

# LEARNING FROM THE HISTORY

Mubarak Ali



Reproduced by  
Sani H. Panhwar

# Learning from the History

**Mubarak Ali**

Reproduced by  
**Sani H. Panhwar**











# History

## The Big Picture

As knowledge unfolds the mysteries of this universe, history also extends its domain to include different aspects. After investigation, it unifies them in order to create a comprehensive knowledge of the universe.

David Christian, professor of history, introduced a concept of history known as Big History, based on the idea that the academic study of the past can no longer be carried out from a nationalist perspective. He argues that the discipline will progress only once it charts human activity with a global scope.

It is the technique which the historian Braudel described as 'Longue dur,e' or long duration. According to him, historians can detect major changes when history is studied on a broader scale of time. Along with astronomers, geologists, biologists, anthropologists, archaeologists, historians, David Christian used the technique to study history, social and natural sciences. According to him, the history of nature and human beings is closely integrated and falls under the same sphere of knowledge. History records change, without which there would be no history. History begins with the creation of the universe, the stars, the solar system, and the appearance of earth.

Life emerged on earth and as a result of an evolutionary process; the Homo habilis appeared, followed by the Homo erectus, and finally the homo sapien. With this began the incredible journey of the homo sapien from Africa to the other parts of the world, which has been carefully documented by archaeologists.

The Prehistoric era spans the time from about 2,000,000BC to roughly 2000BC, when the Classical Age began with the rise of the Greek and Roman empires.

Archaeologists term the pre-historic period as the time before written history began, so it encompasses the Stone Age (Paleolithic and Neolithic ages), the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age. The Palaeolithic Age had duration of 10,000 years while the duration of the Neolithic age is 5,000 years. The duration of the modern period so far is 2,000 years and it still continues. Both the Palaeolithic and Neolithic ages marked important geographic and climatic changes that affected human societies. It was a period of exploration where man learned about trees, plants, animals and different sources of food. He hunted for about three hours, and the rest of the time was devoted to discovering, learning and rest. During this period, man developed some important characteristics which helped him to survive in the changing environment. For his survival, man needed to be



innovative and constantly improved tools made of stone and bones. He acquired adaptability to changing climate. He shared knowledge with other fellows and communicated it to the next generation.

This was followed by the early agriculture period when man settled in fertile land and started farming. Life of a farmer was difficult compared to a hunter's. He had to clear forest land and develop it for irrigation. In absence of developed tools, he had to work hard to look after his crop. Gradually he learnt farming. In the Bronze Age, tools and weapons were invented. With the increase of production and growth of population, the social structure of communities transformed. In the early period, the concept of power was from below because to protect itself and its produce against invasions, communities would hand over power to a group of people who could guard against invaders. Nomadic tribes living outside settlements raided them to loot and plunder agricultural produce. This led to the building of walls around settlements for protection.

Later, in the agricultural period, the guardians assumed power to protect their community which created the concept of power from above. It was during this period that the institution of state emerged along with kingship, army, bureaucracy and social hierarchy developed.

During this era emerged great empires, absolute monarchy with divine power, bloody battles for expansion of empires, building of great monuments such as temples, palaces, tombs and forts as expressions of power and grandeur.

The state began to extract surplus from people to sustain its expenses. The discovery of iron led to technological development. The invention of writing documented political, social, artistic and literary activities of societies. As some scripts were deciphered, immense knowledge and material were provided to historians to reconstruct the ancient past.

To David Christian, the 17th century is the beginning of the modern period. The Industrial Revolution in England which later spread to other European countries, radically transformed the world. It led to capitalism, while technological and scientific inventions not only increased knowledge of the world but also changed the lifestyle of human beings. The speed of change is so rapid today that it has become impossible to assimilate it in different aspects of life.

Big History traces the history of the universe which encompasses 13 billion years. It is a fascinating journey to understand human history in such a broad perspective. Is there any chance of introducing this course in Pakistani universities?

## Black Mirror

History often helps in analyzing the present day issues by reflecting on past events. Generally, this approach is adopted in a society where there is dictatorship, censorship and legal restrictions to express discontent in regard to government policies. The method is effective in creating political consciousness by comparing the present with the consequences of bad governance and disillusionment of the past.

After the independence of Pakistan, the army and the bureaucracy emerged as powerful state institutions. In the absence of a constitution, the two institutions were unaccountable to any authority. Bureaucracy followed in the footsteps of the colonial model, treating people with arrogance and contempt. A strong centre allowed it to rule over the provinces unchecked. The provinces, including the former East Pakistan, greatly suffered because of this.

Sindh chose history to raise its voice against the oppressive attitude of the bureaucracy and a strong centre. Despite the grand, national narratives which justified the creation of a new country, Sindh responded by presenting its problems and grievances by citing historical suffering of its people.

During the reign of Shahjahan, Yusuf Mirak, a historian, wrote the book *Tarikh-i-Mazhar-i-Shahjahani*. The idea was to bring to Shahjahan's notice the corruption and repressive attitude of the Mughal officials in Sindh. As they were far from the centre, their crimes were neither reported to the emperor nor were they held accountable for their misdeeds.

Mirak minutely described their vices and crimes and how the people were treated inhumanly by them. He hoped that his endeavors might alleviate the suffering of the people when the emperor took action against errant officials. However, Mirak could not present the book to the emperor but his documentation became a part of history.

When the Persian text of the book was published by Sindhi Adabi Board, its introduction was written by Gusamuddin Rashdi who pointed out the cruelty, brutality, arrogance and contempt of the Mughal officials for the common man. Accountable to none, they had fearlessly carried on with their misdeeds.

Today, one can find similarities between those Mughal officials and Pakistani bureaucrats of the present day. In the past Sindh endured the repercussions of maladministration and exploitation in pretty much the same way as the common man today suffers in silence. But one can learn from the past and analyze the present to avoid mistakes.

The history of Sindh shows two types of invaders. The first example is of invaders like the Arabs and the Tarkhans who defeated the local rulers, assumed the status of the ruling classes and treated the local population as inferior. The second type was of invaders like Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali who returned home after looting and plundering. The rulers of Sindh defended the country but sometimes compromised with the invaders. Those who defended it were vanquished and discredited by history, and their role was not recognised.

G.M. Syed in his tract *Sindh Jo Surma* made attempt to rehabilitate them. According to him, Raja Dahir who defended Sindh against the Arabs was a hero while Muhammad Bin Qasim was an agent of the Umayyad imperialism who attacked Sindh to expand the empire and to exploit Sindh's resources.

Decades later, in 1947, a large number of immigrants arrived from across the border and settled in Sindh. This was seen by Sindhi nationalists as an attempt to endanger the purity of the Sindhi culture. In 1960, agricultural land was generously allotted to army officers and bureaucrats. Throughout the evolving circumstances in Sindh, the philosophy of Syed's book is the protection and preservation of the rights of Sindhis with the same spirit with which the heroes of the past sacrificed their lives for the honour of their country.

These writings create a political consciousness among the Sindhi population and show how history can be used politically to bring to light the present day problems and analyzing one's historical mistakes by revisiting the past.

## Looking Back

The image of a historical period may vary with the perspective of present day circumstances. If the present is prosperous, the past goes into oblivion and holds no charm for the society.

With disorder, confusion, and discontent in a society, people look towards the past for relief which seems to appear ideal. Historical accounts and narratives provide a rich source of material for resolution of present day problems by reviving the past.

Sometimes, a particular period in history becomes a burden to the present and its revival or continuity can threaten society. The past seems like an obstacle to innovation and transformation of society on the basis of new challenges.

In the 14th century, when the intellectuals in Europe realized that continuation of the Middle Ages and their traditions was impeding progress, they responded to the challenges of their time by reviving the classical period of Rome and Greece. Philosophy and literature changed their outlook and enabled them to contribute to art, literature, architecture, and social and natural sciences with intellectual vigor and vitality. To them, the middle ages were dark and barren and could not help them resolve issues that confronted them.

However, the image of middle ages changed twice. First, as a reaction to the Age of Enlightenment, when disillusioned by rational thinking, the Romantics turned to nature and its simplicity, romanticizing the middle ages as a period of peace, harmony and spirituality.

The positive image of middle ages revived for the second time during industrialization of Europe and USA.

The early period presented a harrowing picture of the condition of working classes living in subhuman conditions without proper sanitation, clean water and safety in factories. There was unemployment and no social security. The industrial cities were polluted and provided no entertainment or recreation for the working classes.

Brooks Adams (d.1927, Boston) in *The Law of Civilization and Decay* published in 1895, discussed the rise and fall of civilization and attributed each historical period with human emotion. He identified the middle ages with fear dominating the society. As a result of which, religiosity and piety emerged which was

expressed through beautiful cathedrals, paintings and sculpture. According to him, the crusade was a very significant event of this period when responding to Pope Urban, the whole of Europe was ready to fight against infidels and liberate holy places.

He was dismayed at the way industrialization degraded society. He identified greed as a major human emotion of his age and believed it created a sense of competition where moral values were replaced by material values. The competition was so severe that opponents trampled each other to achieve personal gains.

Those who were disillusioned by industrialization and its outcome turned to the medieval past which was simpler. Historians and novelists had associated the middle ages with such romance that people looked at it with idealism while chivalrous knights and tales of their adventures and bravery were a source of inspiration. The Gothic buildings of churches and cathedrals echoed the chanting of priests and revived memories of the past.

It became clear that the past cannot be revived and it could become a refuge for the disillusioned.

In our case we look towards our medieval period selectively, emphasizing on conquest and military adventures. We construct the image of generals and conquerors as heroes but ignore the contribution of philosophers, thinkers, artists and men of letters. Reconstructing the past creates war like qualities in a society, where people believe that war is the only solution for all problems. The society then gears itself to devote all its resources to strengthen the army and is ready to suffer acute poverty and misery. Education is neglected and intellectuals are condemned. Sadly, we do not have historians to correct misconceptions of our past nor to improve historical narratives to highlight innovation, and to condemn the belligerent psyche of our nation.

## Politicisation of the Past

The past has many faces and shades. Sometimes it is romanticized and glorified; sometimes it is portrayed as dark and ugly. In both the cases it is used as a political tool, either to revive the lost and forgotten social order or to get rid of it to make a new beginning.

Up to the 18th century, most of the countries were unaware of their ancient civilizations. As a result of archaeological excavations and discoveries civilizations which lay beneath the earth were brought to light. The discoveries of some of the sites and monuments thrilled the world and opened the gates of knowledge, at the same time broadening the vision of history.

Those who realized the significance of the past were the intellectuals of the Renaissance era who are known in history as humanists. Their first concern was how to liberate society from the traditions and values of the medieval period which blocked the creation of new ideas and thoughts. To discredit it, they dubbed the medieval period as dark and consequently rejected its heritage.

On the other hand, they resurrected the classical past of the Greek and Roman civilizations and revived the classical literature which provided them impetus to change the society's superstition laden beliefs to enlightened and energetic thinking.

Classical literature helped to liberate European society from the clutches of the church. However, efforts were made not to replicate antiquity or to emulate the classical literary figures but to invent new concepts and ideas in response to the challenges of their time. As a result of the writings of these intellectuals, society began to change its whole structure. It led to the birth of modern Europe.

This pattern was followed by other nations with different results. The past emerged as a romantic phenomenon in countries which were liberated from colonialism and needed some solid historical identity. In these countries the past was used as a tool by politicians to mobilize the emotions of the people to inculcate a sense of pride. They raised the slogan to revive the glorious past in order to change society.

However, this approach shows the bankruptcy of the intellectuals who relied on the past rather than creating a new system according to the needs of the time. Moreover, it was an attempt to replicate the past than to alleviate the ills and to reform society. It is like putting old wine in new bottles. All such efforts failed to produce any positive results.

In case of Muslims, there are three historical periods which they desire to revive in the hope to reform their society. First is the early period of Islam when there was simplicity, austerity and observance of religious teachings. To some it was the ideal period and the revival of it is the only solution to modern problems. It invokes the implementation of religious punishments to curb crimes and corruption.

The second ideal period is the Abbasid rule when Arab power extended itself by defeating the most powerful states of its time. As it became an imperial power, it produced a grand and charming culture. Baghdad became the centre of literature and art and its grandeur exceeded all its contemporaries. It was the period of conquests and occupation of other countries. It is believed that the revival of its memories would revitalize the dormant Muslim nations into action.

The third period is the rule of the Moors in Spain. It was significant as it created a multi-cultural and multi-religious society based on tolerance and amity. The result of this policy was that it produced great philosophical traditions which influenced medieval Europe and contributed to its enlightenment. All three periods are romanticized and idealized. They created a false pride but no practical result to change the degenerate society.

Hindu extremists raised the slogan of Rama rajya or the rule of mythical Rama which is portrayed as the golden period of India. Gandhi also used this slogan to mobilize the Indian masses. When the BJP came to power, the model of Rama's rule became their ideal to solve all present problems by replicating it. However, politics of India, instead of looking back, turned towards modernization and treated the past as history.

The past is also exploited by despots and dictators to legitimize their power. Muhammad Raza Pahlavi, the king of Iran, celebrated the rule of Cyrus and linked it to his own dynasty as the continuation of ancient royalty. Saddam Hussain took full advantage of the discovery of the Mesopotamian civilization and reconstructed old Babylonian grandeur by presenting himself as the successor of Nebuchadnezzar, the great ruler and conqueror.

However, in some countries, the past is politicized to create national sentiment. In this case the past has become a hurdle and makes society backward. The other approach is to reconstruct the past but not to portray it as ideal. There is no doubt that knowledge of the past is important to understand the process of history.

## Historical Monuments

Historical monuments have acquired distinction after the emergence of the nation state and have become a part of national heritage. In this capacity they symbolize national identity and culture. That's why nations are particularly careful regarding their preservation and conservation. If they are catalogued properly, one can analyze the continuity of history and point out changes which occurred in the historical process from time to time.

As the consciousness of their importance emerged in the modern period, monuments were divided into two categories: those bearing national significance and those which are unique in structure and design; these are designated as world heritage and declared a part of world civilization. In this case Unesco helps take care of their preservation.

In Pakistan we have both national monuments and those which are listed as world heritage. They date from as far back as the Indus Valley Civilization to the relatively recent colonial era. However, there is some confusion as to which historical monuments can be termed national. As the ideology of Pakistan is based on the two nation theory, it identifies monuments on the basis of religion, i.e. Hindu and Muslim monuments. Interestingly, this classification was first made by Fergusson, a British colonial officer and author on the subject of Indian architecture. We happily accepted it and adjusted it in our ideological framework. According to this ideology, none of the pre-Islamic heritage is national. That is to say, monuments of the Indus Valley Civilization and of ancient India, which include Hindu and Buddhist architecture, are not part of our national heritage. We have also excluded the Sikhs and the British from our national arena.

This approach thus results in a general lack of ownership and the feeling that the preservation and protection of these non-national monuments is not our national responsibility. Therefore, they are abandoned and ignored to decay and perish; the Buddhist statues and rock carvings in Swat valley and a large number of memorials and tombs which are scattered throughout Pakistan are a good example of this neglect. However, our apathy extends even towards Muslim heritage as most of these monuments, too, are in a pathetic condition.

This is how we interpret our history. We deny our ancient Indian past. We have erased the Sikh period from our historical narratives. Instead, we have linked our historical roots to Central Asia, Iran, and Afghanistan. This has changed the whole perspective of our culture. It is an attempt to detach ourselves from India and carve a separate identity. By discriminating against monuments on the basis



of religion and excluding them from national heritage we distort cultural traditions and break the continuity of history.

Buildings are not merely edifices of stone and mortar; they have a social and cultural utility. They have the social, political and cultural history of their times hidden in their structures which can be discovered and reconstructed by historians. For example, when we study the construction of a fort built during the time of the Mughals, we can find in it the whole structure of the state. As it served as royal residence, it shows the style of their living and of governance.

For instance, the hall of public audience indicates royal contact with people and the hall of private audience signifies the close association of the king with his nobility. It housed the harem, royal karkhanajats or factories, administrative offices, treasury, pleasure garden, royal hammam or bathroom and space for worship.

If we study a haveli or a palace of a noble, we can reconstruct his social life and that of his family. There are rooms within rooms without any door to separate them. The veranda and courtyard are open. It shows the shared life of a family instead of individuals. The concept of privacy at that time was quite different than what we have today. Therefore, these historical buildings are our guide to the social and cultural norms of their time and provide valuable material to historians.

Moreover, the significance of monuments is that they reflect the mind of their period. They are identified as the spirit of their age. One can analyse the aesthetic taste, architectural skill and maturity of intellect by studying them. As a whole, they represent the professional creativity of artisans and architects and the skill of the engineers and workers. They link the past to the present.

There is a need to create historical consciousness among people in order to preserve and protect our monuments. Otherwise people will continue to destroy them and appropriate the land.

## Obscure and Confused

In ancient India there was no tradition of history writing. The rulers and nobility had no interest in recording their achievements like other rulers of ancient civilizations.

The reason of disinterest towards history was the belief that life had cyclic movement and the same events repeated themselves. Therefore, what was the point in writing history which hardly changed and only repeated itself?

The absence of historical records makes it difficult for modern historians to write a comprehensive history of the ancient period. However, there are some references of historical events in myths, folk stories, and religious literature which are not enough to write complete history.

During the colonial period, the European scholars who studied the history of India argued that the region had no history because the process which creates history was stagnant. The Europeans believed that they were a superior race from an advanced civilization compared to the Indians who were historically backward and far behind in the domain of culture. This provided them a tool to rule over such a backward nation and enable it to become civilized.

According to some European historians, the Indian village was functionally self sufficient and there was no need to have any external contact. Life was limited to a circle and there was no need to move, invent anything new or change the style of life within the village. This system hardly altered the social and cultural life of the ancient people. The only change that occurred periodically was the ruling dynasties which did not strongly impact the social, cultural or economic fabric of the society.

To counter the colonial interpretation of ancient Indian history, some Indian nationalist historians made attempts to prove that ancient India was not backward but most advanced in the sphere of civilization. For example, according to them the Rigveda composed around 1700- 1100 BC includes hymns belonging to the geological period. They believed that the period of Vedas was the golden period of ancient India. Some historians even tried to prove that most of the modern inventions such as aircraft and missiles were actually invented by the ancient Indian scientists.

A group of modern historians including D.D. Kosambi, Romila Thapar and R.S. Sharma have written well-researched history of ancient India based on reliable sources. Their writing has brought to light forgotten and distorted history. On

the basis of these writings it can be said that the ancient Indian society was not static but produced valuable ideas and thoughts.

## History without Historians

Recently, I was approached by the department of culture, government of Sindh, to attend a meeting in regard to writing the history of Sindh.

It can be written with a fresh perspective based on new material available. But who will write the history and secondly, where are the historians?

These questions highlight the dilemma of Pakistani historiography which has no tradition of research, neither of training young historians. Our universities and other educational and research institutions do not produce well trained or professional historians.

In the 1980s, I recall, Waheed-uz-Zaman - the Director of Pakistan Institute of History and Culture - proposed writing a multi-volume history of Pakistan. Subsequently, topics were suggested and assigned to historians but nothing materialized.

In the 1990s, attempts were made again by the same institute and topics were assigned to historians for writing respective volumes against handsome remuneration.

When they approached me, I warned them not to waste money on such projects and wrote an article on writing history without historians. It was not appreciated by the authorities.

I wanted to suggest that instead of asking history teachers to write history, the institute should launch a programme to train young historians and invite prominent historians from abroad to teach them research techniques. Nobody paid any attention and their project failed miserably.

After partition, Sindhi Adabi Board had launched an ambitious project for a multi-volume history of Sindh. Despite the fact that there were historians who could accomplish this task, just a few volumes were published and the project remained incomplete. Perhaps, the department of culture, government of Sindh, could have learnt a lesson from the past but they didn't.

Moreover, there is a need to understand new trends and theories of history. So far, the emphasis is on political history or history of ruling dynasties. Other social, cultural and economic aspects are ignored. There is a concept known as history from below which includes the contribution and role of peasants, artisans, workers, women and other marginalized groups. It is time to change our

historical outlook which is outdated and obsolete. History should be traced from below and not from above.

Before making any attempts to write history, it is important to publish primary sources. One laudable task of Sindhi Adabi Board was that it published the Persian sources of the history of Sindh. Since we have no scholars with a sound knowledge of Persian language, research on the medieval history of Sindh could never be done.

The Sindh Archive Department has rich material on modern history including records from the colonial period which could provide rich information. Recently, the department has acquired documents pertaining to revenue, police, CID and judiciary.

On the basis of these archives, the social and cultural history of Sindh can be written. However, the first task would be to edit and publish these records.

Unfortunately, it appears that neither concerned authorities, nor the society is interested in promoting the discipline of history. Public universities offer traditional history courses which hold no inspiration for students. There is no training offered in research methodology and no space for creativity. People do their Masters and Doctorates in philosophy to get promoted to higher grades while the topics selected for research are irrelevant and boring. Considering the situation, there is no hope for changing the way social sciences are taught or to improve the discipline of history.

The department of culture must first train young historians and then develop projects for history writing. Without trained historians, plans for writing history are a waste of time and money.

## Paucity of History

Nations that were colonized by the European powers during the 18th century have been interpreted in colonial history as uncivilized and backward.

After independence, it was their task to reconstruct the nation with a fresh perspective and retrieve what was lost during the colonial period.

Considering this background, we can study whether such attempts have ever been made in Pakistan or have we truly neglected the task of rewriting history? Sadly, the early historians of Pakistan were too busy justifying partition of the subcontinent, instead of presenting an analysis and a critical examination of the colonial past.

One of the reasons for not being able to understand the recent past is the continuation of colonial institutions and traditions suited to the ruling classes. This hampered our understanding of history. It was believed that once the system was accepted there was no need to criticise it. Maintaining the colonial system and not changing it shows the political and intellectual bankruptcy of the ruling classes. Later on, if changes were made, the same structure was followed which further deteriorated the system.

How has Pakistan contributed to the civilization of mankind? Nations are recognised by their history which gives them an identity and character. If their history is full of creativity and innovation, it distinguishes the nation and gives them respect and honour among other nations. But if there is no creative contribution by a nation to the civilization of the world, these nations are ignored and their dignity is lost.

It should also be remembered that history records only events which have a social, political and economic significance and impact on the society. Routine events do not play a part in historical accounts.

Since 1947 to the present day, Pakistan has hardly contributed a significant event to the development of the society. Politically, there is a cyclical version of history when power shifted from the army to politicians or from one party to another without any momentous change in society. Nothing important happened during these periodical changes. Intellectuals, artists, architects, sculptors and musicians produced no creative work. Instead, they emulated western traditions which only depicted their mental shallowness. Economically, our nation is not independent and heavily relies on IMF and World Bank loans.

