

Pakistan's Leadership Crisis

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Abstract

Metaphors are central in the forming of perceptions. These have greater impact on recipients. The closest in metaphor resembling Pakistan's crisis is Shakespeare's Hamlet. It is a problem play. In the end there is so much evil around that everybody kills everyone else. As the play thickens and is sufficiently spread, it makes it to its logical conclusion. They end up destroying each other. And when folly reaches a point, the wrong doers eliminate each other. After a given point, everything plays out in a crystal clear way. The inevitability is there. What in fact happens is that everyone distorts the reality to fit the circumstances. They recast the reality to fit the distortion. The tragedy catches up as if it had to be. Each step reinforces the other. The self induced hypnosis goes on. To believe anything else is self destruction. The subordinates outdo the desires. In the clash of personalities, individuals turn into a shuttle. What happens to executives is that the unfolding rationalization and logic tackles despair and nothing else. In the process they become part of it. Common sense is defied. How lonely one becomes is the ultimate truth in statecraft. Despite being neutral, the night becomes an adversary. The rare conclusion is that there is a play within the play and so on and it goes on.

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Introduction

Leadership as opposed to henchmanship, is about doing right things whereas charisma is leadership plus. Pakistani leadership in this context has failed to command-in-chief. It is battered both ethically and in morale. Looking at all of them, what standards should one use to make a judgement? Can it be determined? The nation has to pay a high price when all of its leaders are for themselves. In the midst of so many harassing problems, the fronts are too many and the leadership is neither aware nor conscious of it. The wider consensus simply does not exist. The

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governance is in a deadly slide but the leaders are not content with what they have both in symbolism and in substance. It has failed to rise to the calling and continues to be a suspect. The system based on manipulation is anything but clean and efficient. The situation is thoroughly mixed up due to the bogus mixture at the top which is corrupt and lacks credibility.

The deep sense of insecurity drives them to make a grab for power. It is also about easy money. There are no excessive anxieties for the sake of nation and country. We all know it historically and we have grown used to it. The bad influences have become endemic in our case. One is impaled by the dilemma without knowing it, because it contaminates. Yet, one is inclined to hear lots of nonsense. There are no distinguished performances whereas the misperception is that the crown grows out of their heads. If one sits down in a quiet moment of reflection and attempts to look-back, recall and think, then what one finds is that Pakistan went through the worst handling that one can imagine. And the idea of graceful entry or exit is not for Pakistani leaders, but for the Uncle Sam.

Of all the traits of character and influence, integrity is the most virtuous. It is the luminous ob. It is the key element and the centre of gravity connecting everything. Integrity creates an effect that makes some parts greater than the whole. It is a scarlet thread integrating the entire being. The balance in the being leads to justice. The connection between proportionality and justice is as old as mankind. And the constellation of virtues is not liable to the ravages of time and decay and is held together by integration as opposed to disintegration. Moreover, whenever big crisis occur, or is in the air, the passage of time demands sacrifice.

Nevertheless, the self deception continues. The psychological repression that nothing has happened goes on, whereas, everything has happened. The repression is gigantic, disguised and drives people mad, yet it continues to be part of the collective psyche. It recurs in goulash forms. Pakistan is impregnated with it. And whereas the being had become an embodiment, the *deals* in Pakistan are a class of its own in psychological repression. The neurosis is now in the advance stage of collective psychosis and the loss of control manifests it. The big question is: what is it that encourages psychological repression in Pakistan? Now these acts of concealment could have continued but nature created an impasse that exposed everything. How long will we continue to play the tricks? What one is not sure whether any tricks are left or not? The issue behind the continuing crises is as to what kind of a nation and country we want to be?

The Crisis

The crisis today is the most serious since 1971 whereas Pakistanis suffer from an inadequacy to state their wisdom and there is always something to be said. It is time for a branch and root examination. The influences at work are more than one. Pakistan has too many moving parts, and hardly any stable ones. It is always on the verge of unforeseeable events. The system is breaking down for all its intents and purposes.

The passage of time has become decisive, yet to factor it out is a problem because the state of mind blots-it out naturally and not logically. They write it off and don't include it. It is an extraordinary attitude. It is like moving on a course that does not exist. There is not much thought as to how to proceed. The problems are complicated and the scenario is changing from day to day and not weeks or months. Pakistan is crying out for the combined talents of a novelist, an anthropologist, a painter,¹ and an artist.

Both the domestic and external environments are unsuitable. Everything that matters is against the State. All the daggers are in it. The dissatisfaction is on a large scale. It has different shades and colors. It is difficult to draw a line. There is a generalized lawlessness in all spheres. The cynicism all around reflects despair. Have we ever seen such things earlier? It is a full blown, continuing and multiplying crisis. The unpredictable will emerge out of chaos, because, the human element of leadership is missing.

