the basic attributes of love and creativity ingrained by Him in all human beings under His guidance. Once we partake. Once we understand the matters of this world in this manner, the other individual traits of love, honesty, sincerity, dedication, determination, endurance and

tolerance of other's views and behaviour, and self-restraint will necessarily follow. In addition to these traits such basic values as speaking the truth always, keeping one's promise, respecting others, mutual caring and sharing, sense of responsibility, consideration for peace etc. are inculcated by purposeful actions. All these attributes, put together, convert an individual into a considerate person, to say in modern political term a "democratic being". Such persons are a prerequisite for initiating a political process in the right direction. No advance towards creating a civilization can be made without it.

Once we are thus equipped, we can be assured of an affirmed role for changing and shaping the direction of politics of our country. The political process, in fact, embraces all facets of life and is the only vehicle for changing the existing setup and achieving progress and prosperity of the human society. If we accept this premise, an all-out effort will have to be made by conscientious persons to strengthen the political process on democratic lines, i.e. by associating people at the grassroots level with this endeavour. But in order to be able to do so, we must determine the real issues of the masses and give them top priorities. We must go out and sit with them, talk to them and help them as much as we can for removing their difficulties and providing their requirements.

Now, having determined the requisites for political action, we now turn towards spelling out the parameters of collective action for introducing the new political approach and carry out its new political programme. There are seven parameters that dominate the political scene: Ideology, Constitution, strengthening the political process, improving the electoral system, establishing the educational, cultural and moral base, good governance and ushering in economic progress.

Next, we venture to explain this new approach to politics in some detail and the lines that should be followed in these fields for enabling "politics of the people" to take roots.

Ideological Base of Politics

Without an ideological base of politics real progress for building a society cannot be made. The foremost challenge faced by humanity is that people are deprived of equal social, political and economic

rights in the name of religion and democracy. When we talk of ideologies, there are three in existence: the capitalist, the socialist and the Islamic. The ideology of those who have a craze for wealth is capitalism; the ideology of those who believe in democratic centralism is socialism; the ideology of those who believe in human equality, fraternity and service to humanity (as was put forward by all the prophets) is Islam, to be very clear is "*Deen-e-Anbia*". I will dwell here on the ideology of the future, which is Islam, and give its salient features that concern politics.

Islam has its own principles of morality, socio-economic justice, and has a singular approach for addressing the problems of poverty, inequity, corruption and injustice. The failure of the existing political systems to address the basic problems of the people successfully has led to Islam being the only available choice for humanity; only the true concept of Islam has to be spelled out clearly as against the prevalent false concept given out by the religious monopolists. Islam aims at creating a sympathetic and friendly society based on the concept of *Tauheed* i.e. one God for all humanity, that all people are the family of God and, therefore, classes created by man on the basis of inequalities should not exist. Any divisions should be based upon free debate and not the medieval mindset. The purpose of Islam is to create a classless society free from oppression and tyranny, fear and grief, poverty and want and devoid of conflict.. Islam stands for justice in all walks of life. Islam ensures economic justice to all by declaring the means of production of a country common property of its citizens for utilization to one's capability, thus providing opportunity to all to realize their full potential. Islam also plays a pivotal role in developing an excellent model of governance. Islamic vision of the world constitutes a world wherein all communities participate in a race to create works of excellence.

Without debate and tolerance of different points of view, there can be no decent society but only the barbaric dictatorship of half-baked intellectuals who use religions to further their party interests. Our best hope lies in reason, free discussion, receptiveness to ideas, openness, accommodation and seeing others' point of view. Every single idea from the Qur'an should be analyzed, debated and brought into the social, cultural and political fabric of society. Islam should not be suppressed, hijacked, corrupted and ultimately reduced to a

meaningless dumb show of rituals and organized hypocrisy of the rulers. The most important point missing in Pakistan religious leaders' priority is love of the people and the understanding that fraternity and tolerance of other creeds should embrace the entire society.