It is imperative to analyze the contents of the Pakistani history - what have we achieved during the short span of time? Have we ever produced talented leadership? Has our nation advanced in different aspects of society? There are many such questions which the people of Pakistan would like to understand. Everybody recognizes the backwardness and decline of society while each successive government accused the past one for deterioration. Army rulers criticized the civilians who in turn condemned the army rule. Neither army rulers nor politicians are ready to accept any guilt or responsibility for the mistakes that have been made in the past.

There were some resistance movements which sadly ended without creating any moral values. Nationalist movements in our backward culture took an extremist turn. There was a lawyers' movement for the restoration of judiciary. But it too failed to create any moral values in the lawyer's community. Individually, those who are successful in the society, acquire high status as a result of fraud, deception and intrigue. Those who are involved in corruption are not ashamed at all; on the contrary they proclaim their honesty and assert that truth and justice are on their side. They have to change the meaning of moral values. To justify their corruption and their accumulation of wealth and possession of properties, they invoke the blessings of God. With this kind of history, the young generation is inspired by these gangsters who have become a model for success in life. When society accepts them as honourable men, the whole concept of honesty and nobility becomes irrelevant.

Leaders who want to secure a dignified place in history must realize that history brutally judges the record of individuals and nations. It does not spare the corrupt demagogues who adopt immoral means to come into power. Nero, Caligula and Tiberius were great emperors of the Roman Empire but now regarded as mere monsters in history.

Corrupt and powerful individuals improve their image with time but cannot retain the same status in history. In case of Pakistan there is a poverty of history which reduces the Pakistani nation as insignificant and backward.

## Peddling History

History is sometimes used politically or exploited in the interest of the powerful sections of society who wield influence and authority. In the early period, when historians were in the employment of ruling classes, history was written solely to highlight the achievements and virtues of the rulers and nobility while ignoring their crimes and vices.

However, when a ruling dynasty changed, a new history was written to legitimize the new rulers and condemn their predecessors as cruel and inhuman. This happened when the Umayyads were defeated by the Abbasids. Likewise, the Mughal historians ignored the rule of Sher Shah Suri, condemning him as a usurper. This trajectory of history creates doubts about its credibility. Methods of modern historical research sift facts from fiction. When flattery and sycophancy is deleted, a correct form of history comes into being. Those who were condemned in the past are rehabilitated as a result of new investigation.

After the British conquest of India, the ancient Indian period was referred to as superstitious and the Muslim rule was condemned for being despotic and tragic. This interpretation justified the colonial rule.

Interestingly, we find that the current history of Pakistan is being approached in the same manner so that when there is a change in the regime, the past government is declared corrupt and inefficient. Every martial dictatorship that comes into power, ridicules politicians and political parties in order to gain popularity.

When democratic nations broaden their horizons, the approach to history changes so that it can be written in the ideological framework, be that nationalism, socialism, fascism or Nazism. Nationalist historians use history to glorify the past in order to create pride for culture and heritage.

The fascist and the Nazi approach to history were to assert racial supremacy over 'inferior' races, to enslave them and exploit their resources. Colonial powers on the other hand used it to conquer and occupy the Asian and African nations with a ploy to civilize and modernize these regions.

When the struggle against colonialism began, history was revived to bring back past glories which were forgotten and ignored. A new history was now required to use as an inspiration to struggle against the colonial powers. Their defeat hence was not shown to be a result of their internal weaknesses but of conspiracy and betrayal.



Mir Jafar and Mir Sadiq were traitors who caused the defeat of Nawab Sirajuddaulah and Tipu Sultan, respectively. In the 1857 rebellion, the British had a large number of sympathizers who provided them important information which raised questions as to what could have been the reasons that created these traitors.

The approach of history changed during the freedom struggle in the subcontinent. Indian historians chose the Mughals as a tool to create a spirit of nationalism among the various ethnic groups, and to unite them. Their argument being that during this period, the Mughals not only united India as one country but promoted and patronized culture which had evolved over a period of time by Hindus and Muslims alike.

This composite culture collectively referred to as *tehzeeb* (civilization), unified different regions and ethnicities. With this approach, Akbar emerged as the great Mughal ruler who laid down the foundation of Hindu-Muslim unity, religious tolerance and secular traditions, symbolizing modern Indian nationalism and secularism. Sadly, on the same grounds he is condemned and criticized in Pakistan.

The nationalist interpretation had a setback in 1920s when political communalization divided history. The concept of two nations was a heavy blow to the nationalist history. The communal Hindu historians regarded the ancient past as a source of inspiration while the Muslim historians disowned it, linking their history with the Muslim world.

After independence, historical accounts changed radically, especially in textbooks. The British version of history which glorified the empire builders and the heroes of the Raj disappeared and were replaced by freedom fighters. Those who collaborated with the British were identified as traitors. However, the division of the subcontinent led two nations to different directions.

In the history of Pakistan, the period of ancient India is deleted and there is no information about the events and historical individuals who played an important role to enrich the subcontinent politically and philosophically. When history is used as the basis of furthering a political ideology, it loses its objectivity.

## Terms of Reference

To understand history better, historians sometimes coin terms that help to comprehend themes, ideas and concepts of a certain age and reflect the human mind functioning behind historical events and movements. Generally, these terms evolve due to certain circumstances but are used in varied historical contexts when historians can trace a similarity of events.

For example, the term 'young Turks' was used for the first time for young Turkish army officers who wanted to reform the declining Ottoman empire by introducing radical changes in the government structure. Today this term is popularly used in reference to army officers in the third world countries who plan to reform society by staging a coup.

The term 'blood and iron' was used for the policy of Bismarck, the chancellor of Prussia, who united Germany by following his policy of war and bloodshed. The term 'gunboat diplomacy' is still used when an imperial power imposes its terms by violence and coercion. But 'Renaissance' and 'Reformation' are two terms which remained popular among historians and have been frequently used.

The term Renaissance was first used to describe the intellectual and artistic movement which began in Italy and spread to other parts of Europe.

The Italian humanists wanted to liberate society from the power of the church, denounced the Middle Ages as dark and made an attempt to link their cultural relationship with classical Greek and Roman history. Some Muslim historians who became fascinated by this term tried to apply it to Islamic history.

Interestingly, the humanists regarded the middle Ages as being worthless and without any intellectual creativity. On the other hand, for Muslims the middle Ages represented a glorious period when not only politically but culturally, Muslim civilization reached its zenith. This age saw the rise of the Safavids in Iran, the Mughals in India and the Ottoman in Turkey as great empires and in light of their achievements, Muslims cannot consider the Middle Ages as a dark period.

When the Greek and Roman societies flourished in the classical period, for Muslims it was the pre-Islamic age known as *jahiliya* or the period of ignorance in Arabia. Hence Muslims do not attribute much learning to that period. While the European Renaissance achieved excellence in art and architecture, introduced

liberal and humanistic knowledge and consequently challenged religious belief, Islamic awakening always emphasised on the revival of religion.

In this case, knowledge has remained subordinate to religion and man is regarded as a mere mortal having no significant role to play in this world. This is perhaps why just a few rational Muslim thinkers have emerged in history.

The Middle Ages was the period when in 1492, the Spaniards invaded America and not only plundered its gold and silver, but decimated its indigenous population with brutality. When its population was reduced, they imported slaves from Africa to work in gold and silver mines. Jacob Burckhardt, the Swiss historian, regards European Renaissance as the birth of the new man and an age which produced reason and beauty.

Jules Michelete, the French historian who for the first time used the term Renaissance, denied its origin in Italy and applied it to the 16th century France. He condemned the Florence Renaissance as having been influenced by the church and politically controlled by tyrants.

Adorno, a thinker from the Frankfurt school, in his critique wrote that instead of reason and beauty, the product of its modern values created fascism and Nazism, suggesting that Renaissance may have some dark aspects too.

The Reformation movement emerged in Europe following Renaissance which began to interpret religion against the church's diktats. Not only Martin Luther was highly influenced by Erasmus's translation of the New Testament into simple Greek, but it also sparked an enthusiasm among people.

In Muslim society there is no comparable similarity to the Reformation in European society.

Reformation was against the hold of the church and the Pope and it endeavored to reform an institution, not abolish it. In Muslim society, there is neither church, nor a pope. Therefore, whenever Islamic reformist movements were launched, the motive was to go back to the original teachings. The emphasis was not on change but on revival.

Some reformist movements which tried to change the structure from within and adjust according to modern needs have failed to appeal to the Muslim masses. Therefore, to understand Muslim history and its processes, we have to invent terms which could comprehensively trace its trajectory. It is confusing to apply the terms Renaissance and Reformation to understand Muslim history.

Whenever these terms are used, European history comes to mind and finding no parallels in Muslim history is confusing and misleading.

## By the Textbook

The modern concept of textbooks emerged after the French Revolution when institutions of education were taken over by the state. It was now a state responsibility to mould the minds of the young generation in accordance with revolutionary principles.

To erase memories of the past, every revolution lays the foundation of a new social structure. The French revolutionary government changed the entire curriculum and introduced a new educational system based on nationalism. Since the revolution was threatening to the European powers that wanted to protect the continent from its influence, the new revolutionary government changed and nationalized the educational system.

This ended the hegemony of the church by introducing a secular thought process. When Napoleon usurped power by a coup in 1799, he fully realized the importance of textbooks and changed them not only to legitimize his rule but also to project his image. He introduced lessons which created a sense of loyalty and love for the emperor.

He also introduced different textbooks exclusively for girls who emphasised domestic duties and obedience towards the father and husband. There was special training for women in music and dance. It suggests that perhaps the post-revolutionary French society preferred only limited education for girls.

Napoleon provided a new model of textbooks where his image was cleverly projected as a great leader.

Mussolini and Hitler were bestowed with grandiose titles which inspired the young generation to exemplify them in making and shaping their countries. This practice continues even today in the Third world countries where there is dictatorship.

The colonial government in India used education as a tool to promote, establish and strengthen its rule. The important characteristics of these textbooks included the condemnation of the Indian past as despotic and superstitious. Those who resisted the British were declared traitors and their image was distorted.

Examples exist of Sirajuddaulah and Tipu Sultan who were depicted as monsters in the textbooks whereas Englishmen who contributed towards the foundation of the British rule were glorified. It was emphasised that the colonial rule brought blessings to the Indians.

The impact of the textbooks was such that the newly educated generation was impressed by the English culture and looked down upon their own traditions and values. This mindset continued even after the departure of the English. There are still people today who are nostalgic about colonial times and remember it as an ideal period in Indian history.

After decolonization, when nation states emerged in Asia and Africa, new textbooks were written to fulfill the aspirations of the new nations. The glory of the past was resurrected and those who fought against colonial powers were eulogized. The figure of the founding father became a hero as an unchallenged leader when their countries went through different political systems; but as a result, again, textbooks suffered. In case of dictatorship, the policies of the dictator were supported and he was admired as a leader who delivered the nation from chaos and disorder. With the change of government, textbooks always had to change the content in favour of the new regime and its leaders.

In India, during the recent BJP rule, textbooks were rewritten while textbooks written by Romela Thapar, Bipan Chandra, and A R Sharma were banned because of their liberal and secular approach and honesty. When the BJP came to power, they planted their ideology in the textbooks; the current Congress government completely changed the textbooks again. The new ones prepared by the National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT) are excellent in that they contain no hate material but impart a liberal and secular outlook.

In a democratic, multi religious and multi-cultural society, it is difficult to represent a single ideology. In India, educationists have reached the conclusion that textbooks should represent cultural and social values of Indian society without any prejudice.

In Pakistan, the case is quite different. The change of textbooks started when Ayub Khan came to power and implemented a new educational policy in 1962. Since then, textbooks were changed to suit the interests of every new government. The major change came with Ziaul Haq's policy of Islamisation which completely transformed the curriculum.

Developing textbooks is a very sensitive matter for a nation. They can be produced in a way to provide only selective information to students and hide facts which can supposedly damage the character of a nation. European powers which colonised Asian and African countries remained silent in textbooks about their crimes committed in occupied countries.

China and South Korea continue to protest for Japan's acceptance of war crimes and to be mentioned in textbooks. Palestine and Israel maintain different opinions about the same events in textbooks. In case of Pakistan, we ignore the crisis of the former East Pakistan without any compunction.

Textbooks play an important role in shaping the minds of young people since the majority has no time to read more and investigate facts so their knowledge remains confined only to textbooks. Therefore, if textbooks present a distorted version and misinform the students, then that much distorted version stays in the students' minds for the rest of their lives.

John Stuart Mill, the utilitarian philosopher, argues that education should be free from state control for only then it can produce a liberal and enlightened generation. It is true that education under an ideological state or extremist group is damaging. In either case it produces an ignorant, narrow-minded, and perverted but educated youth.

## History they wrote

Twenty three years past the independence of Pakistan, history writing has been rather disappointing. Official historians and textbook writers focus exclusively on and reiterate the Pakistan movement and there is no research on ancient India, the medieval period or the colonial era.

In the absence of any alternative school of history, grandiose national narratives come across as dull and boring. According to official history, partition not only divided the subcontinent into two separate countries but it also partitioned history. Consequently, ancient India is not a part of our historiography.

History writing in Pakistan is controlled by the bureaucrats and politicians who direct historians on how to write history which suits their interests and justifies their policies. It is in the interest of the state to use it to historicize the ideology of Pakistan. This task was faithfully accomplished by I.H. Qureshi in his two books *Muslim Community in the Indian subcontinent* and *Ulema and Politics*, in which he skillfully distorts events and adjusts them within the framework of the ideology of Pakistan. The next historian to follow him was S.M. Ikram, who traced the roots of two nations in medieval India.

Hence officially, the history of Pakistan begins from the Arab conquest of Sindh. According to this point of view Sindh became Bab-ul-Islam or the gateway to Islam. It linked our history with the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates, alienating it from ancient Indian history. This interpretation creates a Muslim consciousness that seeks its identity outside India. However, the truth of history is quite different. Sindh became separate and independent as soon as the Abbasid caliphate declined and local dynasties replaced Arab rule. Arabs who settled in Sindh assimilated in the local culture and identified themselves as Sindhis.

Pakistan has rich cultural heritage and a glorious ancient past. The discovery of the Indus valley civilization astonished and amazed the world of its achievements. Its important towns, Harappa and Mohenjodaro, located in Pakistan, boasted of the advanced and developed culture of this area unlike the Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations. Although there were no palaces here, the temples and tombs indicate that the common man was not exploited like in other civilizations across the world.

When the Aryans arrived in India, they initially settled in Punjab and the first Veda was composed there. When they moved to the valleys of Ganges and Yamuna, Persians had already occupied the region. Alexander's invasion and the Greek settlement produced the Gandhara culture. Scholars like Panini, the



author of first Sanskrit grammar compilation and Kautilya, the author of Arthshastra emerged from Taxila's university.

This was a part of the Mauryan Empire and witnessed the peaceful and non violent policy of Ashoka who had converted to Buddhism but there was tolerance for other religions. Here's a lesson that we could perhaps learn from our past.

From time to time, a number of invaders such as Kushans, Huns, Persian and Greeks came to India. Once they settled here they became Indians. Therefore, the Arab invasion of Sindh was also like other invasions and the Arabs eventually assimilated in the local culture.

Therefore, the Arab conquest should be studied as a continuous historical process and not as an isolated incident.

In northern India, Turks, Afghans and the Mughals ruled for centuries and eventually integrated into the Indian culture. In the 1920s, when communalist feelings emerged, Hindu communalists called them foreigners. But on the other hand, nationalists regarded them as Indians and were proud of their heritage. Pakistani historians seem confused on how to treat this period with Akbar being a major issue for them, as I.H. Qureshi and other historians hold him solely responsible for the fall of the Mughal Empire.

We must understand that history is a continuous process and if continuity is broken, historical consciousness is damaged.

When writing history of Pakistan, it is important to note that history should not be influenced by religious beliefs since history has no religion. It is neutral in character. Secondly, the events happening in this part of the subcontinent should neither be ignored nor neglected but be accepted for their cultural and historical significance. We must also realize that our past is related to the Indian subcontinent and to the outside world.

Pakistan came into being in 1947 but our history existed before this which cannot be deleted. A shared history and culture not only broadens our minds but eliminates a narrow outlook of history. Just like we cannot delete the rule of the Sultans of Delhi and the Mughals, we should include ancient Indian past in our heritage.

Some intellectuals argue that Pakistan should link with Central Asia and break its historical affinity with India. These intellectuals fail to understand that sharing the same religious belief is not enough to be accepted by other cultures.

There are tremendous differences between Pakistanis and Central Asians. We have to trace our roots in our own land and not outside of it. To rewrite the history of Pakistan, we must begin our history from the ancient period and link it to the present. This continuity would create a mature historical consciousness.

European countries are independent and sovereign but culturally they are unified. A contribution by a German philosopher, a British economist or a Dutch painter is regarded as European. South Asians can follow this model and culturally own one another. This would lead us to peace and prosperity.

## History and Morality

There is a debate among scholars as to whether great individuals should be restricted by moral values while trying to accomplish their political agenda or be allowed to freely pursue their policies, violating and ignoring them. Kotilya in his book *Arthashastra* advises the Mauryan king to use all types of deceptions to bring the tribes into the fold of his empire. Machiavelli, the Renaissance scholar in his book *the Prince* suggests that the ruler should lie, deceive and use all tricks to achieve political success. Both Kotilya and Machiavelli provide a practical guideline to rulers.

Some of the dictators of the modern period were so impressed by these ideas that they faithfully followed them in order to become successful rulers. One of the important aspects of their theories is that they have liberated great individuals from all moral bonds and encouraged them to lie and deceive in justification of their inhuman and brutal acts.

There are many examples where historians and politicians justify the immoral acts of rulers on the basis of realpolitik. When Shahjahan, just after his succession to the throne, ordered the assassination of all claimants to the throne, people were shocked by this brutal act and silently denounced the emperor. However, one of the court historians, Saleh Kambo, in his book *Shahjahannama*, justified the emperor, stating that by executing the princes who could claim to be king, he prevented a civil war in which thousands of people would have been killed.

Therefore, to kill few people was better than to plunge the country into disorder and chaos.

When Shivaji (d.1689) assassinated Afzal Khan by deception, he was criticized for this act because he violated the contract made with his rival and betrayed him. Tilak, the Maharashtran politician, who revived the image of Shivaji and elevated him to the pedestal of a hero, justified him on the grounds that great people were above ordinary moral values. Therefore, they should not be judged on these bases. He alleged that their acts were for the larger interests of the nation.

There are many examples where rulers and great individuals who violated moral values were judged by their success and given a dignified place in history. Lord Acton, the British historian, is not of this opinion. He argued that those who violate moral values should not be forgiven. He vehemently declared that if they escaped punishment in their lifetime, history should not spare them; it should try them on the charges of the violation of moral values and punish them as

criminals. They should not be admired, praised or eulogized but denounced and condemned.

On the other hand, we see how imperial powers have used moral values as a tool to assert their superiority over colonized nations. The officials of the East India Company in its early period, when it was a trading company, were corrupt and accumulated wealth by using immoral and illegal means. However, as soon as the company acquired power, its higher-ups decided to root out corruption and reconstruct its bureaucracy which became honest, upright, and observed high moral values in dealing with the public. That's why they were respected by Indians.

They ruled the subcontinent on the basis of their moral character. However, in extending their political power and dealing with the native rulers, they followed Machiavellian policies and whenever their interest required they violated their treaties and ignored their contracts. However, the common man of India retained the image of honest administrative officers who provided them justice, peace and order. This shows the power of morality.

When a society declines, it also loses its moral values. When the Mughal dynasty was disintegrating, Nadir Shah (1739) invaded India and the Mughal emperor, not finding himself in a position to defend his empire, made peace in exchange for a huge amount of money. When Nadir Shah prepared to go back to Iran, one of the Mughal nobles, Sa'at Yar Khan, who was not appointed to the post that he wanted, told the invader that the amount which was given to him was peanuts; Delhi was a rich city and the treasury of the Mughals was there for the taking. Nadir Shah acted on his suggestion and took away a century's worth of treasures of the Mughals.

## Once Upon a Time.....

Discovering the past has always fascinated archaeologists and historians. Archeologists recreate the past through excavation of what lies hidden beneath the earth and long forgotten, building their ideas on their findings through destroyed monuments, artifacts, tools, instruments, human and animal bones. They organise scattered evidence to reconstruct the past. In this way creation of ancient and pre-historical past has immensely enriched historical studies.

On the other hand historians recreate and reconstruct the past through documents, inscriptions, coins, paintings, architecture and sculpture. In this process of reconstructing the past, archaeologists and historians are influenced by social, political and economic perspectives of their time. For Jews, the past is full of suffering, pain, genocide, massacre and expulsion from one country to another. Their perseverance and their will to survive serve as inspiration. However, after the establishment of Israel, they applied all the methods which were used for their persecution against Palestinians.

In turn, the loss of their homes, expulsion from their ancestral land and bloodshed of their community has urged Palestinians to struggle and fight for their independence. Some historians regard the past of a particular age as dark and worthless. For others, the same could be an inspiring source of enlightenment.

When medieval Europe was dominated by religious narrow mindedness, the Renaissance humanists believed that the state of affairs was barren and useless. On the contrary, the classical past of Greece and Rome was fascinating to them as it encouraged creative thinking for a better understanding of human nature. Opinions about medieval Europe changed during the romantic period, when scholars depicted it as period of peace and serenity.

For Muslims, the medieval period of their history was glorious with their civilization and culture at its zenith. Interestingly the rise of Europe coincides with Muslims' decline. Therefore, they take pride in the medieval past but ignore the recent past. Renaissance humanists were inspired by philosophical and literary aspects instead of military conquests. Hence it seems that politicians and scholars use the past according to their likes and interests.

For the European colonial powers, past glories were interpreted through occupation and civilization of land. When the European nations conquered South America and found the monuments of the Inca, Maya, and Aztec civilizations,

they refused to recognize these as the work of Native Americans. Instead these were attributed to foreign invaders.

Similarly, historical heritage of African countries was credited to foreign conquerors. In India, the Taj Mahal was long considered the work of European architects. By rejecting the past of a civilization, the natives were considered subhuman and uncultured.

In China, the intellectuals rejected their past as orthodox and as an obstacle in the way of advancement. Their argument was that the Chinese were defeated and humiliated by the European powers due to their tradition and culture which failed to defend the country against the onslaught of western imperialism. Therefore, to struggle against invasion and to become independent, it was important to get rid of the past and adopt modern civilization. This led to the socialist revolution in China.