The great escape made by the West was from deductive to inductive process of reasoning whereas the failure of Muslims is to systematically apply the scientific knowledge. Compared with consonance, the Muslim mind in general suffers from a psycho-social dissonance. The psycho-social factors determining Muslim dissonance are deductive process of reasoning which is mathematical and side by side with socio-economic and political systems that are also deductive is the heart of the dissonance e.g., democracy is inductive whereas authoritarianism, feudalism and tribalism are deductive. The Islamic world will have to balance its Ptolemaic inheritance with science. What is the impact of Copernicus Revolution on Islamic world? Moreover, the Ptolemaic inheritance of West is rooted in Aristotelian cosmology and by extension in deductive method and process of reasoning. The problem was not with cosmology but with the deductive method. The induction led to a new awareness.

Thinking often signifies that sort of operation of the mind about its ideas, wherein the mind is active, where it with some degree of voluntary attention, considers any thing.² But in what is called *perception*, the mind is, for the most part, only passive; and what it

perceives, it cannot avoid perceiving.³ It may be pointed out that Locke, Leibniz and some of the early Behaviorists were wedded to the idea that our mind was mostly passive in our perceptions. Hume, Kant, Fichte, Hegel and Gestaltian School, on the other hand, do not seem to subscribe to this thesis. They hold that in elementary perceptions, we do notice that even brutes do keep the whole field of perceptions before their mind's eye and then they attend to what they intend to. There is a strong mental propensity for organization and classification even among the brutes and humans are no exception.

The Leibniz *Theory of Pre-established Harmony* (or determinism) is not acceptable on its face-value. Instead, one may feel inclined to accept Bergsonian contention which he offered by way of rejoinder to Heraclitus, who it may be recalled offered his *Theory of Flux* (or change) as being the ultimate reality. In order to highlight and dramatize his thesis, Heraclitus proclaimed: "one cannot step into the same river twice", essentially, because in the second time around both the perceiving mind and the river have undergone a drastic change because we cannot arrest the flow either of the mind or of the river. Bergson rightly observed that: "we cannot step into the same river even once".

The state of flux or the state of "becoming", as the existentialists would like us to believe, is so rapid that *Sameness* is not truly applicable to the process of nature. To put it more precisely one may say that mind is always active and operative – both in thought and perceptions. The degrees of its actions and involvement may change but it is never inactive and passive altogether. Descartes has aptly pointed out that just as matter is inconceivable without extension, so is the case with mind, as mind is inconceivable without thoughts and ideas.

The world is shaped by how we look at it. Since everything, which exists or happens for an individual, exists only in his or her mind and happens for that person alone, the most essential thing is the constitution of one's mind. It is in the self-sufficiency of the mind. For reality is some sense constituted by the mind, not simply perceived by it. So the reality is two fold. The first one is superficial and is about apparent reasons, the royal road taken by every one; purely cosmetic. The second one is more fascinating and is about transcendence; substantive. As one moves into a new constellation, the previous one is slowly and gradually erased, as if it never existed. It simply shuts off. There are parts of our life, which we even do not remember. From the beginning to the end, the transcending mind that develops and vanishes is archaic, magical, mythical, rational, Cartesian-Newtonian and existential. And whereas the madman is pre-archaic as well as post-existential, death

is a deliverance from this tomb they call body to reach the all encompassing reality incarnated in time and space.

Countries too are as human beings, but with a collective mind. As a natural process, transcendence shall occur as society develops. Once there is a refusal to transcend, a state of decadence results. Minds turn prisons. These prisons have open gates yet few escapes. Desires are perceived as reality and perceptions are molded to fit *Weltanschauung*. Moreover, a sense of inferiority is part of human conscious and sub-conscious – that bone deep insecurity and perhaps human beings always overreact. An overreaction may be in the nature of mankind. The fear or hope gets one into an action.

Starting from Bengalis, the people of Pakistan have faced number of crises. It is not different today. Yet, the facts are not understood whereas one deals with a problem on the basis of facts surrounding that problem. The quality of mind is central, because wisdom is at work in body and universe. The decision should always be a sound one. Soundness means not only rational, but also an understanding balancing the drives. A sound decision is a maturity of judgement on an issue. The collective decision makes a distinction, because minds vibrate at different frequencies.

We need to stop lying and accept that this country's real troubles lie elsewhere – gross economic disparity, victimization of women and children, the failure to institute land reform and abolish feudalism, failure to provide quality healthcare and education to all and not only to the privileged, and a high incidence of violence.⁴ One cannot build a modern society on a feudal foundation. To know one's short comings is the pre-requisite of the solution.