The interpretation of the Qur'an and Islam was undertaken by the semi-official class of 'ulema' who bolstered the authority of rulers by producing interpretations in line with the state policies of the dictators. The institution ulema is a human contrivance. The monopoly of either the government or the ulema over the process of interpreting God's messages are undesirable and unacceptable. It is the right of the individual to propel his social his activities in the light of the guidance received from God, as interpreted by the individual with the help of intuition (instinct and insight because he or she is basically answerable for his deeds individually. No one need intervene between man and God. The glory of the Qur'an is that its messages demand an interpretation that benefits the human society in its ever-changing forms in various periods of history.

God's message to man is that he should be well aware of the facts about life and struggle for improving his quality of life by using his mind to acquire knowledge about tools and implements while at the same time not becoming slaves of technology. It is all about maintaining a balance between the material and the spiritual, and the Qur'an repeatedly calls for "moderation" in life.

The true dynamic, pristine and revolutionary Islam of its early years with its emphasis on equality, egalitarianism, social justice and accountability, is emerging as a challenge to western concepts of governance, and is perceived by the West as the greatest threat to its established order based on exploitation, injustice and inequality of opportunity.

Islam is primarily a moral and spiritual order that governs man's conduct in worldly affairs. Reality, according to the Qur'an is spiritual and its life consists of temporal activity. All this immensity of matter constitutes a scope for the self-realization of the spirit. The State has thus to be a transformation of a moral and spiritual order and not merely an instrument of domination.

There is a misconception that Quranic verses, which were revealed by way of divine counseling on appropriate occasions, are applicable today in the same manner without regard to the historical

context. The truth is that we have to apply the principles of Islam derived from the Qur'an to our every day affairs. Those who believe sincerely that sovereignty rests in God, that He is our Lord and to him alone we should submit, and that His divine book, the Qur'an, is our complete code of life, for them it becomes imperative to act according to the teaching of the Book with full resolve.

It is obvious that the believers have to work unitedly with selfless motives and actions to meet the challenges of today's world – social, economic, political, cultural, scientific and technological – with dauntless courage and wisdom while observing strictly the laws of nature. Without acquiring modern knowledge and dedicating ourselves to research regarding the forces of nature, as stressed in the Qur'an itself, we cannot reach the heights of knowledge and rise as a prominent nation in the comity of nations. The role of the western media has been to stop humankind from receiving the true picture of Islam. We should, therefore, cultivate an open mind committed to the search for the truth. The key structure of the facts discovered by science does not deny the presence of the Supreme Being. Facts of science, like the facts of history, need interpretation. In this regard it should not be ignored that because of opposition by the religious elite of the days of renaissance, philosophies based on denial of God were woven into the fabric of western thought.

The most vexing problem we face in Pakistan, as elsewhere, is how do we educate our people, and the people of the world, the majority of whom are illiterate or are under the influence of various pulls regarding the concept of 'faith' which is God-given and unites human beings, as against that of 'religion' which is man-tailored and divided human beings into antagonistic factions, The solution lies in giving high value to life and taking it seriously, and in convincing the materially advanced so-called 'civilized world about the universal truth by ourselves becoming materially advanced on the basis of spiritual advancement.

Moral and spiritual Development

Man, in essence, is a spiritual being possessing finer elements like honesty, love, faithfulness and mercy which constitute the moving force behind all developmental efforts that come into play in

building a civil society materially. He has a temporary material existence in the world but his soul is lasting.

The individual in a society is the basic unit. Its better upbringing for performing his role effectively in building the society is of utmost importance. An individual's mental maturity and physical fitness are, therefore, important elements of national progression.

Reason and morality are the twin guides to blaze our trail. But rationality and ethics require sustained and organized endeavours to prevail and have to be accepted as the final arbiters if disastrous conflicts are to be avoided.

All men and women are equal in the sight of God. Therefore, they should be equal before law and have equal rights, and should have equal access to basic human needs. People having high ranks in society have no right to insult and oppress persons of lower ranks who, in fact, are the creation of the capitalist system. The creation of an unequal society, or a class-society, is against the norms of morality and social justice. There is a total absence of mutual respect, love, mercy and forgiveness and hatred is being spread in the society as a virtue and hatred is all-pervasive and cuts across ethnic, sectarian and class affinities. The real need is to build a stable democracy on the basis of people's full participation and consensus, and sweep away the cobwebs of ancient myths from the Pakistani mind.