In India, the political leadership revived the Indian past to create a sense of unity and belonging among the people struggling against colonialism. In the first attempt, historians reconstructed the Mughal history and culture as a tool to unite Hindus and Muslims as one nation. In the second attempt Gandhi and other Hindu leaders propagated the revival of ancient India in order to mobilize the Hindu population.

Criticizing this approach, Muslim intellectuals presented an alternative past the Islamic period. Their glorification of the Abbasids and the Muslim rule of Spain isolated Indian Muslims. So absorbed were they in the grandeur of their distant Islamic past that the Mughal dynasty was excluded from it.

Hali in his long poem on the rise and fall of Islam laments upon the past but in Iqbal's poetry, there is pride and a sense of admiration of the past grandeur. However, both approaches have been unable to change the Muslim thought process to understand change and to adopt modern ideas to confront challenges.

## History and Religion

Interpreting Islamic history has been a point of dispute, starting from the succession issue after the death of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Then, after the four pious Caliphs, even during Hazrat Ali's reign, Muslim groups fought against one another and shed the blood of their brethren in faith.

Some are of the opinion that it should be called Muslim history rather than Islamic history. They argue that the term Islam represents religion while Muslim refers to ethnicity. Therefore, religion has nothing to do with the bloody conflicts and clashes which occurred among Muslims over the centuries.

To analyze this difference, we need to take a look at history. First of all, the terms Islamic and Muslim were both coined in modern time, probably by western Orientalists. Early Muslim historians never used these terms. They categorized history on the basis of dynastic rule, such as the Umayyads, the Abbasids, the Samanids and the Ghaznavids.

Orientalists, on the other hand, analysed history as one unit rather than dynastically and named it Islamic or Muslim. However, to them, Islamic history is the history of the Arab rule. This ended with the fall of the Abbasids in 1258 when Halagu Khan, the Mongol leader, conquered Baghdad and assassinated the last Abbasid caliph.

The history of the emerging ruling dynasties in the eastern and western parts of the caliphate were recorded on the basis of the ruling families such as the Ziyarids, the Safarids and the Fatimids. The three dynasties which emerged in the 16th century, the Safavids, the Ottomans and the Mughals are not included in the category of Islamic history; the same is the case as regards the history of Indonesia and Malaysia.

The Arab nationalist historians rejected both Islamic and Muslim prefixes in favour of 'history of the Arabs'. Philip K. Hitti's book *History of the Arabs* is one such example. Another radical change took place when nation states emerged in the Middle East. It ended the era of Islamic history and replaced it with nationalism. For example, the history of Egypt includes the ancient period of the Pharaohs, the medieval period as the rule of Muslim dynasties and the modern period. The same pattern is followed by other Arab countries.

Whenever history is interpreted on the basis of religion, it creates problems and misunderstandings. History is closely related to power. Whenever Muslims were involved in internecine wars in the early period, they were fighting not for

religion but for power and for this, they often violated religious teachings. Hajjaj bin Yusuf did not hesitate to bomb the Kaaba, the holiest sanctuary of Muslims. Religion was used to gain political power by working on the emotions of the people. We find this exploitation of religion in every period of history.

During the Hundred Years' war (1337-1453), which was fought between the French and the English, a peasant girl called Joan of Arc, claimed to have been visited by saints who told her she would lead the French to victory. Her story fired the French morale and thus religion was again used to further a political aim. While the French revere Joan of Arc as a saint, many literary works refer to her as a crafty strategist, most famously Shakespeare, who depicted her as a villain in his famous play Henry VI.

The Crusades (from 11th to 13th century), when Christians went to war against Muslims, are another example in which religion was used as a tool to fulfil political and commercial demands of the rulers and traders. The church delivered passionate sermons, exhorting people to sacrifice for the cause of religion and liberate the Holy Land from the clutches of Muslim 'infidels'. Thousands were thus persuaded to join the European armies and travel to Jerusalem.

Modern historians point out that these wars were financed by the Italian states Venice, Genoa and Florence, in order for them to develop new markets and safe trade routes. Later on, the Catholic Church conducted crusades against its own heretic sects to consolidate its political power. Pope Julius II (1443-1513) who was known as the warrior pope, personally led armies into the battlefield to fight against rival political powers.

In the medieval period there was the concept of holy war both in Christendom as well as the Muslim world.

Whenever a Muslim ruler fought against a non-Muslim power, he invoked religion to inspire his soldiers to fight for a holy cause, but in case of war with their co-religionists, they avoided the mention of religion. One such example is Babur who fought against Ibrahim Lodhi purely for political gains but in case of his war against Rana Sangha, he called it a holy war against infidels.

In the early phase of European imperialism, when South and North America, African and Asian countries were conquered and occupied, the Europeans attributed their victories to God. To them, it was due to His blessing that they defeated their adversaries and succeeded in their mission. Therefore, political history should be studied with reference to power and not religion.



## Revisiting the Past

The past fascinates, perhaps because it is distant. We can imagine and reconstruct it with historical information. In the present day; it is possible to rebuild the past society based on our knowledge due to excavations of ancient sites.

Excavations bring to light the charming and fascinating tale of man's survival and ingenuity. After recovering artifacts from the various sites, archaeologists carefully analyze their use and try to depict how people in the stone, bronze and iron ages lived and improved their lifestyle by inventing tools and instruments.

When in 1773, the cities of Herculaneum and Pompei were discovered which were once destroyed by the ashes of a volcano, the archeologists found cities intact beneath the ashes. The flood of lava was so sudden that it covered the cities in full swing of everyday life.

There were shops in the market place with bakers and carpenters at work, and people were buying furniture and other goods in the market. An aristocrat's house was found with a library of papyrus scrolls. Public buildings and temples stood intact as though ready to welcome worshippers. The roads were busy with people running to save their lives from the gushing lava. It helped archeologists and historians to reconstruct the social and cultural life of the past.

Other sources which provide information of past include statues, paintings, inscriptions, coins and written material. The paintings on the walls of pyramids depict the social and cultural life of the Egyptian people. Paintings on the vases from ancient Greece portray the lives of athletes and scenes of the daily lives of common people. Based on these sources, historians are in a position to recover the ancient past. Written material also provides interesting political, religious and administrative details of the past regimes.

Many European novelists were attracted by the medieval period which provided them with themes of knights, chivalry and courtly love. Later, as the information of the ancient periods became available to them, they wrote on the Roman Empire, and the Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilisations. These novels created a curiosity to know the past and its social and cultural life. It also led to the realization of how history changes and transforms societies from one stage to another.

In the modern period, efforts are being made to reconstruct the past in order to experience the culture of past societies. In England, a village of the Iron Age was rebuilt and volunteers were asked to live there in the simulated environment of the past. A similar experiment was carried out in Germany where a village of the medieval period was built to learn about the attitude and behavior of people in the past.

To satisfy the curiosity of people, in different European countries, the famous battles are recreated. Recently, Russia reconstructed the battle of 1812, when Napoleon invaded Russia but failed to occupy it. The defeat of Napoleon and the victory of Russia is an achievement for the Russians. Its replay created a sense of national pride. Americans also recreate their battles to inform and inspire their nation. One of the most effective methods to recreate the past is through films.

European and American filmmakers have reconstructed ancient, medieval and modern history based on historical evidence and the producers try to make them as accurate as possible.

But sometimes one can detect that the historical interpretation in these films which favors a particular point of view. For instance, Alexander's conquests are depicted as the supremacy of Europe over Asia. Films on European imperialism tend to show their bravery and virtue. Like history books one should watch these films with the critical eye.

Our films based on historical themes generally lack correct facts and sometimes come across as a parody although Sohrab Modi's Jhansi ki Rani is based on correct historical facts.

As we do not have the ability to depict our correct past through films and theatre, it remains hidden and inaccessible to people.

## Dimensions of History

Two main trends of history writing emerged in the ancient period. One was documentation of the history of royal dynasties and the other was the history of war, customs and traditions.

Herodotus (d.425BC), known as the 'Father of History', wrote in his book that the main motive behind writing history was to preserve the past for future generations.

Discussing the war between the Persians and the Greeks, he referred to it as a conflict between democracy and despotism. His successor Thucydides (d.395BC), inherited the craft of history writing. His book on the Peloponnesian war deals with human nature which according to him remains unchanged and always responds in the same way to situations like war, famine and political chaos.

During the Roman period, history writing became imperial, described the conflict between the Romans and the Barbarians and widened its scope to include other nations in its narratives.

The prominent historians of this period were Livy, Tacitus, Polybius and Plutarch who enriched historiography of the Roman Empire.

The secular approach of history changed during the middle ages under the influence of the church. Now the purpose of history was to unfold the divine plan, attributing all action to God. In this concept, history had a beginning and an end. St. Augustine categorized historical accounts into six periods on the basis of Biblical history.

Muslim historiography was also influenced by this trend and historians began writing general history with the advent of Adam, followed by narrating lives of prophets and kings. The History of the Prophets and Kings or Tarikh al-Rusul WA al-Muluk, popularly known Tarikh al-Tabari is a historical chronicle written in Arabic by Persian author and historian Ibn Jarir al-Tabari.

In Europe, history writing radically changed during the Renaissance period, when the humanists challenged its religious approach. Petrarch (d.1374), known as the 'Father of Humanism' rejected St. Augustine's periodisation and introduced the concept of the ancient, the middle and modern ages. This new approach linked history to the Greek and Roman periods. Once again, secularisation of history liberated it from religious stronghold, and historical narratives became a battlefield of ideas and different theories.

During Reformation, both Catholics and Protestants used history for ideological defense.

With the French Revolution, a new angle to historiography emerged. While rejecting the pre-revolutionary period along with its institutions and traditions, it claimed to inaugurate a new era. This approach created two groups, the conservative and progressive.

In his book *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), Edmund Burke argued that the French Revolution disrupted the continuity of history and traditions that had evolved after a prolonged period of time. The break created a void causing anarchy and disorder. He was staunch believer of continuity of traditions and resisted radical change. Soon his book became a holy text for the conservatives who wanted status quo and abhorred change in the established order.

On the other hand, the progressives were in favour of eliminating outdated and absolute traditions and wanted to transform the society based on new ideas. The French Revolution became the focal point for this discussion in writing new history.

In the 1820s, Hegel delivered a series of lectures on the philosophy of history to demonstrate that history follows reason. Hegel attributed the natural progress of history to an absolute spirit and that in acknowledging this spirit, as well as the evil in history; reason can clearly be seen also, reconciling the two. According to him, history proceeds as a result of constant conflict. Every event whether great or insignificant has a role in history. To the Germans, history became an important source for understanding all aspects of human life.

Hegel was followed by Karl Marx (d.1883) whose materialistic concept of history provided a new methodology in understanding the process of history.

After the First World War, Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre established an Annales school of historiography which opened new avenues for history writing by emphasizing on social and cultural aspects. As new theories and ideas such as feminism, constructionism and postmodernism etc. broadened the scope of history, it became a discipline required to comprehend social, political, and economic aspects of society which gradually reshaped and transformed historical narratives.

## Revisiting Heroes

Traditionally in history conquerors are glorified as great men who made history through their accomplishments. Describing their achievements, historians eulogised them as great generals, strategists and tacticians ignoring their slaughter of tens of thousands of men and women who were victimized as these great men became victorious. When history is written by the victor's point of view, there is no place for the vanquished.

Traditional history generally commends all conquerors but the most admired, adored, and praised is Alexander of Macedonia who earned the epithet of 'great'. Historians, fiction writers, artists and sculptors fascinated by his personality created a myth around him. He became a hero for his successors who were proud to emulate him.

Hannibal, one of the world's greatest military commanders defeated the Roman army in the battle of Cannae. Known for his daring tactics, Hannibal was an admirer of Alexander. His famous crossing of the Alps in 218BC was a miraculous feat. A Roman army led by Publius Cornelius Scipio defeated the Carthagian army led by Hannibal on the plain of Zama in 202 BCE. Some years later Scipio met Hannibal at the court of the king of Syria. The two generals had a friendly conversation and Scipio asked Hannibal who he thought was the greatest general that ever lived. Hannibal answered: "Alexander the Great." "Who was the second?" asked Scipio. "Pyrrhus," replied Hannibal. "Who was the third?" "Myself," answered Hannibal. "But what would you have said," asked Scipio, "If you had conquered me?" "I should then have said," replied Hannibal, "that I was greater than Alexander, greater than Pyrrhus, and greater than all other generals."

Alexander's image continued to influence Roman generals. Pompey followed in his footsteps, went east to win the third Roman war against Mithradates of Pontus on the Black Sea and in the process, added most of the modern Middle East to the Roman Empire. After being defeated at the Battle of Pharsalus, Pompey fled with his fleet to Egypt, not realizing that the Egyptians would take Caesar's side, and was killed.

In 70BC, Caesar wept at the temple of Hercules in Gades when he saw the statue of Alexander the Great. When asked why he wept he replied, "Do you think I have not just cause to weep, when I consider that Alexander at my age had conquered so many nations, and I have all this time done nothing that is memorable."

The Gallic Wars were a series of military campaigns waged by Caesar against several Gallic tribes – historians say that 30,000 were killed and 10,000 wounded. His assassination cut his career short and consequently saved the lives of people he would otherwise have ravaged. Alexander's reputation and fame did not remain confined to the West.

Alauddin Khilji after consolidating his position, planned to conquer the world. But he was advised to first conquer India for which he was known as Sikander-e-sani. In Europe, Napoleon admired Alexander the Great and created a new system in Europe along the lines of the ancient Macedonian Empire.

It is time we change the way we write history and instead of attributing greatness to conquerors, we must condemn them.

Greatness should be attributed to philosophers, writers, and scholars who created awareness by their ideas and thoughts.

Instead of Alexander, Aristotle should be emulated as a hero. The new concept of history writing will perhaps discourage ambitious generals who wish to control political affairs of the state and achieve greatness in history.

## On Record

Several approaches based on the political, social and economic development of a state are adopted by historians to document history. Compared to other countries, the emergence of Pakistan in 1947 is considered fairly recent. The subcontinent was divided and Pakistan's separate identity from India ensued as a significant issue.

Since the history of Pakistan begins from 1947, narration of limited historical material is a challenge if one is to present a comprehensive view of the developments that took place.

One approach is to write all events chronologically and provide information about what happened in the short span of time.

The history of Pakistan could be based on dictatorship or democracy the two different political systems which Pakistan experienced like many other newly-independent states with the aim of bringing progress and prosperity to the country. Other countries experimented with western democracy and the socialist system.

Another approach is to document the history of evolution of colonial institutions like jagirdari, bureaucracy and the army in Pakistan. These institutions served the colonial hegemony and forced people to submit to the ruling authorities. There is a need to analyze if these institutions still force people's will or follow the will of people. Other institutions which monopolized politics and are associated with the ruling class are feudalism, tribal system and gaddi nasheen. These have also discouraged people from participating in politics.

Yet another approach to writing the history of Pakistan would be to point out new changes in the social structure of the society such as demography, urbanization, growth of religiousness and, the sectarian and ethnic divide.

History can also focus on personalities such as Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan Z.A. Bhutto, Zia-ul-Haq and Pervez Musharraf who emerged as powerful individuals in the absence of weak democratic traditions and institutions. However after coming into power, they misused state institutions to fulfill their personal ambitions and further weakened democracy, distorted the system and disrupted its continuity. Sadly, they were supported by opportunistic intellectuals and politicians who helped them rule as popular leaders of the nation.

History is also documented through intellectual thought and ideas. What did Pakistani intellectuals contribute to the society in terms of guidance and support during social and cultural crises? Or did they silently support the status quo for personal benefits.

For writing history, it is important to include the common man's perspective as it unfolds new venues which are generally dominated by the point of view of the ruling and elite classes. But historians tend to focus their attention only on the activities of the so-called leaders who by plundering and pillaging the country have damaged it beyond repair.

There is a need to bring to light the contribution of the common people who struggled despite adversities. This way their suffering, disillusionment and hopes can be highlighted as their contribution in making the country prosperous cannot be ignored. They deserve a dignified place in history as active contributors to society and not as mute and passive spectators.

Unfortunately, there are professional historians in Pakistan who focus their research on political history, glorify the ruling classes and condemn the people. This not only undermines the role of the people but information of cultural, social and political awareness is withheld. It remains an important task for historians to condemn the corrupt ruling classes and to strengthen democratic values and traditions.



## Hometown Heritage

Generally, historians focus on big cities for their narratives while ignoring the significance of small towns and their contribution to history and culture.

In an agrarian society, small towns serve as an important link between villages and the big cities. During the Mughal period, the state would grant a piece of land to religious scholars as madad-i-ma'ash or financial support. They would settle near villages where their land was located and establish seminaries to educate young people. This created centers of learning and culture.

As the Mughal Empire declined, so did the significance of small towns. Scholars, poets, musicians, artists and physicians now deprived of royal patronage returned to their home towns for permanent residence and in this way small towns became centers of culture.

Story telling, recitation of folk songs gathering of poets and literati, concerts, traditional theatres, performing arts, festivals and, religious and social processions became part of the local culture which distinguished each town from the other in terms of identity. Small town became famous for handicraft, and gradually the cottage industry developed. During the colonial period, cultural prosperity was disrupted as roads and railway changed the lifestyle of the people of small towns. However till 1947, small towns maintained their individuality and distinct character.

In Sindh, Larkana, Shikarpur, Sakhar, Dadu, and Nawabshah had their own local newspapers, literary gatherings, music and handicraft. The traders and merchants of Shikarpur, famous for being adventurous travelled to Afghanistan, Central Asia, Russia and China built beautiful houses in the town displaying their wealth.

The inhabitants of each town had a deep sense of belonging. Names of poets, musicians, wrestlers and artists like Shikarpuri, Sialkoti or Khairpuri would indicate the name of their hometown.

In northern India, nearly all leading religious scholars, poets, short story writers, novelists, musicians, and artists like Hasrat Mohani, Asghar Gondvi, Shad Azimabadi, Josh hailed from small towns. Likewise the names of Maulana Rashid Gangohi and Maulana Qasim Nanotvi, the founders of Madressa Deoband indicate their hometown.

After partition, mass communication developed linking small towns to big cities. In Hyderabad and other towns, local newspapers and magazines could not

compete with the national media and gradually came to an end. Gradually big cities devoured small towns and their culture.

As prominent people abandoned their native towns and moved to big cities, the sense of belonging was replaced by ethnicity and people would be identified by their castes like Paracha, Channa, Awan and Junejo.

Homogeneity replaced diversity; raising the question that if local culture is irrelevant to the present and future shouldn't it be allowed to perish?

Globalization further eliminated national culture. In European countries, efforts are being made to preserve local culture and its identity by establishing museums, art galleries, performing arts and literary circles. Some of the best universities are in small towns where literary people prefer to live: engaging themselves in creative activities in a peaceful atmosphere.

In Germany, authorities of small towns invite prominent writers or philosophers to stay in their town for a while and contribute to art and literature so as to enable small towns to preserve their culture and identity.

## Challenging Tradition

There are many instances in history where views of great scholars or statesmen have influenced the society by playing a profound role in inspiring new thought, research and discoveries.

One such example is of Hegel's views elaborated in his famous lectures on the philosophy of history, delivered in 1830 at the Jena University. According to Hegel's views, India had no history and Africa was a dark continent. This was proclaimed at a time when knowledge of Indian history was limited to European scholars their spring of information mostly being colonial sources, depicting Indian history with negative undertones.

Nevertheless, Hegel's Eurocentric point of view and contemptuous remarks became so popular that not only historians but even writers and politicians quoted him for a long time to come.

Eventually, the history of India was not only reinterpreted but archaeological excavations unfolded its hidden aspects. For instance, in the 1920s, the excavation of the Indus Valley civilization completely changed the historical view of India.

In 1915, Kautilya's Arthashastra was translated by R. Shamasastri, which brought to light the brilliant work on the art of statecraft and diplomacy. Kautilya remains one of the greatest figures of wisdom and knowledge in Indian history.

In 6th century BC, the history of India went through a transformation when Buddhism and Jainism challenged Brahmanism and its rituals dominating the Indian society. New social and cultural aspects were integrated into the society and Brahmanism began to absorb the values and social beliefs of Buddhism and Jainism in its composition.

Asoka's reign further changed the perspective of Indian history with his edicts and missionary zeal to propagate Buddhism. His rule established peace and prosperity in India while his missions introduced Buddhism to Sri Lanka, South East Asia and China. The influence of Buddhism is evident in the foundation of the Nalanda University which was a religious center of learning from the 5th century CE to 1197 CE in Bihar, India. Nalanda flourished between the reign of the Úakrāditya supported by patronage from the Hindu Gupta rulers as well as

other Buddhist emperors. The Buddhist impact can also be seen in the paintings of Ajanta and Ellora's caves.

Later, Indian historians like Romila Thapar and others debunked the myth of Hegel regarding ancient India. It was not a static society but a dynamic and innovative one with the capacity to not only produce new ideas but also weave invaders into its social fabric.

In the medieval period, the Turks brought revolutionary and technological innovations which further transformed Indian society. The introduction of paper contributed to the spread of knowledge and helped the administration maintain a complete record of revenue and political, social and cultural information.

The Persian wheel changed irrigation and helped boost agriculture. With technological inventions, the textile industry was upgraded. Irfan Habib's book *Technology in Medieval India* provides comprehensive information regarding the impact of new technology.

Indian society was not stagnant in the arena of philosophical or social thought either. Eugenia Vanina's *Ideas and Society in India from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries* discusses how India changed in the medieval period. The continuing technological and social changes impacted the caste structure in India. Gradually, the artisan class emerged as wealthy and rich, with people from the higher social classes of the Brahmans being employed as accountants. It is therefore incorrect to assume that there were only dynastic changes in Indian history.

The story of Africa is similar. According to new research, the Homo sapiens first evolved in the African continent and spread out to other parts of the world. The BBC documentary 'The Incredible Journey' graphically depicts with geological and archaeological evidence that all modern humans descended from the anatomically modern African Homo sapiens.

Recent excavations in Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, and Sudan prove the presence of great civilizations of Egypt and the Phoenicians flourishing in these areas. The historians of Africa unfolded the astonishing history of this continent.

Research on the history of India and Africa weakened the Eurocentric point view that only European history can unfold the mysteries of nature and lead mankind to freedom.

## Change for the Better

There are two types of challenges that a society may confront. A society in political, social and economic crises readily accepts and absorbs changes in order to restructure itself while the intellectuals and ruling classes respond to the challenges of time.