Creativity emerges when one deals with difficult, complex and multiple historical situations at the same time. But history can turn into a travesty and mockery of facts if it is called upon to serve reductionism. Now in order to reach the truth, it is necessary, once in one's life, to put everything in doubt.⁵ Creativity is not possible without intellectual curiosity and it implies a ceaseless quest for self-realization, a yearning for new visions and a constant struggle to attain the unattainable.⁶ Creativity is shut down in most people by early socialization, thereby leaving it to misfits.⁷ The ultimate metaphysical ground is the *creative advance into novelty*.⁸ There is also a connection between being recluse and an imaginative mind. The second starts where the first finishes. And an original and penetrating mind carries the day. Mind is the kind of thing with which one can do wonders.

The Muslim mind has to be liberated from the sterility of half a millennium of intellectual stagnation and obscurantist orthodoxy.⁹ There is no clear boundary between the self and society – and this may be true at the automatic level.¹⁰ Memorable writings, be they for print or films have often nurtured hope, as the spiritual, intellectual, physical and social force that transforms the critical particle of the human brain from inertia to vitality.¹¹ Indeed.

There is always so much power in a new idea taking shape and changing the way people live and act.¹² The *magic* of an original idea is an ecstasy. It is bliss. It remains on the move until its realization. To be on the verge of sanity and insanity is esoteric. It is an oceanic feeling. There is nothing like it. It is a condensed phenomenon. It is a bright moment that is expanding and blazing, the original idea. These are the graces of Divine. The passage of time selects the mind. The interpretation of an original idea becomes an epic. And an epic is the outcome of both elation and sorrow. The ordinary people of Pakistan will have to do extra-ordinary things. For the challenges are curious and concerns are numerous.

The *thought*, an *unspoken*, an *unwritten* word; the *idea* breaks out and realizes itself by translating itself into words, painting, sculpture or scientific invention. And everything starts with thought and language. The thought deals with word sense whereas language uses word meaning. A congruent combination results in a creative expression. And *precision* too is an instrument of thought whereas “thought” itself cannot deviate from the currents of the Kosmos, because, “thought” is a product and performance of those very currents.¹³ Thought does not express itself in words, but rather realizes itself in them.¹⁴ The big question is whether thought is capacity or Divine?

Our opposable thumbs and big brains gave us the tools to dominate the planet, but wisdom comes more slowly than physical hardware.¹⁵ Why has consciousness been so dim? The hope – a realistic one, perhaps – is that the struggles still to come are fewer than those left behind.¹⁶ Whereas in Pakistan, for the tragedy we must blame all categories of ‘leaders’ – the generals, retired generals, politicians, the judiciary, the bureaucracy, ulema, academia, intellectuals, feudals, industrial tycoons and the media.¹⁷ The crisis of leadership, in fact, is the crisis of mind.

Today when our leaders proudly speak of Pakistan having survived for sixty years, they fail to mention that the Pakistan we have today is not the country that was born in 1947.¹⁸ It is time for the political leadership to be humble and repair the decline of competence that has condemned the majority of Pakistanis to a life of unspeakable misery and degradation.¹⁹ We Pakistanis know what havoc the elite at the

top have played with democracy and democratic institutions.²⁰ As a class it is “essentially bogus”.²¹ The slide is much more than this or that. It is simply socio-economic and political chaos, let alone the law and order and lack of capacity and competence. And nothing will be settled until everything is settled including the shift of focus.

Pakistan must back its policies and reforms with political participation, science, ethics and pluralism. The 21st century dictates as such. Lack of it is domestic instability including economic, political and geo-political subservience. Besides, a culture of violence is badly affecting the daily life. If political instability and violence is controlled, the Islamic world including Pakistan has the potential to build once again a glorious civilization. Creativity and the rise of Islam went side by side, as is the case with the rise of the West. Creativity leads to a ‘level of consciousness’ that counters political and religious reductionism. The rise and decline of states has a great deal to do with demographics, culture, natural resources, educational systems, economic policy, political stability, individual opportunity and legal frameworks – all matters largely beyond the control of outsiders.²²

Conclusion

The signs were good. The atmosphere was good. The hope was that change is afoot. But it turned out to be as usual. Everything went in the air. A whole list of things has come up. Somehow no passage is without problems. The splits are double, at times triple and multiple. There are no saner moments of brilliance. The inadequacies are deadly. Who would look for a remedy? Time necessitates a shift of focus. The system of thought will have to be changed by integrating arts, morals and science as a start point and not emotions whereas the present context revolves around the assumption that the spoken mind is the deed done, as if the verb expressed is an action accomplished. Every government is worse than the previous one and the leadership not only wins the cake but eats it too.