Constitution

The Constitution of a country is its most fundamental legal document. It sets the basic structure of society. It confers power on various institutions of the state and, at the same time, guarantees fundamental rights of the people and limits the powers of state functionaries. It is an expression of the aspirations and will of the people.

Constitutions make sense only if people genuinely believe in the sanctity and supremacy of the constitution and are prepared to protect and defend it. But this can come about if people first have confidence in the independence and integrity of the judiciary, which is the guardian of the Constitution. In a parliamentary democracy

elected parliament is sovereign and the executive is accountable to it. It is indeed a serious matter if the apex court is deprived of its inherent right to adjudge the validity or otherwise of the laws and ordinances passed by the executive. The Constitution is the wall that stands between a despot and the people. It does not allow the ruler to make laws without referring it to the parliament. The judicial machinery of the realm limits the ruler's power. Law comes from the people, not from the rulers, and hence cannot be changed without the consent of the people's representatives. Law is not the will of the ruler. He can neither make it nor change it.

The Constitution itself is democracy, and if one goes by the Constitution he has to be a democrat. Tampering with the Constitution will bring disunity in the federation and would be against the national interest. In a system in which a constitution becomes impotent or subservient to the command of the ruler, people lose faith in the State. A constitution can remain intact only if it has the backing of the people. Pakistan's greatest weakness lies in the fact that the Constitution and the law are subject to the whims of the rulers who change the rules when they do not suit them. The man entrusted with power should have a well-developed ethical and moral sense. Making election to a legislature subject to educational qualifications is unknown to the democratic system. It would restrict the right of representation. An illiterate person can be a far more 'educated' voter than someone with an academic degree. The real problem associated with politics or public life is not formal education or lack of it but ethical and moral. If only graduates are permitted to contest elections some excellent future leadership will be eliminated. Nelson Mandela said "I discarded my presumptions that graduates automatically become leaders". If we were to exclude anyone formally from contesting elections, it should be those clearly proved guilty of moral turpitude, financial impurity or abuse of power.

In view of the peculiar circumstances prevailing in Pakistan the term of the Parliament should be lowered to three years. Thus more frequent elections will help develop greater political awareness and also create greater sense of accountability. They will tend to reduce election expenses and force political parties to develop grassroots organizations constituency-wise.

Good Governance

Good governance is allowing ordinary people the right to appoint and remove those that govern them. A government should assert the rights of the people and parliament rather than its own power. Development requires transparent governance and accountable public institutions. There is an urgent need to re-establish the trust and confidence of the common man in the efficacy of institutions and rule of law. Pakistan today presents an image of a country plagued by political, ethnic and sectarian divisions. Legitimacy of a government depends on whether or not, in the eyes of the people, it is using its powers rightly.

The Pakistani society needs to be governed, rather served, by consensus and not through totalitarian policies. The power of the electorate, to elect and be governed by the freely chosen representatives of the people, should be in letter and spirit. As a consequence of such power of the people possibility of bad governance, nepotism, favouritism, bribes and injustice is eliminated. We must come up with a government that sincerely believes in improving the lot of the masses. The leadership and bureaucracy should be brought down to the level of the masses and made to operate from that level and spend their day-to-day life as an ordinary citizen of the country. They should not be allowed to be arrogant and live a lifestyle portraying power and wealth. That government is best that governs the least. It should be ensured that the laws made by the parliament are in public interest and are enforced for the greater good. Military generals should not be allowed to interfere in the affairs of the government.

The essentials of good governance are honesty, justice and fairplay, fulfilling covenants, dedication to duty, respect for law, tolerance of dissent covenants, cherishing of public domain and primacy of the public interest. The responsibility of managing the state should be entrusted only to persons of competence and integrity.