The result of this strategy is that it keeps the society far from chaos and disorder as its old institutions are reformed periodically preventing their collapse.

But when a society is attached to its traditions, cultural and social values, it may not be ready to bring any change and reform to its structure. In this case, it becomes stagnant and sterile.

If a society cannot alter itself at a time when it needs reformation of its traditions and institutions, all efforts for reformation become useless after passing the critical phase because by that time the roots of its institution become so corrupt that any steps to reconstruct them will fail.

Societies which follow the revolutionary process of reform look forward to the future. On the contrary, stagnant societies go back to their past roots and find solutions to their problems on the basis of ancient wisdom. Change in progressive societies is a pleasant experience while in stagnant societies, it is torturous and painful.

The subcontinent witnessed several religious reformist movements in the 19th century. Two different movements emerged under different political and social circumstances to fulfill the demands of the Muslim community in India. Some appeared before 1857 while others occurred after.

As a result of the decline of the Mughal dynasty and the subsequent take over by the East India Company, the political and social condition of the Muslim elite classes became miserable. The Muslim nobility were disappointed by the loss of their status but failed to analyze the emerging power of the Marhattas, the Jats, the Sikhs, and the Rohillas who steadily weakened the Mughal rulers by attacking and plundering cities and towns. There is lot of material available in the historiography of the time where historians have graphically depicted the picture of decline and decay. Poets composed verses reflecting the dismal social and cultural scenario, but there were no intellectuals to lead the society out of this disorder by creating ideas and thoughts.

In the absence of intellectuals and thinkers, the *ulema* assumed the leadership of the Muslim community, using religion as a tool to reform, repair, and reshape their political, social, and economic condition. The first half of the 19th century witnessed a movement known as Fraizi Movement in East Bengal, where the East India Company had established its rule after the Battle of Plassey. The change of political rule created a new conflict between Hindu landowners and the Muslim peasants. Among the landowners were some Muslims who had occupied landed property during the Mughal era? Extremist in their religious views, they held the local Bengali Muslims in contempt. The East India Company's commercial and trade policies deprived the artisan class of employment and income. In these circumstances, Haji Shariatullah (d.1840), championed the cause of the Muslim peasants and united them by creating a spirit of brotherhood. He urged them to observe the original teachings of Islam. His aim was to purify Islam from unIslamic traditions and rituals to convert the Muslim community as puritans, and to inculcate in them the spirit to uplift their social and economic status. The movement became popular among the Muslim peasants and artisans. To create a sense of identity, a particular dress and style of life was promoted. The peasants were attracted to the movement on the basis of the slogan that land belongs to God. Both the peasants and artisans were urged not to pay taxes which were burdening their economic condition.

After the death of Haji Shariatullah, his son Dudu Mian took the responsibility of the movement and faced the opposition of not only of the zamindars but the government of the East India Company as well, whose interest was to keep order in its territories?

Dudu Mian changed the character of the movement and converted it from resistance to compromising.

The movement attempted to solve social and economic problems of Bengali Muslims with the help of religion, creating in them a religious identity which separated them from the rest of the Bengali people. However, one important aspect was that Bengali language was used for preaching and writing religious tracts which were understood by common people. Consequently, the Fraizi movement separated itself from the North Indian Muslim community. It liberated the Bengali Muslims from the North Indian cultural hegemony, created religious rather than political consciousness giving an opportunity to the *Ulema* to lead the Muslims of Bengal.

## Deconstructing History

Historiography is important for understanding history, for creating a consciousness and to comprehend its entire process. When history is used to legitimize the role of the state, its institutions or to justify the action and policies of the ruling classes, it betrays the interest of people and empowers the elite classes against common people.

Pakistani historiography has been distorted right from the very beginning by early historians who enthusiastically supported the state and its existence on the basis of ideology. I.H. Qureshi provided guidelines for history writing and constructed a framework which suited the ruling classes. His earliest work is his excellent Ph.D thesis on the administration of the Sultan of Delhi. He was also a well-reputed professor of history at St. Stephen's College in Delhi. After his immigration to Pakistan he held several important government positions and provided an ideological basis to the newly existing state.

In his book *Muslim Community in the Indian Subcontinent*, he argues that during the so-called Muslim rule in India when the Muslims arrived from different parts of the Islamic world, they immediately abandoned their ethnic or national identity on the basis of their faith and absorbed themselves in the Muslim community.

First of all, the very concept of the Muslim community is a creation of the colonial period where the British administration divided the Indians into different communities on the basis of their religious differences.

During the medieval period, there was no concept of a Muslim community. Muslims who arrived in India retained their ethnic and national identity as Turks, Mughals, Persians, or Arabs. At the Mughal court, there were two strong parties of Turanis and Iranis. There was no monolithic Muslim community and religion did not play any role in uniting them. Therefore, Qureshi's interpretation is misleading.

His views on Akbar are also quite unconventional. He accuses him of being responsible for the Mughal decline in India. Akbar, in fact was the founder of the Mughal Empire as Babar and Humayun did not have the time to consolidate it. Akbar not only expanded it by conquests but provided an administrative structure to the institutions of the state. Akbar's most important achievement was to indianise the Mughals and integrates the Rajputs as equal partners of the empire. He made the Mughal Empire multi-religious and multicultural. That was

perhaps the reason that it thrived despite its decline and degeneration right up to 1857. How can a man who built the empire become its destroyer?

Qureshi's main argument is that by integrating the Hindus as a partner, he lost the support and sympathy of the Muslims. However Akbar was venerated and recognised as the emperor by all his subjects, irrespective of religion, caste and creed.

The result of Qureshi's denunciation of Akbar and his policies is that the Pakistani state has rejected Akbar's model of religious tolerance and adopted the policy of intolerance and narrow mindedness for our social and educational systems.

On Ayub Khan's initiative, a book on the history of Pakistan was published which was edited by I.H. Qureshi. It consisted of articles on the different aspects of history written by Pakistani historians. The article on the Mughal rule was written by Shaikh Abdul Rashid, a former professor of history at Muslim University in Aligarh, who came to Pakistan after his retirement. Qureshi inserted his anti-Akbar paragraph from the book *Muslim Community in the Indian Subcontinent* without any reference, acknowledgement or consultation of the author. K.K. Aziz claimed that when he was working as an assistant to Qureshi, the latter published Aziz's book *Struggle for Pakistan* in his own name. Why did he not protest and disclose this fraud?

I.H. Qureshi's book *Ulema in Politics* is an unsuccessful attempt to glorify the role of religious scholars in Indian history. It is a historical fact that throughout medieval India, the Sultans of Delhi and the Mughal emperors did not permit the ulema to interfere in political matters and challenge their authority. Ziauddin Barani, a historian of the Tughlaq period points out that religion and politics are separate and cannot be united to rule the country. The Muslim rulers did not allow themselves to be dictated by the *ulema*.

The two religious scholars of Akbar's period, Makhdum-ul-Mulk Mulla Abdullah Sultanpuri and Sheikh Abdul Nabi were corrupt and arrogant. Even Abd-ul-Qadir Bada'uni, the orthodox historian, complained about their rude behavior. In his early period, Akbar respected them but later exiled them to go to pilgrimage. How can Qureshi justify and admire such unscrupulous elements?

In my opinion, I.H. Qureshi is responsible for distorting history and for constructing a framework for future state historians to follow. To correct history, there is a need to deconstruct his historical framework and rewrite history with a broader and liberal perspective.



## Flattery

### Flattery and its Victims

*Power and superiority are so flattering and delightful, that, fraught with temptation, and exposed to danger, as they are, scarcely any virtue is so cautious, or any prudence so timorous, as to decline them. - Samuel Johnson*

THUS we find that throughout history flattery has been a powerful instrument and tool to transform an individual from a state of virtual non-existence to one that is powerful and authoritative.

As soon as an individual assumes power, he changes dramatically from an ordinary and obscure person to a famous and reputed one and becomes a paragon of virtue. His past is ignored and his present position turns him into a hero. He is immediately elevated to the high pedestal of fame and glory.

Consequently, he is so intoxicated by flattery that he starts believing himself to be the savior and deliverer of the nation, a divinely guided leader and a man who possesses extraordinary qualities to solve all kinds of problems. He is regarded as the chosen one who can guide the nation along the path of prosperity and security. He is assured by his cronies that he is loved by the people more than anyone else. They convince him that they are his sincere and true friends and ready to sacrifice their lives for him.

The person is so taken in by those intellectuals, officials and friends who shower praise on him that he, in return, patronizes them and offers them all kinds of benefits. As they get all types of benefits from their patron, they make an attempt to keep him in power. They fully know that his decline will spell the end of their privileges.

The reality is that his flatterers are not praising him as a person but as someone who has authority and the power to give concessions to his cronies. However, this reality comes as a shock to the person when power slips from his grip. As soon as the individual loses power as a result of political change or a coup, he finds him in isolation, bereft of any support or sympathy from the former sycophants. He reverts to his position of an ordinary individual. All glorifications which were attached to his name disappear in no time.

Such a person is humiliated and insulted by the media, intellectuals and bureaucrats who were once around him. Everybody is ready to thrash him for what he has done in the past and focus on how he misused his power and how involved he was in corruption. Under these circumstances, such fallen leaders prefer to spend the rest of their life in exile rather than in their own country.

We have a number of examples in our recent history where powerful individuals declined to an insignificant position and were left alone to live on past memories. When Ayub Khan carried out his coup in 1958, he suddenly emerged as an extraordinary man. He was profusely admired as the man who could lead the nation to progress and advancement. He was called the 'De Gaulle of Asia'.

An experienced general and mature statesman, he was advised by Z.A. Bhutto to assume the title of 'field marshal' to distinguish himself from other generals. Pir Ali Mohammad Rashdi even suggested that he become king of Pakistan. Surrounded by flatterers he started to believe that he was the person who could deliver the nation from turmoil and crisis.

In his last days when he was losing popularity, his cronies continued to tell him that he was still popular among the people. It is said that to mislead him they provided him cuttings of newspapers which were in his favour. He remained ignorant of the criticism and condemnation surrounding his policies. When he resigned under pressure, there was jubilation. He silently retired to his home village where he died like an ordinary person. There was no national mourning, no tribute to him.

His successors had the same fate. Yahya Khan after his retirement became the butt of sarcasm. His scandalous lifestyle was condemned by everybody. He is remembered in history as the man responsible for the secession of East Pakistan. When he died, few people took note of his death. Ziaul Haq who was praised as *mard-i-momin* is now remembered as the man who patronized religious extremists in the country and violated all constitutional provisions in order to fulfill his political goals.

The fact of the matter is that men of power like flattery because it satisfies their ego and they are conscious about their personal qualities. It makes them feel taller than others. There is a price to be paid for this when they fulfill the demands of their minions, who trap them in their net of flattery. According to the writer Leo Tolstoy "Even in the warmest, friendliest and simplest of relations, flattery or praise is needed just as grease is needed to keep the wheel going round."

Wills Goth Regier in his book *In Praise of Flattery* enumerates the dangers of flattery and how it is lethal, to a person who is praised. According to him, it is like a drug that because of its addictive powers causes a person to lose his senses; it is a disease which makes a person fatally sick; it prevents the man of power from hearing any bad news; it increases intolerance to criticism; and it abets arrogance. The result is that the man of power is lost in the labyrinth of flattery and becomes a prisoner surrounded by a circle of flatterers.

## Flattery to Power

Flattery is the product of advanced civilization when society is classified into powerful and helpless, rich and poor and have and has not. When wealth is accumulated in the hand of a minority and when power is concentrated to few individuals, in such a society, flattery flourishes as an art to take advance and benefit from those who wield power and authority. In one sense it is reciprocal. Flatterers expect to get cash, grant of property, title, promotion, and safety in return of their praise. However, they keep their agenda hidden and manipulate the situation in their favour.

It is not an easy art to charm a person; therefore, those who decide to use flattery as a tool for their interest closely observe and watch the individuals who are their targets. For example, they must know what characteristics they have; what are their likings; what are their weaknesses; and how to exploit their emotions and make them happy? They must also take care that in what situation should they be praised? Mature flatterers always keep in mind that if a person is rich he should be flattered for his generosity and large-heartedness; if he has close relationship of his friends, he should be admired of his sacrifices to his friends. If he has authority and power, he should be eulogized for his sagacity and wisdom. Thus, flatterers are master to assess and judge the situation to win the heart of their patron.

Flattery became a sophisticated art at the royal court where rulers had absolute power and authority. To please them and to get favour from them, it was important to admire every act of them. Flattery Under these circumstances, not only developed a language of its own but coined such beautiful phrases interspersed with couplets that impressed the one to whom it was meant. Moreover, when a flatterer used to speak before his patron, he had to control his body movement and sweetened his voice in order to shower praise.

In Persian and Urdu literature the genre of poetry known as *Qasuda* (ode) was used to praise the rulers and nobility by narrating their achievements. It was an art to exaggerate the victories, conquests, generosity, and bravery of the person and put him above all known conquerors and rulers or famous individuals. For example, even in the period of decline, the Mughal rulers were attributed all qualities which their illustrious predecessors had. It was evident that they were pleased by poets who were generously rewarded bestowing robe of honour or costly gifts.

Historians were not lagging behind poets to flatter their patrons. Whenever, Abul Fazl refers to Akbar in Akbarnama he used such titles and phrases for him which made him superman. In one place he writes: "he is of noble lineage, of joyous countenance of right disposition of lofty genius of pure purpose of enduring faith of perfect wisdom begirt of varied talents of wide capacity of high honour of splendid courage of right judgment of choice counsel of generosity unfeigned of boundless forgiveness. "Narrating more attributes Abul Fazl expresses his surprise that how such qualities were joined in one person. No doubt, it was the height of flattery and Akbar did not mind it.

However, flattery sometimes misfires. Willis Goth Regier quotes some interesting stories in his book *In Praise of Flattery* (2007) Aristabulus, a Greek historian, to please Alexander inserted a factitious event in his history in which the king and Porus fought against each other in single combat. His purpose was to glorify the king and highlight his bravery. He read out this passage in presence of the king and his generals. On hearing it, Alexander became angry and tossed the book in the river and threatened Aristabulus to throw him too like his book.

Another interesting story is of Holbein, who painted Ann of Clevis in such a way that Henry VIII after seeing the portrait married her. Later on he found that the lady was not as beautiful as she was in the painting. He divorced her after six months of marriage. Holbein to save himself from the wrath of the king escaped from the country.

Louis XIV of France was such a powerful ruler that once he declared that he was the state. However, he knew the boundaries of flattery and once remarked to Racine, his court poet that: "I would praise you more, if you had praised me less."

Napoleon once told Marshall Droc about his courtiers that: "they attributed to me the finest speeches of which I never uttered a single word." The Marshall justified it by saying that: "since it is for the glory of the state, let them have their full range."

The tradition of flattery is going on unabated in our society. We are not lagging behind from our illustrious predecessors. Whenever, a military dictator comes to power, we immediately proclaim him as modern Muhammad b, Qasim or Salahuddin. The irony is that he himself starts to believe the incarnation of the past heroes. The result is that every dictator and political leader is encircled by cronies and phycophants who continuously flatter him as the savior and deliverer of nation.

As we have feudal culture in which powerful and authoritative demand that they should be praised by qualities that they do not have. As a tool to achieve ends, it is further infiltrated in our political and social institutions where heads expect to be adored by their subordinates. It is the easiest way to win their favour. History tells us that flattery blinds those who are targets of it. As a result of it, they commit blunder after blunder and there is nobody who has courage to tell them about it. Finally, it leads them to decline and fall. Alas! There is nobody who wants to learn from history.

## Heroes of Flattery

*Power and superiority are so flattering and delightful, that, fraught with temptation, and exposed to danger, as they are, scarcely any virtue is so cautious, or or any prudence so timorous, is to decline them. - Samuel Johnson*

Thus we find that throughout history flattery has been a powerful instrument and tool to transform an individual from non-existence to powerful and authoritative one. As soon as an individual assumes power, he changes dramatically from ordinary and obscure person to a famous and reputed one and becomes a paragon of virtues. His past is ignored and his present position turns him a hero, He is immediately elevated to high pedestal of fame and glory. Consequently, he is so much intoxicated by flattery that he started in believing himself as the savior and deliverer of nation, a divinely guided leader, and a man who has extra-ordinary qualities to solve all kinds of problems. He is regarded as the chosen one who can guide the nation to the path of prosperity and security. He is assured by his cronies that that he is loved by people more than anyone. They convince him they that they are his sincere and true friends and are ready to sacrifice their lives for him. He is so fascinated by those intellectuals, officials, and friends who shower praise on him that he ,in return, patronize them and offer them all kinds of benefits As they get all types of benefits from their patron, they make attempt to keep him in power. They fully know that his decline will be the end of their privileges.

In reality, flatterers are not praising to him as a person but to his authority which has power to delegate concessions to his cronies. However, this reality comes as a shock to the person when power slips from his hand. As soon as the same individual becomes powerless as a result of political change or a coup, he finds him in isolation bereft of any support or sympathy by his former sycophants. He reverts back to his position of ordinary individual. All glorifications which were attached to him just disappear with no time. He is humiliated and insulted by media, intellectuals and bureaucrats who were once around him. Everybody is ready to thrash him what he has done in the past: how he misused his power and how much he involved in corruption. Under these circumstances, most of the fallen leaders prefer to spent rest of their life in exile rather in their own country.

We have a number of examples in our recent history when powerful individuals declined to insignificant position and left alone to live on the memories of the past. When Ayub Khan made a coup in 1958, suddenly he emerged as an extra-

ordinary man. He was profusely admired as the man who could lead the nation to progress and advancement. He was called 'De Gaulle of Asia'. An experienced general and matured statesman. He was suggested by Z. A. Bhutto to assume the title of Field Marshall just to distinguish himself from other generals. Pir Ali Muhammad Rashidi even proposed him to crown as a king of Pakistan. Surrounded by flatterers he started to believe that he was the person who could deliver the nation from turmoil and crisis.

In his last days when he was loosing popularity, his cronies continued to tell him that he was still popular among people. It is said that to mislead him they provided him cuttings of newspapers which were in his favour. He remained ignorant from criticism and condemnation of his policies. When he resigned under pressure, there was jubilation. He silently retired to his home village where he died like an ordinary person. There was no national mourning. No tribute to him.

We have seen the same fate to his successors. Yehya Khan who, after his retirement became a butt of sarcasm. His scandalous life style was condemned by everybody. He is remembered in history as the man who is responsible for secession of East Pakistan. When he died few people noticed of his death. Ziaul Haq who was praised as *mard-i-momin*, now remembered as the man who patronized religious extremists in this country and violated all constitutional provisions to fulfill his political goals.

The matter of fact is that man of power likes flattery because it satisfies his ego and he feels conscious about his personal qualities. It makes him taller than others. He has to pay the price of it when minions easily fulfill their demands by trapping him in the net of flattery. According to Leo Tolstoy: "Even in the warmest, friendliest, and simplest relations, flattery or praise is needed just as grease is needed to keep wheel going round."

Wills Goth Regier in his book *In Praise of Flattery* enumerates dangers of it that how it is poisonous and lethal to a person who is praised. According to him it is like a drug which addicts a person up to the extent that he loses his senses; it is a disease which makes a person fatally sick; it prevents man of power to hear any bad news; it increases intolerance to criticism; and it abets arrogance. The result is that man of power is lost in labyrinth of flattery and becomes a prisoner in the circle of flatterers.



## Europe

### Church and Society

During the medieval period, the institution of the Church became so strong that it dominated the political, social and economic aspects of society. For example, it completely changed the structure of cities. During the Roman period, the centre of the city was marked by fountains, porticos and forums. Forums provided open space to the inhabitants to gather and watch cultural shows, listen to the speeches of politicians and generals, and participate in public discussions.

In the new religious set up the whole structure of the city changed. Now, the centre of the city was dominated by an imposing cathedral which displayed the power of the church. Around it were monasteries where monks chanted night and day. The entire atmosphere created fear among the citizens who were constantly reminded of their mortality and warned to take care about the next world.

The Church controlled the daily routine of the people. They divided their day and night by the ringing of church bells. The Church performed all rituals from birth to death. All believers were expected to attend church services; any absence gave rise to suspicion regarding a person's religious beliefs. Such was the religious structure that nobody could contradict the teachings of the Church. Le Fabvre, the French historian who specialized in 16th century Europe, concluded that in this period there was no space for anyone to become an atheist.

To capture the imagination of the people, the Church adopted a number of symbols such as memorials of martyrs who sacrificed their life for religion. These memorials were built at different places to create a spirit of devotion among the believers. Miracles of saints were propagated in order to create respect for them. Holy relics were displayed in every church which attracted people to come and pay homage to them. The Church also introduced its own calendar which regulated the date for religious festivals and rituals; it was also used for administrative purposes.

When the ritual of confession was introduced and it became incumbent on every Christian to confess his sins once a year, it allowed the Church to interfere in the private life of people. It became customary for priests to deliver sermons in which they condemned the rich and criticised women for displaying fashion. These sermons were passionate and fiery and aimed at working on the emotions and conscience of the congregation which brought them in further awe of the

Church and they looked to it to save them from natural disasters like illness, famines, drought and pestilence.

To increase its control on society, church authorities had the right to excommunicate those who defied the order of the Church. It was a formidable tool because a person who was excommunicated found no place in society. He had no alternative but to apologies and accept punishment to come back into the fold of Christianity.

Another effective tool in the hands of the Church was the institution of inquisition. It was organised in the 11th century to prevent any deviation from the teachings of the Church. Priests toured villages and towns and traced suspects who had any doubts in religious beliefs. If such a person was found, he appeared before the officers of inquisition who thoroughly investigated the case. If necessary, torture was applied to get a confession; if found guilty, he was handed over to secular authorities to be burnt at the stake. In Spain, the inquisition was used against the Jews and the Muslims after the conquest of the last Arab kingdom of Granada in 1492.

The Church also launched crusades against the heretics and different religious sects. Any break from mainstream Christianity was regarded as treason.

When the printing press came into being and started to print books, Church authorities were in a quandary regarding how to control literature which was against the teachings of religion. In 1515 CE, the Pope issued an order that the authorities of the Church should check the material of every book before publication. Nobody was allowed to publish any book without the permission of the Church.

The Church used to publish an index of books printed in other countries and prohibited its followers from reading them. Some of these books were completely banned and some of them partly censored. The officials of the Church searched the arriving ships to make sure that they were not carrying any banned literature. It was customary to raid bookshops and libraries to see if there were any uncensored books.