The *idea* that Jinnah started with did not take root. The legal, and not political mind, was at ease with the settlement. Being a lawyer he thought that the case has been won, but the story did not end. Take for example 1971 – here was a failure that severed the nation into two. The philosophic bases of Pakistan were put to the test. The word Pakistan did not change, every thing else changed. And today it is a meltdown. The idea on which Pakistan was built is bruised. Citizen is an irrelevant stranger. Assuming anything else is begging the question.

The lack of control over the instrument of craft, i.e., language, disturbs. The despondency leads to a neutral gear. It smells of weakness. Everything in the garden is not green. The equilibrium has limits. The

climax is in the realm of law and constitution. The importance of things is in relation to the impact on policy. Criterion has the most telling impact on the net of conceptual understanding. It guides one from known to unknown.

Therefore, each one must have a style, a style in thought, and an artist in creativity. The critical is pre-verbal thought. The syntax of thought has its own grammar, but the language deceives awareness. The superficial is strengthened whereas consciousness is real because unfolding takes place there. The meanings are multi-layered. The world always yields up the meaning. What matters is the state of being. The reflection is in relation to the level of being. Seeing is in the sense of comprehension and understanding. That is how it appears different to different people. And that is why the "doctrine" of a thinker is that which, within what is said, remains unsaid, that to which we are exposed so that we might expend ourselves on it.²³

Parenthetically, it may be stated that the philosophers of history contend that there are two foundational principles for the rise and fall of civilizations, and these are: Unity and Justice. Unity, they hold, can be based on multiple factors, such as, common race, blood, language, history, hopes, fears, dreams, country and one could add even common religion. The operative principle is: more these elements, stronger the sense of unity. Unity is supposed to cement various factions and sections of a society and move it like one organism towards the realization of its common goal. While justice, they contend, helps to preserve unity. For if justice is gone, unity cannot stay behind far too long either. In fact, Aristotle rightly observes, when justice is gone, "man turns into an armed animal".

In case of Pakistan, our leadership invoked Islam to cement and galvanize the masses for the realization of a separate homeland. But the moment Pakistan was born, Islam was set aside as a source of unity and identity. And unfortunately justice was never allowed to be born in the first instance. Obscurantists, anti-state and anti-Islam elements were allowed to defeat the very purpose of Pakistan's creation. Today, the whole fabric of our society stands tottering to the core and we are suffering from a national psychosis.

Man, it may be observed, resorts to two kind of identities to define his being, that is, earth-based identity; and God-based (or religion-based) identity. The whole debate virtually boils down to two kinds of world-views. In materialistic world-view, we contend that everything comes from matter and unto matter it returns. This world-view leads us to nationalism, humanism and secularism. The second world-view holds that everything comes from God and unto God it returns. This world-view gives us trans-

national, trans-geographic and trans-cultural outlook and provides a metaphysical anchorage to our mind and faith.

It may be underlined that our Prophet (PBUH) followed God-based sense of identity. For instance, the Prophet (PBUH) left his home-country – Makkah City State – his nation and nation-hood, his history and geography back in Makkah and gathered together his Ummah in Madina. Subsequently, he went through a series of wars against his own nation, (where father was on one side and son on the other, where uncle was on one side and the nephew on the other, where one brother was on one side and the one on the other), until his own nation too entered the fold of Islam.

Islam insists that all Muslims are brothers in faith whereas the rest of humanity is their brothers in creation. We are all born from Adam and Eve and they were raised from dust. Man, Islam insists, should be honored on the basis of the contents of his mind rather than the color of his skin or the language that he may speak or the area he may belong to. In fact, Islam introduced a new Charter of Humanity. But unfortunately we have not allowed it to sink into our psyche and the collective mode of our thought and conduct.

Moreover, we are accustomed to use mind for insights. Mind for deeper insights is misleading. After getting conscious of the fact through the function of consciousness, the mind rationalizes it. And consciousness is nonexistent unless it is a function of presence. It is an operation of awareness. The consciousness of consciousness is everything. It can be a witness of its own. It is every cell in the body, and every particle in the universe. Consciousness is bigger than normal awareness. Its intelligence is much broader than normal rationality. It is intuitive and insightful. It understands subtle connections. It apprehends messages in words, double talk and metaphor cutting across oceans. It recognizes original words and an original one without words. Its wisdom is immeasurably great and holistic. It is in flashes and gestures. Consciousness is Divine and Divinity. Human beings are always at the threshold of good and evil and consciousness is a point of transition from human to Divine. The problems created by a state of consciousness cannot be solved by the same state of consciousness. The solution has to have a new and different state of consciousness. Awareness is the dance of life whereas transformation is becoming.

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