What is direly needed is the orientation of the government to promote the growth of civil society. For that purpose the collective wisdom of the people in a truly democratic environment will have to be relied upon.

Self-denial, honesty and integrity are habits of the mind that have to be taught and cultivated by an ongoing system of societal approval and constraints, advancement and punishment. Such traits are necessary for the civil society because they work as a system of constraints, advancement and punishment. Such traits are a necessary part of civil society because they work as a system

The following steps should be taken to bring about good governance:

1. Genuine land reforms should be undertaken to remove feudalism and its distortions perpetrated on the rest of the society and culture. The resultant modernization would also bring immense socio-economic benefits.
2. The rule of law should apply to high and low, rulers and the subjects alike. All public servants must follow the law, rules and established procedures.
3. The public revenues should be spent for public purposes as authorized by law, not for personal needs of the rulers.
4. No government servant, including a judge, should be employed by the State in any capacity once he retires, and no extension should be permissible.
5. Total revamping and re-structuring of the police should be done. No corrupt, oppressive and criminalized police force could be tolerated in any civilized scheme of things.
6. The bureaucracy should be given constitutional cover after being recruited at all levels on merits alone. The merit should be determined by extending written, oral and psychological tests
7. No discretionary powers and funds should be given to anyone in the government or the high State functionaries including the Prime Minister and the President.
8. No person or institution should be exempt from accountability, including the President, the Prime Minister, the judges and the generals.

Accountability is the basis of a democratic system and determines the extent to which the ruled have their hold over the rulers.

Powers of the President and the Prime Minister

The president should not have the authority to nominate the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Service Chiefs and the Governors of the provinces in his own discretion. He should also not have the authority to dissolve the Parliament and the assemblies and to dismiss the Prime Minister. The parliament could only be dissolved by the President at the behest of the Prime Minister. The role of the President is mostly ceremonial in nature and represents the prestige of the country. He walks ahead of the Prime Minister in State ceremonies.

Both the President and the Prime Minister have to work in complete harmony with each other; both of them should work as a benign team.

The Prime Minister represents the supremacy of the Parliament as well as the will of the people. Commonsense lays down that the Prime Minister performs the real functions of the State and carries effective authority to perform these functions. The President must follow the Prime Minister's advice in all State matter and appointments. The power under which the Prime Minister can ask the President to dissolve the Parliament and call for fresh elections within ninety days, is a primary pillar of democracy, and is enshrined in virtually every constitution of the world that has a parliamentary system of governance.

Civil and Military Bureaucracy

There is need to redefine the role of bureaucracy and lay down its working parameters. Recruitment of a neutral civil service strictly on merit is an essential part of the parliamentary system of governance.

It is time to re-invent government machinery, bring it out of sluggish centralization and domination making it essentially to serve the public interest.. The bureaucracy must come out of poor management and pervading inefficiency and regain its spirit of service and discipline.

The reasons for the deteriorating standards of efficiency are: unnecessary and fast expansion of bureaucracy, disregard for merit,

poor training at various levels, lack of transparency and accountability, poor monitoring and supervision and refusal to modernize the management system.

For bureaucracy to be functional and efficient should be free from any political pressures and their service protected and secured

BASES OF POLITICS OF THE FUTURE (POLITICS OF DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS)

Reasoning and rationality; learning rational living

Commonsense

Religious tolerance

Non-sectarianism

Love for humanity

Acting with free will

Shunning pride, hatred, self-egoism, prejudices, superstitions and myths; superstitions, spiritualism and religion have devastated humanity.

Determining goals of life

Activating dormant faculties and powers of human mind, psyche and spirit; being creative.

Collectivizing land and other means of production, and banning absentee landlordism

Discouraging capital formation through interest filled economy and free economy; encouraging spending for the common good.

Establishing justice in all fields, and destroying cruelty and oppression.

Emancipating women to generate a humanitarian society and not treating them as an article of luxury. Giving full weightage to their ego, will and spirit.

Believing in the Ultimate Reality, the Universal designer; creating a sense of union with the Ultimate Reality.