The result of this hold of religion was that the medieval period remained intellectually bankrupt and hollow. It prevented the birth of liberal and secular ideas and thoughts. However, the corruption and degradation of the church institutions allowed thinkers and intellectuals to challenge it and liberate the society from this rigidity and extremism. The end of the Church's power was the beginning of a new era in the history of Europe.

## The Courage to Say No

In 1517, Martin Luther, Professor of Theology at the University of Wittenberg, nailed his 95 theses on the door of the castle church in Wittenberg. This was a common method of initiating scholarly discussion.

By doing so, Luther wanted to challenge the authority of the church to introduce innovations against the original teachings of Christianity.

It was a bold step by the young professor (who had no political support) to oppose the most powerful institution of Christianity.

However, Luther was not the first to point out corruption and mismanagement of the church. Previously, the reformers attempted to revive the purity of religion and curtail the authority of Pope. But all such attempts failed while the church decided to consolidate itself.

Some reformers were excommunicated and burnt at stake while others were declared heretics and forced to silence.

In the medieval Europe, the institution of church was very strong with the Pope being the spiritual and temporal power and an unchallenged authority. As he had the power to excommunicate, the rulers of Europe were afraid to defy the authority of the church. Those who dared to challenge it paid a high price by either having to apologize or by accepting punishment.

Therefore, when Luther exposed the corruption of church and its deviation from the Christian teachings, he risked his life. The Vatican took notice of his objections and asked him to appear before the Imperial Diet and explain his position. Afraid that he might be arrested, Luther hesitated to appear until he was assured that he would not be arrested and he had 24 hours to save himself.

Luther decided to appear before the Diet at Worms and during his long journey, he was surprised to see that people from the nearby villages and towns lined the roads to welcome him. As he passed through the villages, people applauded and encouraged him. This was beyond his expectation because he was not aware that people favoured his religious ideas. The warm reception by people gave him confidence.

When he appeared before the Imperial Diet, he was struck by its grandeur as there were emperors, princes of German states and the Prosecutor from the

Vatican present. Luther belonged to a peasant family and was unfamiliar with such etiquette and decorum.

As all eyes were fixed on him, he became nervous. The prosecutor pointed out to the table where all his published books lay and asked him to confirm that he was the author of those books. After seeing the books, Luther confirmed that the books were written by him. The prosecutor asked him whether he was ready to recant his religious ideas written in those books. At this point, Luther kept silent. Observing this, the prosecutor gave him 24 hours to think and return the next day to express his opinion.

Luther retired to his room but could not sleep the whole night. He thought about what to say next day. He remembered the people who came from different villages and towns to welcome and applaud him for his courage to challenge the church and its corruption. They were simple people and hoped that his action would bring a change in their lives. This helped him reach his decision.

The next day he appeared before the Imperial Diet and refused to recant his religious views. His refusal changed the course of history. A man with no political power broke the most powerful institution of Europe.

Can an individual change history alone or does he need the support of people and social and political forces to fulfill his agenda?

The predecessors of Luther failed to reform the church because they were either alone or supported by a minority. In case of Luther, he was not only supported by the people but had the blessings of the German princes as well who wanted to get rid of the Pope's control.

In Pakistan we pray for a leader to deliver us from chaos and disorder. However, the problem is that the Pakistani people are not ready for a change and reject any voice which challenges traditions and values. A leader cannot be successful unless the society is ready to get rid of its outdated customs, institutions and ideas.

## European Reform Movements

In every religion reform movements emerge either to revive its original teachings or to re-adjust it to modern times. Some movements are short lived and after accomplishing the demands of certain groups, faded away in history. Some movements have long and enduring impact and continue to exist with changing interpretation.

In the history of Christianity, the institution of the church was very elaborate and strong and dominated not only religious life but also social and cultural activities of daily life. To maintain its domination, the church opposed any change in its structure. It severely punished all those reformers who from time to time raised their voice against its corruption and deviation from the original teachings of Christianity.

In the medieval Europe John Wycliffe (d.1384), John Huss (d.1415) and Girolamo Savanorola (d.1498) were important reformers who wanted to purify religion and to reform the institution of the church. As the Pope and the church were powerful, their movements were brutally crushed. John Huss and Savanorola were burnt at the stake.

However, in the 16th century, European society began to change and the domination of the church started to weaken. Its hold on education was challenged by the municipal school system which imparted liberal and secular education. The students who graduated from those schools joined the bureaucracy, business and other professions which were emerging to fulfil the demands of the market.

In the church run schools Latin was the medium of instruction, while in public schools local languages were taught. In the changing social and economic situation those who studied in secular schools were successful as compared to those who were educated in religious schools. The newly educated generation wanted freedom from religious restrictions.

Moreover, the rulers of Europe were eager to get rid of the domination of the church and assume full sovereign powers. Their major concern was that taxes extracted from their territories were taken away to Rome. If they defied the Pope and the church, they were excommunicated. Under these circumstances, the rulers and feudal lords wanted to gain independence from the hold of the church. Therefore, when in 1517, Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses on the door of the local church, it reflected not only the corruption of the church and its officials but

the unrest and disillusionment of the people who wanted to reform the intuition of the church.

Luther and his agents wanted reforms supported by German princes and the people at large. In cities, merchants and traders favored the movement so they did not have to pay religious taxes which they considered a heavy burden.

Though Luther did not say a word in favour of the peasants and sought the help of feudal rulers, the peasants were inspired by the reforms and the challenge to the Pope's authority and revolted against the rulers and their exploitation. They were influenced by the teachings of Luther which proclaimed justice in society on the basis of the Bible.

In 1524-25, the peasants' rebellion shattered the whole fabric of German society. The rebellion was led by Thomas Munzer, a religious leader, who told them that rich people were responsible for their plight and poverty and wanted to keep them illiterate so they are not able to read the Bible. In his view religious reforms were not complete without transforming society by eliminating differences between the rich and poor.

Thomas Munzer was killed in the battlefield and the disciplined armies of the princes slaughtered the rebel peasants. Afterwards, Luther relied on the support and assistance of the rulers and reformation became Majestic Reformation.

Luther's movement was followed by Ulrich Zwingli (d.1531) in Zurich and John Calcin (d.1564) in Geneva. Henry the VIII of England founded the Zwinglian church. These movements changed the political, social and economic structure of Europe.

They plunged Germany in a 30-year religious war which ended in 1646 by the Treaty of Westphalia which laid down the foundation of nation states. According to it, the rulers of Germany could decide the religion of their states. It caused great migration within the German states in which Protestants and Catholics shifted to the states of their sects.

Thus, sectarian conflicts were unleashed in Europe. In France, which was predominantly a Catholic country, Protestants were persecuted and massacred which resulted in their migration to England, Holland and Germany. In England, Catholics were discriminated against and most of them fled to Catholic countries. The Netherlands, which was under the rule of Spain, became Calvinist and Spain was forced to adjure faith and return to the Catholic fold. It led to the war of Independence in Netherlands against Spain. The religious turmoil and

persecution ultimately ended in the 18th century when the church and the state became separate entities and the states became secular.

This is how Europe learnt its lesson from the sectarian and religious conflict and established a pluralistic society. The Protestant countries which challenged the authority of the Pope and broke the traditions prospered while the tradition bound Catholic countries remained backward for a long time thence.

It shows that societies which liberated themselves from the hold of the religious dogma and extremism adopted newer changes and used their energies in developing their institutions for the welfare of the people.

## Church and State

Christianity emerged when the Roman Empire was at the height of its power. To survive, Christianity adopted the policy of submission, obedience and peace. Its teachings appealed to the oppressed, powerless and weaker sections of society who by accepting it endured exploitation and suffering with patience. In the early period, the converts belonged to the rural areas but gradually the faith spread and the urban population also embraced it. The belief in religion was so strong and deep that believers preferred to die rather than to abjure it. They were tortured, thrown before wild animals and burnt at stakes. However, the number of converts continued to increase and strengthen Christianity's impact on Roman society.

When Roman Emperor, Augustus Constantine converted to Christianity in 312 CE, and made it the state religion, its character changed from submissive to an aggressive religion. Once the church acquired political power, it made attempts to convert the entire Roman Empire by using all coercive methods. The emperor fully patronized the Church in its efforts and gave it the position of a leading state institution. He allotted landed property to it and donated huge amounts of wealth to its officials. He exempted it from all taxes. Seeing this, the Roman nobility also joined the new faith to gain not only the favour of the emperor but also to protect their property and privileges. This transformed Christianity which, abandoning common people became protector of the elite classes. When the Church became rich it changed its attitude towards poverty which was a matter of pride in its early days and instead, praised the merits of wealth.

In the fifth century, the Christian world was divided into two. In the east was the Roman Emperor who fused religion into state structure and used it for political motives. In the west, the Pope became the spiritual leader, undermining the power of the European rulers. In both places, Christianity interpreted its ideology from fresh perspectives. It integrated its history with that of the Roman Empire and connected the birth of Christ to the foundation of the Empire by Augustus. A new history was written which, by denying the earlier stance, condemned all other faiths and claimed its monopoly on truth and righteousness. Heresy therefore became a crime. The Church adopted a policy to eliminate all heretic and sedition movements within Christianity and to wipe out the existing religions of the Roman time.

In 453 CE, a law was promulgated whereby the properties of pagans and heretics were confiscated. They were punished if found to have secret meetings; the punishments including crucifixion, burning at the stake or being thrown to wild



animals. These were the same punishments which were given to the Christians during the Roman period. As the Church became the inheritor of the Roman Empire, it adopted a harsh policy towards non Christians. This shows how political power changes the mindset and attitude of people. Saint Augustine argued that it was the blessing of God that the Church became strong with the help of the empire. Therefore, it was its right to punish heretics and strengthen the faith. Heretics were also ostracized socially. They were not allowed to attend church services. Christians were prohibited to marry into heretic families. Non Christians were dismissed from government jobs. There was a law which allowed them to be exiled and their property confiscated.

The pagan philosophers were also victims of the Church. One woman philosopher, who was famous for her knowledge and wisdom, was stoned to death in front of a church when a bishop incited the mob against her. The last non Christian philosopher of Alexandria left the city as he was harassed and terrorised by the clergy. Some of the non Christian philosophers went to Harran, an ancient city near modern day Turkey, where they survived up to the 11th century. They were the people who transmitted Greek learning to the Arabs.

There was religious tolerance in the pagan society which ended after the domination of Christianity. Tolerance was replaced by narrow-mindedness; all doors for creativity and innovation were closed. The rise of religion cut off all relations with the past and the knowledge of Greece and Ancient Rome was lost. Its slogan was one empire and one religion.

The American Founding Fathers after studying history learnt the lesson that fusion of religion and state was detrimental to progress. That is why, at the time of drafting the constitution, they separated Church from state. In Europe, the French Revolution ended the domination of the Church and secularized the state.

## Intellectuals

### Of Intellectual

There is a general consensus among Pakistan intellectuals to abstain from opposing established traditions and values. As supporters of the existing system, they attain popularity, social status, cash rewards, titles and support in official circles. They are fully aware that to oppose popular opinion would bring condemnation and displeasure. In fact, the task of intellectuals is not to support public views in order to please people. On the country, it is their responsibility to change public opinion and create awareness and consciousness in society. To fulfill this role, they have to pay a heavy cost. We have a number of examples where the intellectuals raised their voice against popular public opinion and expressed their concern on the emotional fervor of the masses when they felt a principal was at stake.

In 1889, Dreyfus, a Jewish officer in the French army, was wrongly tried and convicted on the charges of treason. There was such public fury against him that nobody had the courage to speak in his favor. At this point, Emile Zola, the novelist, spoke openly in his defense and published an open letter in a newspaper accusing the government and the authorities of injustice. Zola faced public and government anger and escaped to England to save his life. Later on it was proved that the whole case was false and Dreyfus was released.

Intellectuals, often face problems when their country is involved in war. At such times emotions run high; people are not willing to hear anything against war efforts, Bertrand Russell, the British philosopher, and activist, raised his voice publicly against Britain's involvement in the war in 1914. He lost his post at Trinity College and was forced to pay a fine as punishment for his beliefs but did not back down. He continued his anti war campaign throughout his life and played an active role during the Vietnam War by forming a tribunal to try the American government on war crimes.

We also have the example of Arundhati Roy, the frail woman, who publicly expressed that it the Kashmiri people want independence. They should be allowed to have it. It takes great courage to go against public opinion and make a statement on such a sensitive topic.

Though in Europe and America there are a number of intellectuals who oppose popular public opinion, in the face of criticism and condemnation, in third world countries, dissident intellectuals face greater hardships and threats. As they

challenge the existing systems, values and traditions, they are regarded as rebels and their ideas are considered dangerous and harmful to society.

Their writings are either banned or censored. They are not allowed to teach and are gradually marginalized. They have to live in poverty and austerity. In advanced countries, they have some space for survival but in the third world it is difficult for them to live a dignified life. However, there are still some intellectuals who continue to say and write what they believe despite all hardships. Their commitment compels them to challenge obsolete ideas and shake society by presenting new thoughts. They do not seek admiration, appreciation or financial recognition. Their satisfaction stems from their contribution to the domain of ideas. Sometimes an intellectual's ideas change the outlook of society and sometimes they are lost in the mist of time. Here we have the example of Abul Fazl, Akbar's historian whose ideas were ignored and never applied. It is sad that many Pakistani intellectuals did not ever rebel. Since the inception of the country, their approach was to follow in the footsteps of state policies. Many have the knack to change their views in accordance with whoever is in power and so have continued to be the mouthpiece of energy government.

When Ayub Khan imposed martial law and sought the support of intellectuals, they lined up to applaud his dictatorship and immediately accepted his offer and so the writer's guild was formed. During Zia-ul-Haq's dictatorship, they enthusiastically attended the Ahl-I-Qalam conferences to please him. It is the common practice of many of our intellectual to somersault and change their views in favor of those who are in power.

We have noticed how our literary giants and journalists, who were praising Musharraf's moderate enlightenment transformed into democrats overnight. The result of this opportunism, flattery and sycophancy is that they have lost the trust of the people. However, many won't be ashamed of it. Another tragedy of our intellectuals is to sell their knowledge to NGOs and undertake research for funded projects which are not used for their own society; rather they provide political and social condition in order to deal with us. They are not contributing anything to create awareness among our people: this gap leaves a vacuum for conservative forces to spread and popularize their ideology.

The task of the intellectuals is not to fulfill their personal demands and sell their knowledge. Knowledge gives them dignity, respect and honour; they should preserve it at all cost. It reminds me of the episode of Goethe and Beethoven; two giants, one in literature, the other in music. One day, both were taking a walk when a nobleman crossed their path Goethe, out of respect, stood aside to give him way but Beethoven continued to walk and told Goethe "there are thousands of nobles, but only two of us."

## Dissident Intellectuals

Dissident intellectuals are those who raise their voice against injustice and tyranny. They are not concerned about the popularity of their views and they suffer for their ideas and thoughts, not only at the hands of the state but also the society. They are often imprisoned, tortured; even punished by death. They endure all hardships because of their commitment to their principles and reject all temptations of wealth and high offices.

Often such people are not given due recognition in their own time and many disappear into oblivion. However, they leave a rich legacy of their views and thoughts and their courage to speak the truth continues to inspire others. One such great dissident was Socrates who was condemned to death by the Athenian jury, consisting of more than two hundred men, on the charges of corrupting the Athenian youth and denying its gods.

Plato recorded his defence speech under the title of "Apologia". After hearing the verdict, he addressed the citizens of the city and the jury. He warned his accusers that they would be condemned by future generations for their judgment. He chose to die rather than to go into exile or pay a fine to save his life. His prophecy came true: in the annals of history, Socrates (d.399 BCE) is vindicated while his accusers are condemned. He lives on as a great source of inspiration to dissident intellectuals to follow in his footsteps.

When Philip of Macedon occupied the city of Athens, there was nobody who could raise a voice against the victor. At this critical juncture Demosthenes (d 322 BCE), the great orator, challenged the foreign occupation and spoke against Philip. When Philip's army pursued him he took refuge in a temple; unable to follow him inside, the army laid siege outside. Rather than be taken prisoner, Demosthenes committed suicide and joined the ranks of those who choose death rather than compromise on their principles.

Another example is that of Cicero (December 18, 43BCE), a great Roman writer who influenced the humanists of the Renaissance. He was also elected Consul of the Roman Republic. After the assassination of Caesar, Octavian and Antony gained great power. Cicero disapproved of Antony's abuse of power and bravely spoke against him in the Senate. Anthony did not tolerate this criticism and ordered that Cicero be executed. After his death, his hands, which had penned the criticism against Antony, were cut off along with his head and were nailed to the rostrum in the Senate.

Persecution of dissident intellectuals continued throughout history. In our time dictators and democratic despots have victimized all those who criticized their acts of violence. Muhammad Raza Shah, the king of Iran, was notorious for his barbarity towards his opponents; a number of intellectuals were tortured and put to death during his reign. One of the most tragic cases is that of Samad Behrangi (d.1967), the author of the famous short story 'Mahi siyah kocholo' or 'Small black fish.' He was kidnapped by Sawak, the secret agency of the Shah. He was tortured and killed and his dead body was found in the river. However, the Sawak failed to kill his story. It is such a popular story that every Iranian has read it and been inspired by it.

Even in Pakistan there are some dissident intellectuals who are condemned and forgotten. One of them is Khalid Alig, a radical and revolutionary poet who strictly followed the classical traditions of Urdu poetry. He remained independent throughout his life and refused to accept any honour or title from the state. He also did not accept any financial help in spite of his poverty. He lived and died on his own terms. As he was not part of the literary mafia, he is also forgotten.

But men such as Alig are few and far between in our country; the majority of the men of letters are opportunistic and clever enough to adjust under dictatorship as well as democratic governments to gain benefits and privileges. People respect and honour them in spite of their opportunism and intellectual bankruptcy; they are invited to every book launch and literary seminar or conference because they please everyone with their writings. The result of this intellectual bankruptcy is that since Partition, our intellectuals have failed to produce any inspiring literature. They just fulfill the demands of a backward society.

They kept their silence when army action was taken in Bangladesh. They are still not speaking while Balochistan suffers and bleeds. Instead of raising their voice against the persecution of minorities they compose romantic poetry and write symbolic short stories. As they represent the popular feelings of society, they are invited abroad to entertain the expatriates and earn lots of money; as they pose no challenge to the state, they are awarded titles. In such a society and under these circumstances, there is no space to produce new ideas and thoughts. Such a society will remain backward for a long time.

## The Task of Intellectuals

Arnold Toynbee, writing on the rise and fall of civilization, puts forward his theory of 'challenge and response'. According to his theory, each civilization faces a number of challenges and crises during its growth and rise. Its survival depends on the responses to these challenges.

As long as a society is able to respond actively to its problems, it survives changing its structure by adopting new traditions and values. If a society fails to respond, it slowly and gradually decays and loses its vitality. Those responsible for responding to the challenges are intellectuals. It is their responsibility to create a new consciousness and create new ideas to guide society to adjust according to the need of the time.

If intellectuals of society fail to play this role, society would lose its strength and dissipate. The role of intellectuals becomes vital when a society is in a state of decadence as chaos and anarchy breaks it into pieces. We have many examples in history when a group of intellectuals came forward and, by their thought provoking and innovative ideas, gave a new life to their society.

This happened in the case of the Renaissance. Intellectuals such as Desiderius Erasmus, Thomas Moore, Patriarch, Machiavelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Michel Angelo, and a lot of others who stimulated European society to get rid of the medieval practices and traditions. As a result of their efforts, European society transformed into a new and energetic entity.

Then we have the example of Germany. German intellectuals were shocked after Germany's defeat by Napoleon. The question before them was how to recover from the defeat and revive the pride of the nation. They realized that the weakness of Germany was that it was divided into a number of states and lacked unity.

Therefore, the intellectuals undertook the task of uniting the German people on the basis of language. They developed the language as a tool to integrate people and create in them historical consciousness. The Grimm brothers collected German folktales and songs and writers and philosophers contributed to make the language rich. It created the linguistic nationalism which subsequently resulted in the unification of Germany in 1772 under Bismarck.

This pattern was followed by Arab intellectuals in the 1960s to create a sense of Arab nationalism among the people. Lebanon's Christian intellectuals played an

important role in making Arabic language a tool to integrate all Arabs without any discrimination on the basis of religion. Bassam Tibi, Syrian born German professor, in his book *The Arab Nationalism* documented the whole movement of nationalism and highlighted the role of al-Husri who worked hard to mobilize the intellectuals to contribute to this movement.

This linguistic nationalism was above religious beliefs. Philip K. Hitti's book *History of the Arabs* and recently Albert Hourani's book *History of the Arab People* are the best examples of this movement. Unfortunately, this secular concept of nationalism failed in view of the political changes in the Middle East which reshaped it through religious extremism.

Another example is that of the Chinese intellectuals who responded to the challenges in the mid-19th century when China was forced by European powers to sign humiliating treaties one after another allotting them not only its territory but granting trade concessions which rendered it powerless. Under these circumstances, the question before the intellectuals was how to get back the lost national pride.

Some scholars believed that the only way to survive was to adopt European traditions and political system. Some argued in favour of reviving Confucius' teachings in their pure form. Later on, some intellectuals were fascinated by Marxism and the Russian Revolution in 1917. These different solutions were experimented with and finally socialist ideology succeeded in changing the history of China.

Pakistan, since its inception is passing through turmoil. Military interventions have interrupted its political system. Politicians have failed to govern the country efficiently. Economic problems and financial corruption are causing an imbalance between the rich and poor and increasing poverty, which is resulting in social and cultural backwardness. Religious extremists and sectarian conflicts are disturbing communal harmony.

How are the intellectuals of Pakistan responding to these challenges? Not effectively. The only voice of dissidence is from a few individuals. Some poets have stimulated the emotions of their readers by radical poetry. But its impact is always short lived. Political and social consciousness is the result of political, philosophical and historical writings which are composed in prose.

For thought provoking and radical ideas, intellectuals are required who, without any compromise with the state and the ruling classes, side with the people and create in them a spirit of resistance against the system. Pakistani society so far lacks such honest intellectuals.

## The intellectual Voice

Intellectuals have always played a crucial role in society. These are people who are not concerned with the popularity of their views nor do they follow popular trends. On the contrary, they write and speak what they believe in and what is intended for the betterment of society.

When intellectuals raise their voice against prevalent ideas, they are criticized and condemned but they continue their struggle relentlessly however controversial it may be.

Voltaire, the French intellectual, was the champion of enlightenment and throughout his life he struggled for freedom of expression and human dignity and was against religious extremism and intolerance. He was a prolific writer and wrote over a hundred books, pamphlets and tracts.

He corresponded with European rulers, members of the aristocracy, other intellectuals as well as ordinary citizens, and wrote around 25,000 letters discussing political and religious issues. Eventually he was banished from Paris. Voltaire wandered from one place to the other for refuge but never compromised on his ideas despite suffering in exile. He settled down in an estate which he purchased on the border of France and Switzerland where people from all walks of life visited him.

Voltaire was born in an age of religious extremism when in Catholic France; there was no tolerance for Protestants. On April 13, 1598 in Nantes, the French King, Henri IV (and Prince of Navarre), formally signed the document known as the Edict of Nantes. Even though the edict did not put an end to the pogroms and the persecutions, whose victims were Protestant believers in France, it did terminate what became known as the Wars of Religion, while legally (for a time at least) fixing the status of these reformers in the kingdom. It is to Nantes glory to have associated its name with one of the most far reaching acts of religious tolerance in history.

August 24, 1572 was the date of the infamous St Bartholomew's Day Massacre in France. On that day, over 400 years ago, began one of the most horrifying holocausts in history. The glorious Reformation, begun in Germany on October 31, 1517, had spread to France-and was joyfully received. A great change had come over the people as industry and learning began to flourish, and so rapidly



did it spread that over a third of the population embraced the Reformed Christian Faith.

Voltaire favored religious pluralism and believed that one religion or faith could make the society fanatic and narrow-minded. With two religions, people would slaughter each other in the name of faith. Only a society which had multiple religions would be tolerant and understanding of one another's faith. In his writings, he emphasised on tolerance and condemned St Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, who had preached intolerance against non Christians.

Voltaire criticized the clergy when the church opposed inoculation against small pox, claiming it to be an intervention against the work of God. He supported inoculation and accused the priests of being superstitious. When there was an earthquake in Lisbon in which thousands of people died, the clergy called it divine punishment for the sinners but regarded it a blessing for the good people who died and earned paradise by the grace of God.

Voltaire opposed their views as he believed the earthquake to be a natural calamity.

Voltaire not only influenced the European society but also impressed the rulers by his views. He was invited by Frederick II of Prussia where he lived for three years but left in disappointment when he realized that he was only considered a decoration in the court and the implementation of his philosophy was not intended.

However, he continued to correspond with Frederick and discouraged him against wars in Europe, describing gruesome details of the battlefield where thousands of men died just to glorify kings and killers. He wrote letters to Catherine of Russia advising her to abolish serfdom and liberate the peasants. He vehemently opposed the French aristocracy who consumed wealth and made no contribution to society.

He remained anti-clergy throughout his life and argued that it was the priests and the religious people who created conflict, bloodshed and hatred in society while Hobbes, Locke, Newton, and Spinoza peacefully benefited humanity through their ideas and inventions.

In 1778, his 84th year, Voltaire attended the first performance of his tragedy *Iršne*, in Paris. His journey and reception were a triumph, but the emotion was too much for him to handle, and he died in Paris soon afterwards. His body later on was transferred to the Pantheon which was built by the revolutionary government to honour its heroes.

Pakistani society is presently going through a similar process that France and Europe went through in the 18th century.

Religious intolerance, extremism, warmongering and violence in the name of religion and trampling of human rights reign, while the rich and the ruling have abandoned the people and their problems. Sadly, there are no towering figures as Voltaire to raise a voice against these vices and transform society like he had done in the 18th century Europe.

## Shared Culture

When Samuel Huntington, professor of Political Science at Harvard University, published an article entitled Clash of Civilizations in 1993, it created a debate on whether the theory was correct or not. Throughout history, civilizations have shared inventions and innovation and created a world of homogeneity rather than differences.

When the Egyptians learnt from the Mesopotamians and the Greeks from the Egyptians, new ideas spread from one corner of the world to another and the process of cultural diffusion continued to enrich civilizations.

Another aspect of cultural influence is when a military power conquers or occupies a country and adapts the culture of the vanquished. With the Roman occupation of the Greek city of Athens, which was famous for its learning, the Roman aristocrats went to Athens for higher studies. Stoic philosophers like Cicero, Seneca and the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius emerged while Greek philosophical movements such as Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Cynicism became popular in the Roman Empire.

The Romans also learned history writing from Greek historians like Herodotus and Thucydides. Their impact can be seen in Greek historiography where Roman historians followed the Greek pattern of documenting history.

Polybius, who wrote Roman history, was originally a Greek historian. In his monumental work which was a series of biographies called Parallel Lives, famous Greeks and Romans were paired together to discuss their common virtues and vices. Greek language became the language of the ruling classes and Homer's poetry was recited by the educated classes. Greek theatre was emulated by Roman dramatists while Greek art, architecture and sculpture were adapted throughout the Roman Empire.

The Byzantine Empire was just another name for the Eastern Roman Empire. The Byzantine Greeks not only called themselves Roman but also considered their empire Roman.

When the Arabs conquered Syria, they adopted the Byzantine administrative set up and Greek remained the official language. During the Abbasid period, Greek philosophy was translated into Arabic. Which introduced Greek philosophy to Medieval Europe, creating an eagerness for Greek knowledge in the European society.

On the other hand, the Roman Empire left a rich legacy including political institutions, the legal system, art and architecture for Europe.

The Carolingian dynasty under Charlemagne revived some of its institutions. He adopted the title of the Holy Roman emperor and made Latin the official language of his court which remained the language of the educated classes throughout the Middle Ages. The Renaissance scholars also imbibed the Roman heritage to get rid of the church and its authority.

Persia, being in a state of decay, easily succumbed to the Arab invasion but as their civilization was rich and advanced, the Persians in turn made a cultural conquest. They brought the Abbasids to power after a revolution that deposed the Umayyid dynasty. The Persians excelled in the art of administration and took over the bureaucracy, transformed the Abbasid Caliph as the Persian monarch and introduced Persian court etiquette, rituals and festivals.

This model was followed by the Muslim dynasties such as the Ziyads, Safavids, Samanids and Ghaznavids in Central Asia. In India, Balban claimed his ancestry to the legendary king Afrasiyab to legitimize his rule. The Persian culture overpowered other cultures in Central Asia and India while Persian became the court language.

United under the leadership of Genghis Khan, the Mongols defeated the empire of the Khorezm. The Khans became the rulers of Persia, converted to Islam and adopted the fascinating Persian culture. The other Mongolian group invaded China and culturally became Chinese.

In history, there are military clashes and wars for political domination, but sometimes the impact of rich and deep rooted civilisations has been so strong that the victors and the vanquished became integrated in a single bond.

## A Culture of Corruption

Corruption has many categories and dimensions, and comes in all shapes and sizes. It could be the misuse of power, violation of moral values or a flourishing bribe culture for material gratification.

Corrupt practices are fatal to society and attempts have always been made to prevent it by the clergy imposing religious sanctions, by philosophers and political thinkers discussing moral values or through implementation of laws. Despite these measures, corruption has prevailed in every society throughout history.

Corruption at the top level involves the powerful ruling and elite classes. A Chinese ruler once asked a philosopher in his court about how to eliminate corruption. The philosopher replied that for starters, he should stop stealing himself.

Financial corruption is most condemned as it wrecks the fabric of society. When a state imposes and collects unjust taxes with coercive power, it is corruption of the highest order. When the aristocracy, ruling classes, bureaucrats and influential individuals accept bribes, they want to further improve their financial positions to live luxurious lives, consequently creating moral degradation in society.

Corruption from below involves petty government officials who use power play and accept bribes to perform tasks which are actually a part of their duty that they receive a salary for. The main cause of this corruption is the fact that they have low income and in order to live comfortably or beyond their means, they have no alternative but to accept bribes. Consumerism could perhaps be another reason which lures a person to acquire money through illegal means.

Edmund Burke (d.1797), the 18th century British parliamentarian and intellectual, critically examined the role of the East India Company which has a certain relevance to our society. According to him the servants of the company belonged to the lower strata of the British society and therefore were neither well educated, nor trained in the British moral code of life. While serving in India, they did not observe aristocratic traditions and values and were free from all moral, social, and cultural restraint.

This led to fulfillment of their personal ambitions to become rich by hook or by crook. Unchecked, they became involved in immoral and unethical practices.

Their greed, fraud, deception and lies not only challenged the Indian social and political system, but also disturbed the political and moral structure of the British society. They took their ill-gotten wealth from India to England, purchased landed property, became members of parliament and in this way distorted the traditional and respectable values and institutions of Britain.

Burke led the prosecution against Warren Hastings, the former governor-general of India. Hastings was accused of misconduct during his time in Calcutta particularly relating to mismanagement and personal corruption. Burke's prosecution became a wider debate on the role of the East India Company. Burke believed that both financial and political corruption were harmful and damaged the British society, He further argued that once traditions and values were broken, corruption becomes endemic in society.

The Pakistani society suffered a setback as a result of partition when established traditions and moral values were destroyed with no checks and balances to control corruption in the newly structured society. Hence, financial as well as political corruption flourished at all levels. Religious decorum was maintained but was disallowed to check dishonest practices and immoral acts in daily life.

The result is that today, corruption is not regarded a vice but accepted as normal routine and tolerated by every section of society. It is used to acquire more power and to enjoy a luxurious lifestyle. Those who are involved in corruption from below argue that as the state does not provide basic amenities, health, education or care of senior citizens, wealth is the only source of their protection. That is why people use all fair and foul means to accumulate wealth for their security and well being.

Due to the corrupt political culture in our country, people with mediocre talent, skills and education become rulers and damage the entire structure of the state. This process has led the country towards decay and degeneration. The ruling classes violate laws and regulations and misuse authority to promote personal agendas. Sadly, they are neither criticized nor condemned but on the contrary, they are respected by the society which clearly shows the complete collapse of moral values.

## Back to Machiavelli

Thinkers and philosophers throughout history made efforts to persuade rulers to observe principals of justice in order to protect the weak from the powerful. Plato in 'The Republic' emphasised on justice. Thomas Aquinas, a medieval theologian, maintained the same view that state without justice is nothing but a tool of coercion. During the Medieval period, Muslim thinkers also emphasised the importance of justice in politics in many treatises.

There are references to Anushervan, the Sassanid king as a role model. Kai Kaus in Qabusnama, Nizamul Mulk in Siyasatnama, and Ghazali in Nasihat ul Mulk advise rulers to follow the policy of justice. These treatises known as 'The Mirror of Princes' encourage the rulers to observe moral values for the welfare of their subjects. However, history shows that rulers had their own agendas to fulfill and were not bound by any advice and sermons.

Machiavelli, the Renaissance thinker had different views regarding the moral definition of justice. In Plato's dialogue, a Sophist thinker challenges Socrates that "might is justice." But Machiavelli presents an outline for rulers like Hitler who studied and followed Machiavelli's teachings.

Presently, many leaders in the Third World countries are too smart to surpass Machiavelli's thoughts and adopt principals which suit their political agenda. We find Machiavelli and his Prince alive even today, violating all moral values in order to achieve success.

First of all Machiavelli wants to know whether one is ambitious for power. If the answer is yes, then, he advises him to lie and deceive in order to achieve utmost power. He has to be more cunning rather than wise to rule, or in other words, to be a fox rather than a lion. He further advises one to rule with an iron hand and does not tolerate any opposition from the public.

Those who dare to challenge his policies must be punished. His Prince enjoys being surrounded by people who flatter him, and are ready to obey all his commands. His Prince would refrain from having a man of principle in his company who would not be obedient to his corrupt policies.

According to Machiavelli's advice, a leader should not keep his promise. His views should change with his interests. Practical politics is more important than promises and commitments and the truth may be violated if it becomes an

impediment. He should not be ashamed or apologetic if he breaks a promise or a commitment.

To maintain his innocence, power should be handed to a deputy to deal with the enemies brutally. When the deputy becomes unpopular, he should be dismissed, executed or imprisoned to show the people that the ruler himself was always against the deputy's policies. This way, he absolves and protects himself from ill will.

He does not introduce any reforms as these bring change and may upset society. Therefore, the status quo is maintained and it is in the ruler's interest to keep the system intact.

Machiavelli believes that his Prince is free from all moral values and is only concerned about maintaining power and to getting rid of his enemies. There is no question of justice to protect the weak from the powerful.

On the other hand the weak are supposed to be obedient and loyal to his rule. Machiavelli's realpolitik, or pragmatic politics, is justified by not only dictators but also many democratic leaders. Perhaps Pakistani leaders do not read Machiavelli but they are the true embodiment of his Prince. They have sycophants around them to admire and praise them and transform them as great and popular leaders. In return these sycophants are pleased by receiving high titles that they do not deserve. Those who oppose the rulers are isolated, imprisoned and tortured.

Under such leaders people are given opportunities for corruption. The state and its institutions become tools to protect corrupt leaders and their interests rather than protecting the people against them. Agitation is crushed by brute force. After studying the politics of Pakistan, we can conclude that some of our leaders have further embellished Machiavelli's ideology.



## The Fragile State

History shows that a society can tackle political, religious, and economic crises with an active and intellectual response. Passivity and lack of intellectual energy could cause the collapse of a society.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, Europe faced political and religious issues which seriously affected the social and financial structure.

In the Thirty years' War of religion, fought between Catholics and the Lutherans in Germany, 30 per cent of the German-speaking people lost their lives.

In the 17th century, England was involved in the civil war between the king, the Anglican Church and the parliament which mainly comprised the Calvinists or puritans. When religious strife and conflict had exhausted the European society, an intellectual response emerged in the shape of Thomas Hobbes' (1588-1679) book, *the Leviathan*.

According to this English philosopher, every sect believed that God was on its side while the others were infidels. Each sect emphasised on salvation of the soul and heaven being man's eternal abode as they believed that life in this world was temporary.

Hobbes analyzed that people were concerned more about the next world because anarchy and disorder made them pessimistic about the world and its affairs. In these circumstances, he figured that the basic instinct of human beings was the fear of violent and accidental death.

In the absence of a politically strong organization to control the society, there was no law, authority or system to protect life and property.

He concluded that only a strong state could defend the country from foreign invasion, and provide peace and prosperity to the people. Once the people had material benefits, they would care about this world rather than worry about the hereafter. He also suggested that state and religion should be separated, while a secular and democratic society should be promoted which would inspire people to pursue happiness. In his opinion, only a secular society could get rid of religious intolerance and sectarian strife.

Thomas Hobbes believed that a strong government was important for maintaining peace and order in the society. It was essential for people to pay

taxes to make the government efficient as only a strong and well-organised state could deliver security to people.

How are Thomas Hobbes' views relevant to Pakistan and its society in the present day? We confront the same problems that the European society did in the 17th century. Sectarian conflicts intensify as each sect believes that truth is on its side and forces the other to convert to their faith. This leads to bloody clashes among different sects with the followers ready to die for the cause of their faith and become martyrs.

In the absence of a strong Pakistani state, the society is in a situation where there is no law and order but the law of jungle prevails.

According to Hobbes' views, corruption and non payment of taxes renders the state of Pakistan weaker. People do not pay taxes but spend money to protect their life and property by hiring private agencies in their defence against crime. Since Hobbes clearly pointed out that human beings desire peace and security and are not in favour of living in insecure circumstances; similarly, the Pakistani society is also desirous of a strong, incorruptible government which would restore peace and order, provide opportunities to people to enjoy prosperity and to die a natural death after living a happy life.

## Demystifying Despots

In every age and period there have been dissidents, activists and intellectuals who raised a voice against tyranny, despotism and exploitation. With a deep rooted commitment, they endured torture, imprisonment, and accepted death without any compromise. Sometime, curious about their tenacity and stubbornness, one questions their policy to challenge the powerful authority not for their personal gains but for the truth to which they adhered.

Most of the time they stand alone and the majority of people whom they speak for maintain silence. Instead of appreciation, they are criticized and scorned by their fellows. However, their belief of righteousness is so strong that they persist in their views, refuse to compromise and defy authority when their principles are contradicted.

There are many examples in history when dissident activists faced powerful rulers fearlessly and spoke openly against their designs which were antithetical to moral values. In Roman history many dissident politicians and thinkers opposed rulers who wanted to crush the spirit of the Roman Republic.

One of these thinkers in the late Roman Republic was Cato the Younger: a follower of the Stoic philosophy, politician, statesman and orator. He is remembered for his stubbornness and tenacity, moral integrity, and his famous distaste for the ubiquitous corruption of the period.

First, he criticized Caesar in the senate. Then to further prevent his designs, he rallied an army and fought against him in the battlefield but he lost in the war. When Caesar offered to share power with him, he spurned and refused it. He decided to commit suicide but before taking any step, he discussed with his son the immortality of the soul. He told him that virtue and good deeds purify the soul from all pollution and thus death becomes a salvation for it.

Caesar was assassinated by Brutus and his colleagues because of his ambitions to assume imperial power. The assassins were considered enemies of Rome and were killed by Mark Antony and Octavius. Throughout the imperial history of Rome, Cato and the assassins of Caesar were considered traitors and were never granted a dignified place in society nor history. This is how history treats dissidents when it is written by the ruling classes; it vilifies their character.

George Orwell wrote a novel 1984, which depicts life in a totalitarian state. When its hero Winston Smith defies its system, he is interrogated and told by his

tormentor that he should understand that his voice would be crushed. Not only his voice but even his existence would be eliminated leaving no trace behind.

That is the policy of dictators and despots whose opponents disappear without any trace of their existence. They are murdered and their dead bodies are thrown on the roadside as a warning to people.

This happened in the cases of Stalin, Hitler, Pinochet and a host of dictators who crushed and killed their opponents to save their rule. During the military rule of Ayub Khan and General Ziaul Haq, many dissident activists and writers were tortured in the Lahore Fort. In the Zia regime, they were flogged in public and jailed without a proper trail. Some of them left the country to take political asylum in foreign countries while others suffered. The tragic part is that their sacrifices were soon forgotten. They are not remembered as they disappeared from historic record. It is the victory of the dictator while people have no knowledge of the despot's tribulation. They are forgotten heroes.

In politically conscious societies, historians are making efforts to rehabilitate dissidents in order to correct history. Cato, Brutus and his colleagues are no more traitors but have been ratified as defenders of freedom and liberty in the new version of history.

In Pakistan, we need to restore dignity to those who were condemned by dictators in the past. In fact, they are a source of inspiration for us to struggle against tyranny. Societies where dissidents, activists and intellectuals are left at the mercy of tyrants to brutally silence their voices deserve to be ruled by corrupt megalomaniacs and debauch rulers.

## General

### Conflict and Change

Machiavelli's *The Prince* became famous while the rest of his works are not so well known. One of his books *The Discourse* also referred to as *The Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livy* discusses the classical history of early Ancient Rome and is useful in understanding the present day issues of our country.

Out of 142 volumes of Titus Livy's ancient history of Rome, only ten survived. When the book was published for the first time, Machiavelli's father who had prepared the index obtained a copy from the publisher.

Machiavelli studied the wide-ranging comparison of ancient and modern states and societies, spruced up by a contrast between the ancient Roman republic and modern Florence. The book provided abundant material on the early history of the ancient republic, which for Machiavelli was the exemplary state by which all others - ancient and modern, could be assessed. He derived lessons from Livy's history, which resulted in a mix of practical and workable political systems.

According to Machiavelli, monarchy, aristocracy and democracy are not bad in character and spirit. However, after degeneration, monarchy becomes tyranny. Aristocracy is the rule of the oligarchy which converts to a corrupt system when controlled by ambitious individuals. Likewise democracy ruled by a mob results in disorder and anarchy.

The Roman republic consisted of the consul which was like a monarch but did not have absolute power, the senate which represented aristocracy, and the tribune which voiced the sentiment of the plebeians.

Machiavelli pointed out that the amalgamation of these three institutions resulted in social, political and economic discord in the Roman society. When common people protested and raised their voice against exclusion from politics, the higher authorities decided to include them in the political process.

To Machiavelli, conflicts played an important role in transformation of the society. If there was compromise and homogeneity, the society would fail to produce new ideas and thoughts. Therefore, contradiction was an important element which changed societies of the past.

When conflicts were crushed or suppressed brutally, they damaged society. In case of Florence, his hometown, the authorities either suppressed opponents or exiled them and the result was disorder and chaos.

Machiavelli further noticed that in Sparta and Athens, foreigners were not allowed to take part in politics. In the Republic of Venice people were not permitted to carry arms. On the other hand the Roman Republic granted citizenship to foreigners, and allowed common people to carry arms. Therefore, he argues that an inclusive as opposed to an exclusive approach stabilizes the political system.

Machiavelli believed that conflicts must not be allowed to discourage people but the nature of conflict must be understood.

Since conflicts express grievances, problems and sufferings of people, these become guidelines to learn the social, political and economic situation of the common people and help solve their issues.

However, if conflicts are repressed without understanding them, they would weaken the political and social system. Moreover, a policy of inclusion rather than exclusion should be adopted in dealing with political rivals and minorities.

We can apply Machiavelli's thoughts to the Balochistan conflict which has become a national crisis and threatens to damage our political system. Unfortunately, our approach to solve the matter by crushing the conflict and excluding the people of Balochistan from the political process has failed miserably.

We may have democracy but the feudal aristocracy controls all powers which are inclusive of usurping people's right to take an active part in politics. When people protest and demonstrate against anti people policies, they are brutally dealt with by law enforcing agencies.

This creates a gap between the people and the ruling classes. What privileges do people enjoy in a democratic state if their voices are not heard and they are dismissed as a non entity? As the roots of democracy become weak, military adventurers grab the opportunity to capture political power and establish a dictatorial rule.

Machiavelli's ideas are pro people and encourage their active participation in political activities. As the Pakistani society is passing through crises, we can learn from his convincing arguments and change our outlook regarding conflicts and peoples' role in politics.

## Lords of the Land

In an agrarian society, owning land is not only a source of income but also a symbol of social status and prestige. It has created a privileged class which has power, authority and economic resources.

This elitist class of land owners not only dominates the political scenario but uses its privileges to safeguard their property and vested interests. They do not want to change the social set up of the society and oppose any attempts to bring about reformation.

This kind of attitude is fully reflected in the history of Rome. The Roman Empire expanded as a result of conquests while the ruling classes emerged politically and financially powerful as war booty enhanced the wealth of generals and senators. Commercial opportunities further developed traders and merchants who became rich and resourceful.

With surplus wealth, these two classes invested in land. Being politically powerful, they got hold of public land as well as gobbled up land owned by small farmers and, in this way, they established large agricultural plantations. To cultivate this land they used slaves captured and brought to Rome as war prisoners. This disrupted the entire social structure.

The poor and unemployed peasants arrived in the city of Rome, creating a disturbance in the smooth city life. However, the ruling classes were hardly bothered and continued to enjoy their luxurious lifestyle.

Realising the misery and the dismal condition of the homeless and landless peasants, Tiberius, who belonged to the illustrious family of Scipio Africanus (236-183 BC), raised his voice against this injustice. As a reformer, he tried to obtain more rights for the landless peasants of Rome and was strongly resisted by the wealthy landowning class, who refused to give up their privileges. In 133 BC Tiberius was elected tribune, and worked to pass laws that would reduce the concentration of wealth and lands in the hands of a few nobles. It created panic and anger in the senate and among the trading classes. The issue became critical when Attalus III, the king of Perganum, died and bequeathed a great deal of property to Rome. There was much at stake when Tiberius ran for tribune again the following year, but the elections were postponed.

Eventually a riot was incited against Tiberius and his followers, and in the tumult that followed, Tiberius was killed and thrown into the river. Hence the

first attempt to promote the cause of poor peasants in the history of Rome came to an end.

Tiberius' brother Gaius, deeply influenced both by the reformatory policy of his older brother, and by his death at the hands of the senatorial mob silently watched the situation. It is said that one night his brother appeared in his dream and asked Gaius to take up the cause of peasants and resist the injustice of the ruling classes. When he decided to contest the elections for tribune, the senators came along with their soldiers. In the ensuing fight, he was defeated and nearly three thousand of his followers were killed. He escaped and took refuge in a temple but the soldiers violated the sanctity of the temple, killed him and cut his head to be presented to a senator who promised to give gold against the weight of his head. The soldier who killed him put metal inside the head to make it heavy and got rewarded in gold. This gory chapter ended the second attempt to reform the system.

Historians point out that one of the reasons of the fall of the Roman Empire was the agrarian system through which petty farmers were evicted from their small land holding while powerful landlords used slave labour for cultivation. As the slaves had no interest in working hard or to increase agricultural production, the decline gradually set in.

As unemployment increased in the city of Rome, it created conflicts and riots which could not be controlled by the ruling classes. Civil wars among ambitious, political groups weakened the roots of the empire which led to its collapse.

In Pakistan, the feudal class is not ready yet to understand the changes in our society and resists all attempts for land reforms. They are unwilling to share power and exclude all other classes from active politics. Hence the results are disastrous.

A new leadership is emerging not on the basis of merit and intelligence but on the basis of dynasty. The ruling classes dominate all aspects of society, with no space for the common people to play their role which leaves them with no choice but to become involved in ethnic and sectarian conflicts, further deteriorating the law and order. Our ruling classes need to study and understand the decline of societies and learn lessons from history.



## Being a Nation

National movements and patriotic ideas developed during the French Revolution (1789), which was a period of radical, social and political upheaval not only in France but throughout Europe.

The French were united in the revolution against feudal and aristocratic authorities. They marched towards the battlefield singing "La Marseillaise", the national song and fought bravely to save their country in the true spirit of nationalism.

In 1862, the theory of nationalism was used to awaken national pride among the Italian people to fight against the occupying foreign forces. Italy which was previously a mere geographical expression became a united country by assimilating different ethnic groups.

In the third phase, nationalism helped unite Germany which earlier comprised more than 300 independent states. The German philosophers, Herder and Fichte, radicalized the German thought process and infused nationalism while the Grimm brothers collected folk literature to impart a sense of linguistic homogeneity among Germans.

In Asia and Africa, nationalism was used to get rid of colonial masters. In some countries territorial nationalism was used to fight against colonial powers, while in others nationalism bore linguistic or religious undertones.

With Gandhi's advent in 1919, nationalism in the subcontinent acquired religious undertones, although previously the subcontinent was secular. Secular nationalism suited the elite, the Western-educated class that dominated the Congress party whereas religious nationalism appealed to the masses who were deeply rooted in religious traditions and values.

Gandhi raised the slogan of Ram Rajiya, the legendary rule of Ram which was the golden period of Indian history. The common people understood this language and became attracted to politics.

As a result, the Muslim community was now excluded from Gandhi's religious nationalism. They began a quest for a different type of nationalism to protect their rights.

The agenda of Gandhi's nationalism was to struggle against the colonial power while the social and political structure of society remained unaltered. Gandhi did

not favour abolishing the caste system, the liberation of women, and eradication of poverty nor introduction of land reform. Which is why, even after Independence, the caste system remained intact, women continued to be exploited and poverty could not be eliminated.

Gandhi avoided confrontation. He wanted to maintain traditional relations between peasants, landlords, workers and industrialists as well as the domination of upper castes over the lower ones.

Therefore, his nationalism failed to change the Indian society even after the British left.

In the case of the Pakistan Movement, the two-nation theory played an important role. Since the Hindus and the Muslims were pronounced separate nations because of their religious, social and cultural differences, Muslim nationalism based on religion was created. The All India Muslim League struggled for a homeland on the basis of Muslim nationalism which lacked a social, economic, and cultural agenda. There was no planning for introduction of land reforms, equal status of women, or economic opportunities to all its citizens.

The result was that after Independence, colonial institutions continued without any social change. Feudal lords monopolized politics, bureaucrats controlled the administration, and industrialists exploited the workers. The masses sacrificed their homes and livelihoods in the name of nationalism but their socio-economic condition hardly improved. Presently in Sindh and Balochistan, nationalist movements are gaining strength.

What is the agenda of these nationalist movements? Are they against their landlords and tribal leaders? Are they in favour of eradicating outdated traditions and customs?

In order to make them effective, there is a need to broaden the scope of these movements. Sindhi nationalism should include peasants, Kolis, Bhils, and other lower caste tribes. The marginal communities will only become a part of it when the movement appeals to them in regard to protection of their rights.

In case of the national movement in Balochistan, those living in the province must not be excluded. Nationalist movements that lack a pro-people agenda have no space for masses.

History teaches us that nationalism fulfils the interest of the elite and middle classes while ignoring common people. It is used to mobilize the emotions of

people but after accomplishing its objectives, the elite class abandons the common people whose problems and issues remain unsolved.

## The Politics of Identity

The history of Pakistan focuses mainly on the Pakistan movement. It gives credit to the All-India Muslim League and its leaders for creating a new country while other groups and communities who contributed to the struggle for freedom remain unobserved.

Does this interpretation suggest that the Muslim League has a right to rule the country while other political parties and their leaders can be excluded from mainstream politics?

In reaction, the excluded groups and communities have developed their own interpretation of history glorifying their contribution to the freedom movement and the creation of Pakistan.

Many books and documents of historical literature discuss the contribution of students, women, religious minorities, journalists and the literati to the freedom movement. Some narratives also highlight provinces and cities which played an active role in partition of the subcontinent.

These narratives are not only significant in history but may influence current politics. However, political changes and crises prevent these efforts from being amalgamated as a single, national front.

After being negated from history and politics, small provinces began to focus on writing their own history. For instance the Sindhi Adabi Board planned the development of comprehensive history of Sindh. Other provinces could not materialize similar projects because of a dearth of historians. In some cases old literature and gazetteers were reprinted to fill the gap.

Some well organised communities have documented their history, asserting their identity in a society which failed to unite and integrate them in the mainstream, as national identity remained weak.

The idea behind these narratives is to project a positive image of the community including its distinguishing characteristics, social institutions, rituals, cultural practices and its achievements through ages. In some cases the *panchayat* or *jirga* system were commended as just institutions.

For writing the history of these communities, there is no written material or source of information available other than traditional history. In the absence of

source material, historians rely on verbal accounts, traditions, and myths which are often accepted as truth.

Another issue here is that the history of a community is not written by professionals but amateur historians who belong to the community. As part of their loyalty, they praise their community and assert its superiority over other communities.

This type of history provides a sense of identity to members of the community, giving them the confidence to play a constructive role for the advancement of their community.

An example that can be cited here is of the turbulent people of Mewat, a community which was divided as a result of Partition. After leaving their homeland, a large number of them settled in Pakistan.

The image of the community in conventional history is rather negative. In Ziauddin Barani's *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, they are portrayed as robbers and bandits who looted, plundered and created disorder in the capital of Delhi.

Their anti state activities were brutally crushed by Balban and peace was restored.

First, the people of Mewat integrated the divided community on the basis of their cultural traditions and secondly they worked towards improving their negative image dominant in traditional history. In her book, *Against History against State*, Shail Mayaram dispels the traditional views about the people of Mewat, lending them a dignified position in history.

Historians from Mewat are also rewriting history to restore their historical image. However, the recent research is still excluded from historical narratives while the old conventional accounts can be found in textbooks and general history books. The old interpretation must be changed to include the new research in national historiography.

Another approach would be to rewrite history on the basis of modern research methodology by separating it from myths and fiction. History should be written on the basis of evidence sans exaggeration. Moreover, it should not remain isolated but should be cohesive with national history.

## Distortion Factor

The ruling classes have always feared being depicted in history as corrupt, or of being tyrants or despots. Hence, they have always adopted the policy of controlling history writing so that their misdeeds are either eliminated or misinterpreted to suit them.

Historians are especially employed to write history that highlights the achievements of the rulers, while burying their crime and misdemeanors. In the past, rulers and monarchs appointed court historians who recorded all events of the court, flattered the ruler and painted him as most generous and just.

Timur (1336-1405) would summon his historians in the court every evening and order them to read what they had recorded. It was impossible for them to write anything against the king as he only wanted to listen to praise and admiration of his rule. However, there are instances in history when historians who were not reporting directly to the king were able to truthfully record history of their time. During the reign of Akbar (1556-1605), Abdul Qadir Badayuni, the author of *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh* challenged Akbar's religious views.

The book was circulated in secret and by the time Jahangir (1569-1627) found out about the book, it was too late for eliminating facts. It is a rare document depicting the reign of Akbar, as it was not written by a court historian but a private person instead who recorded events of which there is no official version in history.

Aurangzeb (1618-1707), after 10 years of his rule dismissed court historians as they were not allowed to write about his rule. He was, perhaps, afraid of history. In Pakistan, the subject of history is treated in a poor and dismal manner. As corruption breeds across the society, historians are not allowed to record crimes, fraud and lies. Official institutions have been established to control history writing in textbooks which are in a way being victimized. The National Curriculum Board decides what historical matter should be used and what should be discarded. Textbooks change with regimes, while history is distorted and falsified to give dictators and usurpers, dignified and exalted images.

Historians who served military dictators in the past glorified their rule and presented them as saviors and deliverers of the nation. However, as the regime ended, the true picture of their rule was brought to light. Many facts went missing though, as historians had no access to official documents.

Besides dictators, politicians and bureaucrats, army generals are also afraid of history, because they are involved in corruption so massive that it can bewilder the imagination of the common man. The builders' mafia grabs and sells land illegally at high prices. Sometimes one plot is sold to two or three parties who after the forged deal, wander from court to court seeking justice in vain. Adulteration and forgery is rampant at all levels in society. Teachers would rather use their teaching skills in private tuition centers instead of classrooms and mint money. Private educational institutions are busy exploiting parents and students by charging phenomenal fees without imparting a decent standard of education. Physicians and doctors are becoming better known as butchers. Lawyers cheat their clients and students shamelessly cheat in examinations.

Religious parties are busy exploiting religion to achieve their political designs. Religious sects create hatred against each other leading to bloody violence. Intellectuals and media people shamelessly sell their knowledge to their paymasters. Political parties continue to mislead people in order to come into power while leaders treat their parties as private property and their families monopolies and manipulate their leadership.

Being deeply entrenched in corruption, all of them are afraid of history. Sadly, there are no historians who have the courage to bring the truth to light, nor to document the prevailing corruption in the society. Without historical record, there is no way to understand the problems or trends of the society and the crimes go unpunished in history.

## All about Conservatism

The French Revolution gave rise to political terms such as nationalism, liberalism, conservatism, feminism, and socialism. The revolution also led to a debate on sensitive political issues and provided tools to politicians and intellectuals to fight for their ideology. The sudden and radical changes thrilled and fascinated those who wanted to transform society on the basis of new ideology and thus rid it of the old system. On the other hand, the privileged classes felt insecure and threatened about losing their status and high position.

The revolution was a great challenge to the rulers, aristocrats, and clergy who enjoyed privileges of the old system. When Edmund Burke responded to the revolution and criticized it, a theory of conservatism developed from his ideas which became the favorite ideology of the ruling clique of Europe.

Based on Burke's argument, the first principle of conservatism was that established traditions and customs should not be radically changed. As these traditions evolved through history and were based on the practical experiences of generations and their knowledge, therefore they should be retained and preserved. If change was necessary, it should be brought about gradually without disturbing the status quo. A sudden change to abolish them would create a void and result in chaos and disorder. Burke lamented that the French revolution eliminated centuries old traditions and deprived the society of its vibrant culture. He supported the English system and its traditions which kept the country in peace and order.

The second principle of conservatism was the hierarchical structure of society. It advocated that social order was natural, all human beings could not be equal and inequality was important to maintain stability in society. When the French Revolution raised the slogan of equality, it frightened the nobility who were proud of their birth and ancestry based on which they occupied influential posts by excluding other social classes. Equality threatened to steal their privileges, reducing them to become common folk whom they hated and looked down upon.

The third principle of conservatism was to reform society in a peaceful way without damaging the existing system. But the reforms were generally introduced under political and social pressure. Likewise, the French Revolution forced most European countries to introduce the constitutional system and extended political rights to people.



The fourth principle of conservatism was to stay connected to the past and adopt a policy of continuation without any disruption and interference.

The term conservatism was widely used to indicate social, political, and religious trends in a society. In religion, conservatism means rejection of new interpretation and believing in original teaching. Its social meaning was to assert inequality and continue to justify and hold valid, old and outdated traditions and customs.

In the political field, it legitimizes the domination of upper classes and the exclusion of common people to play an active role in politics.

In every aspect of society, conservatives are interested in the conservation and preservation of existing traditions because their privileges are dependent on these traditions. As new traditions displace them from their safe and high positions, they struggle hard to maintain them in the name of religion and culture. These traditions are deep rooted and not easy to eliminate. Therefore, those desirous of immediate change believe that only a revolution can abolish traditions instead of a gradual process.

With the development of democracy, conservative political parties emerge to champion the cause of the old system. However, it can be difficult to continue the old order and accommodate changes in order to survive and win the support of the people.

In Pakistan, feudal and tribal traditions are so strong that they are a matter of pride for the society. Inequality is accepted on social and religious grounds. Feudal and tribal leaders trace their power on the basis of their families and dominate politics because of their social status. Therefore, they oppose reforms to change the status quo.

Generally, the middle class plays a progressive role in society, but in Pakistan, it is becoming more conservative than the upper classes. The reason of their conservatism is the educational curriculum based on the ideology of Pakistan. This is indicative of the revival of forgotten customs and rituals which have now become a part of our daily lives. As the trend of conservatism spreads in the society, political parties follow it and project these values in their political agenda to get popular votes. Consequently all major parties and their manifestos are based on conservative ideas indicative of continuity instead of change in society. As conservatism becomes stronger in Pakistan, progressive forces retreat, while the hope to change the society to modern and democratic one slowly dies.

## When Power Corrupts

History becomes quite horrific when it tells stories of rulers and dictators who had absolute power and were above the law. When power is inherited or usurped, the result is unchallenged authority which knows no limits and creates havoc against the weak.

Power can change the character of an individual - giving a sense of superiority - nothing less than a demigod.

Considering himself in an exalted position, this individual has no respect for ordinary human beings and easily mistreats, tortures, and even executes them. Any criticism or opposition to his acts are out of question. He becomes the wisest and the most knowledgeable of all and people around him resort to flattery to please him.

In the past there were mainly two types of rulers. Those who cared for their subjects and provided them security and prosperity and expected gratefulness in return. The second types were rulers who terrified their subjects and treated them with contempt. With no authority above them, their acts remained unchallenged.

Assyrian national history preserved in inscriptions and pictures consists almost solely of gory and bloodcurdling depictions, military campaigns and battles. The motive behind these paintings was to create fear among the subjects.

In their sense of superiority, some rulers became rather neurotic. According to some history books, when the Persian king Cambyses (600 to 559 BC) wanted to marry his two sisters, he sought legal advice from his courtiers who told him that it was illegal and incestuous but being a king, he was above the law.

Cambyses once took up his bow to shoot at Croesus, his friend; but Croesus escaped. When Cambyses found out that he had not killed Croesus with his bow, he ordered his servants to put him to death. The servants knew their master's temperament better and thought it best to hide Croesus instead. When Cambyses asked for him later, the servants told him that Croesus was still alive. "I am glad", he said, "that Croesus lives, but as for you who saved him, you shall be put to death".

When Alexander conquered Iran, he was impressed by Persian court etiquette and ordered that he should not be approached by Macedonians with mere

salutation, but with adoration. Those who refused to obey were put to death on the pretence that they were engaged in a conspiracy. Tiberus was known for hedonism, decadence and cruelty. Caligula liked to watch people be tortured and executed, and murdered his brother along with countless others.

He lasted only four years in power before he was assassinated. Nero's rule is often associated with tyranny and extravagance. He is infamously known as the emperor who "fiddled while Rome burned". Nero committed suicide and it is said that his last words were, "What an artist is now about to perish."

The history of the subcontinent also has many examples of rulers who misused their power. Ziauddin Barani in *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* writes that Mohammad Tughlaq rewarded his courtiers when in a good mood but when he lost his temper, he would order a person to be killed even for the slightest misdemeanor. Ibn Battuta, who visited during Tughlaq's reign observed that executioners stood in front of his palace, ready to behead offenders as soon as they received orders from the sultan.

For the Mongols, it was customary to celebrate victory after a battle, by building a pillar out of skulls of enemies. Babur, the first Mughal emperor also built a skull pillar after the battle of Panipat in 1526. However, his successors abandoned the practice.

In England, absolute monarchy was reduced by the parliament. The French Revolution ended the monarchy after executing the king. In Europe, after the revolution of 1848, constitutional monarchies were introduced which limited powers of the rulers.

In India, the power of the Mughals was first thwarted by the Marathas and finally ended by the East India Company in 1857. In the modern period, the process of democratization of society has played an important role to end absolute and totalitarian power of rulers.

## Designing Democracy

As a major turning point in history, the Industrial Revolution transformed all aspects of life in European society.

Beginning in England, it gradually impacted the society socially, politically and economically across Europe. With rapid industrialization, scores of men and women were driven towards factories and mills as workforce. Workers employed in a factory or working in the same craft or occupation soon began to acknowledge that their problems and issues were common. This led to the organization of trade unions or a consolidated body to be able to collectively demand their rights from the employer.

As political consciousness increased, the groups which were excluded from the political mainstream demanded for the right to vote. In the 19th century, the working classes, women and other groups like the Chartists who wanted a share in the political process increased the pressure for their rights. The political activism of these groups threatened the aristocracy that wished to retain their status quo and social order of the society.

John Stuart Mill, known as the most influential British philosopher of the 19th century, expressed his views on the question of representation. He opposed the granting of voting rights to the working classes, as he believed that they tended to be hostile towards property holders since they had no property of their own. In his opinion, if these classes were granted the right to vote, they would pressurize the parliament to increase their wages, to reduce working hours, to have the right to go on strike for their demands, to propose a high tariff in order to protect local production, to force the parliament to pass laws in favour of the working class and to develop a taxation system for property holders.

These measures would alter the social fabric, create chaos and anarchy. Despite their fears, the Parliament had to pass the Great Reform Bill of 1832, which extended the franchise to some extent. Reform bills in 1867 and in 1884 further granted the right to vote to more people but still excluded women. Despite opposition, democratization spread to other countries of Europe.

In the United States, the process of democratization was different. Alexis De Tocqueville, the French political thinker visited America in 1830 and analyzed democracy.

Later, his famous book *Democracy in America* was published in two volumes. He observed that American society inherited no aristocracy hence the social status of an individual was not based on birth or inheritance, as was the case in Europe. Instead, it was based on wealth. There were open opportunities for anyone to acquire wealth by working hard. Poverty was not due to a badly governed system but only if someone was not utilizing the opportunities available. The competition to become rich created an ambitious society. As there were no established institutions and traditions, individuals were free to achieve their objectives, unrestrained.

When Tocqueville visited America, Andrew Jackson was the president who for the first time opened up the White House to public. The mob stormed in for the inauguration, violating all protocol. With no aristocratic tradition to hold them back, the American public was free to express its sentiments and display its power.

European aristocrats and the American elite influenced by European high society culture condemned the mob activity at the White House.

In Europe, intellectuals became increasingly concerned about the growing mass culture. To them the process of democratizing social, political and cultural values was a threat to the established system. These views were fully expressed by Oswald Spengler, a German historian, in his book *the Decline of the West* which discusses the philosophy of the rise and fall of civilizations. He believed that the Western civilization flourished in the 19th century when art and literature was created in the royal courts in all their sublimity, depth and beauty. Spengler believed that democratization gave birth to a mass culture which disrupted literary and artistic creativity and led to the decline of the European civilization.

An analysis of the failure of democracy in Pakistan shows anti-democratic vibes. People may have the right to vote, yet they are not allowed to share political power. Voters are controlled by feudal and tribal leaders for votes without giving them any benefits.

Once they reach the parliament, the leaders pass laws in their own favour and not that of the public. There is little or no space for the middle class in active politics as they are excluded from the political sphere.

In the West, democracy is successful because there is no monopoly of the rich and upper classes and the commoners are given ample space to play an active role in forming the government. There are no winning candidates and no concept of captive voters.

Pakistan can become a true democracy only when feudalism is abolished and people are allowed to cast their vote according to their own free will.

## Changing Patrons

According to a story in Indian mythology, Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth had a quarrel with Sarasvati, the goddess of knowledge. Sarasvati cursed Lakshmi to be loved and possessed by those who were stupid and illiterate but Sarasvati suffered the repercussions of her own curse.

The wealthy and resourceful employed scholars, writers and poets to write praise for them, highlight their achievements and conceal their crimes and idiosyncrasies. On the other hand, scholars and writers had no choice but to seek and enjoy their patronage in order to survive.

It was customary for rulers to gather the most famous poets, artists and historians around themselves and become well-known as a great patron of art and culture.

Mahmud Ghaznavi (971-1030 AD) went to the extent of kidnapping scholars and forcing them to serve in his court. Most of them obeyed his command except for Ibn Sina (d.1037) who refused to oblige him. The Mughal emperor Akbar (1556-1605), invited reputed poets, scholars and musicians to his court and generously awarded them.

Throughout Europe, middle-class writers were supported by noble patronage. Goethe (1832) served different German rulers. Thomas Hobbsen (d.1631) enjoyed the patronage of an English aristocrat. Adam Smith (d.1790) accepted the patronage of an aristocrat who employed him as a tutor for his son.

Poets, historians and scholars in the subcontinent suffered financially after the decline of the Mughal Empire as royal patronage was no longer extended to them. They wandered from one place to another with relatively prosperous states like Awadh, Hyderabad and Murshidabad being their only hope for survival. Mir Taqi Mir (d.1810) wrote in his autobiography about his plight. Zauq (d.1854) in one of his couplets described the generosity of the court of Hyderabad, Deccan, yet he was unwilling to bid farewell to Delhi, his beloved city.

Under the patronage of rulers and aristocrats, poets and writers exhausted their talents on flattery and praise of their patrons, losing their creative independence. In a way, due to royal patronage, literature and art suffered and the society failed to produce independent thinkers and philosophers who could criticise rulers and condemn them for bad governance. Scholars and writers developed the art of circumventing the construction of sentences, using similes and indirect

references, making it difficult for researchers to extract the truth from their accounts.

With the arrival of the printing press, European intellectuals were liberated from the clutches of court patronage. The number of readers increased as education spread and information reached masses in the shape of books. Writers survived on royalties of their books and became independent and free to criticise or guide the society. It was a radical change, as instead of rulers, now the society patronized them and democracy allowed freedom of expression.

Since the Pakistani state has become ideological, it is difficult for Pakistani intellectuals to play an active role in society. Any criticism is considered anti-state. Historians are obliged to interpret history within a certain framework; poets are obliged to write national songs while journalists are busy flattering politicians and the ruling classes.

As readership in Pakistan is limited, writers cannot survive on the basis of selling their books. If they work for state institutions, they have to follow the state policy. If they wish to write for newspapers, they have to support views of the owners, while private television channels allow no space for free discussion. Under these circumstances, intellectuals can sell their knowledge for a price. As a result, there is no creativity, nor the production of new ideas and thoughts to challenge the society and to change its old and outdated tenets.

Without a creative and intellectual movement, the society cannot be reformed. Intellectuals must be liberated from all patronage so as to freely express their views for the betterment of society.



## Born Free

Rousseau in *The Social Contract* says, “Man is born free but everywhere he is in chains”. A thought-provoking and meaningful line which highlights the social, political, cultural and moral chains that enslave a person. Ironically, people are apathetic and indifferent about being shackled and have no urge or wish to liberate themselves. They happily conform to their confinement as a legitimate way of being controlled.

For instance, the fully documented daily routine of Mughal rulers shows how they spent their time from sunrise to dusk. Every moment of the day was a part of their disciplined schedule. They appeared in the palace balcony for their subjects early in the morning as a good omen. Afterwards they proceeded to the court to administer the business of the empire. Their busy routine continued till evening until they retired to the privacy of their bedroom. Once Shah Jahan who was unwell, failed to appear in the balcony which generated rumors about his death, resulting in a war of succession among his sons. As a result, he lost his throne and spent the rest of his life as a prisoner in the fort of Agra. Aurangzeb learnt a lesson from this and never missed a public appearance despite his serious illness. These were golden chains which the rulers happily accepted as a price of their power and authority.

In modern times, the tradition has continued with political leaders being chained by protocol and their movements being restricted. They are not free to be like ordinary people and go to the park for a walk or to a restaurant for a cup of coffee and enjoy the freedom in their lives.

Ordinary people are shackled by social, religious and cultural chains which do not allow them to liberate themselves. If an individual tries to get rid of these shackles, he is ostracized from society and he becomes isolated.

Therefore, the majority of people willingly or unwillingly accept these traditions, cultural and social practices that bind the person in such a way that he cannot release himself from the relentless grip.

Rousseau, in his prize winning essay, criticizes the advancement of civilization and accuses institutions, traditions and values for enslaving man. According to him, civilization has damaged mankind by taking away freedom. He argued that in the early period of human history, man was closer to nature, and enjoyed pleasure and happiness without any bondage.

History shows that the process of technological inventions and their use has completely tied up our lives at the cost of liberty. Rousseau points out that man lived a simpler life in the early period of history. People were free to eat or dress according to their own will. But in modern times, people dress according to fashion dictates and eat according to certain table manners. They like it when others appreciate their attire, language and lifestyle. People live for others and lose their independence.

Recalling the allegory of Plato's Cave, where a group of people tied up in chains see reflections on the wall that they perceive as real. One of them frees himself and goes out of the cave into the glaring sunlight. He returns to the cave and tells the other people that they are watching nothing but a reflection of the real world. They do not believe him and continue to be in the same position with no desire to break their binding chains nor to liberate themselves from enslavement.

There is no doubt that the chains may be very heavy and people are used to being shackled. But despite the powerful constraint, if attempts to break away are made from time to time, mankind would one day be liberated from bondage.

In the Pakistani society, we are bound by centuries-old, rusted chains of feudalism, tribalism, religious fanaticisms and mutilated social and moral values. We are used to bearing with them and sometimes even regard them as holy and sacred. There is no alternative except to break them, emerge out of the darkness of the cave and embrace the light of freedom by restructuring civilization with new, positive and progressive values.

Man should be free and unrestrained to become a master of his destiny and use his creative powers to fully and freely enjoy the fruits of life.

## Change for the Better

There are two types of challenges that a society may confront. A society in political, social and economic crises readily accepts and absorbs changes in order to restructure itself while the intellectuals and ruling classes respond to the challenges of time.

The result of this strategy is that it keeps the society far from chaos and disorder as its old institutions are reformed periodically preventing their collapse.

But when a society is attached to its traditions, cultural and social values, it may not be ready to bring any change and reform to its structure. In this case, it becomes stagnant and sterile.

If a society cannot alter itself at a time when it needs reformation of its traditions and institutions, all efforts for reformation become useless after passing the critical phase because by that time the roots of its institution become so corrupt that any steps to reconstruct them will fail.

Societies which follow the revolutionary process of reform look forward to the future. On the contrary, stagnant societies go back to their past roots and find solutions to their problems on the basis of ancient wisdom. Change in progressive societies is a pleasant experience while in stagnant societies, it is torturous and painful.

The subcontinent witnessed several religious reformist movements in the 19th century. Two different movements emerged under different political and social circumstances to fulfill the demands of the Muslim community in India. Some appeared before 1857 while others occurred after.

As a result of the decline of the Mughal dynasty and the subsequent take over by the East India Company, the political and social condition of the Muslim elite classes became miserable. The Muslim nobility were disappointed by the loss of their status but failed to analyze the emerging power of the Marhattas, the Jats, the Sikhs, and the Rohillas who steadily weakened the Mughal rulers by attacking and plundering cities and towns. There is lot of material available in the historiography of the time where historians have graphically depicted the picture of decline and decay. Poets composed verses reflecting the dismal social and cultural scenario, but there were no intellectuals to lead the society out of this disorder by creating ideas and thoughts.

In the absence of intellectuals and thinkers, the *ulema* assumed the leadership of the Muslim community, using religion as a tool to reform, repair, and reshape their political, social, and economic condition. The first half of the 19th century witnessed a movement known as Fraizi Movement in East Bengal, where the East India Company had established its rule after the Battle of Plassey. The change of political rule created a new conflict between Hindu landowners and the Muslim peasants. Among the landowners were some Muslims who had occupied landed property during the Mughal era? Extremist in their religious views, they held the local Bengali Muslims in contempt. The East India Company's commercial and trade policies deprived the artisan class of employment and income. In these circumstances, Haji Shariatullah (d.1840), championed the cause of the Muslim peasants and united them by creating a spirit of brotherhood. He urged them to observe the original teachings of Islam. His aim was to purify Islam from unIslamic traditions and rituals to convert the Muslim community as puritans, and to inculcate in them the spirit to uplift their social and economic status. The movement became popular among the Muslim peasants and artisans. To create a sense of identity, a particular dress and style of life was promoted. The peasants were attracted to the movement on the basis of the slogan that land belongs to God. Both the peasants and artisans were urged not to pay taxes which were burdening their economic condition.

After the death of Haji Shariatullah, his son Dudu Mian took the responsibility of the movement and faced the opposition of not only of the zamindars but the government of the East India Company as well, whose interest was to keep order in its territories. Dudu Mian changed the character of the movement and converted it from resistance to compromising?

The movement attempted to solve social and economic problems of Bengali Muslims with the help of religion, creating in them a religious identity which separated them from the rest of the Bengali people. However, one important aspect was that Bengali language was used for preaching and writing religious tracts which were understood by common people. Consequently, the Fraizi movement separated itself from the North Indian Muslim community. It liberated the Bengali Muslims from the North Indian cultural hegemony, created religious rather than political consciousness giving an opportunity to the *Ulema* to lead the Muslims of Bengal.

## At Liberty

An interesting misconception among print journalists and TV anchors is that the Pakistani media is free and therefore propagating a change in society. Without doubt, the media is presently exposing crime and corruption in society. We get our daily dose of how suspects are tortured in police stations and in case they die, their bodies are handed over to the families without any guilt or remorse.

There are news of bomb explosions in Imam Bargahs, shrines and mosques killing hundreds of devotees and worshippers. News about violence and aggression has become a regular feature and people are neither shocked nor sensationalized after reading or watching gory details. These events are routine news items for people who have consequently become desensitized.

The prompt information and gruesome details of violent incidents hardly prevent these occurrences and everything continues unabated. The media may inform us about violence but fails to create any political and social consciousness. Communal riots have become a norm while corruption is unchecked at all levels. Considering this situation, society cannot be changed or reformed by mere dissemination of information, sermons and exhortation but can only be transformed by changing its basic structure and eliminating the difference between the privileged and the 'have-nots'.

Maintaining status quo and hoping to bring a change in state structure and its institution is nothing but a delusion. The root cause of the problem is the perceived ideology of the state which excludes religious minorities from the mainstream of society. In a religious state, conflicts among religious sects sharpen so much that each sect declares the other as heretic leading to violent clashes to eliminate or weaken the rival sect.

Another major issue of the Pakistani society is the absence of the rule of law. There is no protection of the weaker sections of society against oppression and exploitation by the rich and powerful classes. The feudals and bureaucrats being powerful treat the law with contempt and take pride in its violation to assert their superiority. As long as the state and society remain unchanged, unaccountable violence and killing will continue.

Being part of the society, the Pakistani media reflects the same values and psyche and follows two main trends; religious and political. Even advertisements are based on these two trends in order to address the emotions of viewers and readers. The tragedy being that every Pakistani tries to prove that he is an orthodox Muslim and a patriotic Pakistani. Religious channels devote almost all

of their programming to preach and cure all disease in the society through spiritual means. Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that technology in a backward society would only take it further back in time. Hence some sections of the print and electronic media are responsible for pushing society towards medieval times instead of moving it forward.

That the Pakistani media is free is just a myth. It is evident that the owners and proprietors of the print and electronic media have their own agenda and vested interests to fulfill. Therefore, they are free to remain within certain limits and not cross forbidden boundaries.

By representing the rich and influential sections of society, the media strengthens status quo and hence it is a folly to expect that the media would raise a voice against outdated traditions and obsolete values. It avoids promoting new and radical ideas or views which conflict with the Pakistani ideology. Their internal censorship policies twist discussions, conversation and interviews and produce ideas that inculcate narrow-mindedness and prejudice among people.

The internet on the other hand provides space to those who have something new and radical to say, an opportunity denied by the media. Therefore one can find lively debates and discussions among different groups who can freely express their views through blogs and websites.

As a result the young generation is more attracted towards the internet as compared to newspapers and television as this alternative medium is more powerful and free from all restrictions and censorship.

## Churchill Said

When national struggle for independence began in the subcontinent, the contention of British colonial officials and intellectuals was that the Indians were not yet politically mature to govern the country and hence not ready for independence. To achieve independence, the Indians must first learn the art of administration and diplomacy.

The Indians justified that their past was a testimony to their excellent political experience and performance for instance the Indus Valley Civilization and the planned cities of Mohenjo Daro and Harappa. It was further argued that they had built the great Mauryan Empire whose leading intellectual Kautilya had produced Arthshastra, an excellent treatise on statecraft and diplomacy. The Indians were proud of the Mughal Empire which had not only united India but left behind a rich cultural legacy.

Unconvinced by this debate, the British believed that the present day generations were no match to their ancestors. They lacked talent and innovation. Their vitality and intellect declined with the passage of time making them backward. Max Muller, the famous scholar of Sanskrit used to advise his students not to visit India as the decadent condition would disappoint them.

The British excluded the Indians from administration and bureaucracy, recruiting them as clerks since they were not considered worthy of being appointed at higher posts. The same policy was adopted in the army where the Indians could not go beyond the post of subaltern. It was only after the partition of Bengal in 1905 that the Indians were gradually allowed higher posts.

In this process, the Muslim community remained far behind in learning and failed to compete with other communities. They suffered social, cultural and political degeneration, took refuge in religion and the glories and grandeur of the past. Aloof from innovation, they preferred to live in their own isolated world.

On the other hand, the British introduced modern European institutions to make India civilized and governable. However with the passage of time, the nationalist movement against colonialism became strong but the Muslim community contributed sparingly.

After the Second World War, the British were exhausted, but still not ready to depart from India. The Conservative party was not prepared to be deprived of the "the brightest jewel in the crown".

"I have not become the King's First Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire," Winston Churchill famously declared in 1942. He was racist and held the Indians in contempt, convinced that in case of independence they would ruin their country. He argued against granting freedom to India and Pakistan. "If India is granted freedom, power will go to the hands of rascals, rogues, freebooters; all leaders will be of low caliber and men of straw. They will have sweet tongues and silly hearts. They will fight amongst themselves for power and India will be lost in political squabbles. A day would come when even air and water will be taxed." He wrote these words 64 years ago and we have certainly worked very hard all this time to prove him right.

After Independence, the Pakistanis are proud of their past, eulogize those who conquered India and also trace their greatness to the rise of the Umayyads and Abbasids.

Actually for them, their past is a heavy burden. The rise and fall of civilizations and nations is the regular feature of history. Generations of declining nations do not inherit the same qualities and talents of their ancestors. After the fall of the Mughals, there was degeneration and decline of innovation and intellect in the subcontinent. The Muslim aristocracy deteriorated morally and lost its credibility.

According to the official version of history, Pakistan came into being as a result of 'struggle' which is not entirely true. To obtain a country was not a great achievement, the real task was how to build it and govern it. In this respect, the morally corrupt ruling classes miserably failed.

Churchill predicted the dark future of India. After partition, the subcontinent was divided into two parts: India and Pakistan. The Indian leadership defied Churchill's prediction and is on the path of economic development. In Pakistan, the ruling classes are proving him right through corruption and by plundering the country's resources.

Every year we celebrate Independence Day with official elaboration but sadly, each year we find more corruption, decay in moral values, and terrorism in the society. Does August 14 bring any hope or happiness to the millions people of Pakistan?



## Evolution of Hinduism

The term Hinduism was coined in modern times. When scholars compared it with other organised religions, they made an attempt to study its beliefs and institutions systematically. Hinduism passed through a number of reformist movements and evolved with time.

In the 6th century BCE, Brahmanism was challenged by two new religions - Jainism and Buddhism. Both criticized the domination of the Brahman caste over the sacred language of Sanskrit and their performance of complex religious rituals which became rather extravagant for ordinary people.

However, Brahmanism gradually assimilated teachings from those two religious thoughts. As a result, Buddhism was eliminated from India and Jainism shrank to a small minority. The flexibility of Hinduism helped it in surviving the vicissitude of time.

In 6th and 7th centuries CE in south India and in 13th century CE in north India, the Bhatia movement emerged which was against the caste system. It appealed to the lower castes to achieve a dignified position in society. Without challenging the basic structure of religion, but in a similar manner like Sufism, it promoted spirituality and the love of God leaving the social structure intact.

During the colonial period when Christianity arrived in India under the umbrella of political power, Hinduism faced a serious threat. It faced accusations of being a backward religion that encouraged women to burn themselves alive through the practice of sati; prohibited remarriage of widows, and permitted child marriage.

In response to these challenges, the first reformist movement began in Bengal under Raja Ram Mohan Roy (d.1833), who decided to reform Hinduism by introducing elements which could make it acceptable to the modern environment. It was a reformist and not a radical or revolutionary movement.

It had no political ambitions and the only concern was to fulfill the aspirations of the educated Bengali class who wanted to readjust their religious beliefs according to the needs of modern day. He condemned idol worship and insisted on oneness of God. The Brahman caste and their role in the performance of elaborate religious rituals was also opposed.

The followers were encouraged to read the holy books and take guidance directly. These books were printed in the printing press which had arrived with the advent of the British so that the holy books were now easily available. This ended the Brahman monolith on religious knowledge.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy also led campaigns against Sati and for the remarriage of widows. He founded schools for girls, attempted reconciliation with other religions and created religious tolerance among his followers. He encouraged social and cultural relations among all castes.

Welfare projects, too, began and orphanages, schools and hospitals were established. Thus the Brahmo Samaj changed the situation of Bengalis through education and religious tolerance.

As a response to Christian missionaries, another religious movement, the Arya Samaj appeared in central Punjab, founded by Diyananda Saraswati (d.1883). It was different from the Brahmo Samaj as it became popular among the lower middle classes while the former had followers belonging to the upper classes.

Unlike Brahmo Samaj which emphasised on the teachings of the Upanishads, the Arya Samaj turned to the teachings of Vedas. It proclaimed that only the Vedas were the true, revealed books while all others were false. Here, it deviated from the Brahmo Samaj policy of reconciliation with other religions.

Since there is no conversion in Hinduism, the Arya Samaj introduced the practice of shudhi which meant that Hindus converted to other religions could be reconverted and brought back to their original faith. Shudhi meant purification, and therefore efforts were made to purify the lower castes which were regarded as unclean so as to make them a part of the Hindu community.

The Diyananda Anglo Vedic Trust was established and schools and colleges were founded to educate and train the young Hindus in accordance with the teachings of the Arya Samaj. It also established schools for girls. It was not only a reformist but also a political movement. The idea was to unite the Hindu community to face modern challenges and preserve religious identity.

The third religious movement to emerge was led by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in 1923, who wanted to unite the Hindus under the ideology of Hindutva. According to his ideology, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism were Hindu religions while Islam and Christianity were not.

From 1915 to 1920, the Hindu Mahasabha, and their militant branch accelerated their efforts to unite the Hindus as a nation - their model being Shivaji who

fought against the Mughals. Hindutva recognised the lower classes and declared that there was no need to make them shudhi or purify them as they could join the organisation irrespective of belonging to any caste.

After partition, the Arya Samaj became weak as it lost its centre which was Lahore. In 1980s, the BJP emerged as a strong, Hindu political party whose aim was to capture political power and implement a Hindu raj. Its argument was that liberal and secular parties gave concessions to religious minorities at the cost of the Hindu majority.

Though it came to power, it failed to materialise its agenda. The Indian society which has a diversity of religions and cultures cannot afford to convert into a religious state. As a result, religion and politics in India have not mixed well.

## Fall of Nations

Historians are always trying to understand the process of the rise and fall of nations. Ibn Khaldun, Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee were some of the major thinkers who investigated this complex issue and attempted to understand the historical laws which governed this process of the rise and fall of civilizations and nations. Recently two professors, Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson published *Why Nations Failed* (2012) in which both the authors, after analyzing the history of the Asian, African, Latin American and European nations, developed a theory regarding the causes behind the collapse and failure of nations.

They argue that every nation has some important institutions which are either inclusive or extractive. In case of inclusive institutions, people participate in and share their activities which results in the general well-being of the people. On the other hand, extractive institutions are controlled by the ruling oligarchy and snatch the production and income from the people for their own use and reduce them to poverty which, in turn, makes them more dependent on the ruling classes.

There are often resistance movements against extractive institutions and efforts to replace them by inclusive ones. However, such movements are sometimes successful and sometimes fail to achieve their objectives. In case of England, the turning point in their history was the Glorious Revolution of 1688 which not only empowered the English parliament but also weakened the monarch.

The passing of the Bill of Rights made inclusive institutions powerful and enabled them to reshape society by clipping the wings of the ruling oligarchy. It led to the process of technological development which resulted in the Industrial Revolution. The great Reform Bill of 1832 expanded the franchise and brought changes in the political structure which consequently established a purist society. Another historical juncture, which changed the character of an extractive institution, was the French Revolution of 1789 which abolished monarchy and feudalism and established equality, liberty and fraternity. Napoleonic wars spread these revolutionary ideas to other countries of Europe which led the movements for democracy which gradually created space for people to represent inclusive institutions. In Japan, the mega restoration of 1868 ended feudalism and introduced the modern political and economic intuitions. These nations took advantage of these important historical junctures and succeeded in expanding their inclusive institutions which led them to industrialization and political and social development.

According to the authors, if extractive institutions remain intact, any political change will fail to restructure society. After the decolonization of many Asian and African countries several so-called revolutions took place but as extractive institutions were not eliminated, they failed to bring any change in society. The authors gave the example of Egypt where the monarchy was replaced by Nasir and his successors Sadat and Hosni Mubarak but as the extractive institutions remained intact, nothing changed in the society.

If we apply this theory to Pakistan, we find that after partition, the ruling oligarchy retained all the extractive institutions of the colonial period and prevented people from forming inclusive institutions. We have experienced both military dictatorship and the democratic form of government without any change in the basic structure. Bureaucracy, army and feudalism remained in power.

The ruling classes defied the principal of rule of law and hampered the establishment of a pluralistic society. The ruling classes missed the opportunity on two occasions to strengthen inclusive institutions: one, just after Partition (1947) when the nation was ready to use its energy for the building of the nation. Sadly, no action was taken to abolish feudalism and change the character of the army and bureaucracy.

The other moment of history was the separation of Bangladesh (1971) when the extractive institutions were weak and could be dissolved by the inclusive ones. Again, the ruling classes lost the opportunity and decided to use these exploitative institutions for their own benefit and privileges. Now we neither have democracy nor a pluralistic society and nor do we have rule of law. Therefore, it is believed that the Pakistani state has collapsed and is on the brink of being declared a failed state.

## In Quest of Truth

Generally in a Muslim society and particularly in Pakistan, there are poets, writers and religious scholars, but no philosophers, thinkers and scientists whose approach to knowledge is analytical, empirical and rational. The main task of philosophy is the pursuit of truth as it constantly probes and searches truth which evolves with time.

Societies which believe that they have found the truth do not bother to look at the changing times to realize that a new concept of truth has emerged as a result of human progress in knowledge.

This is evident from the study of the history of Greece and India where philosophers were keen to know about the nature of this world and human beings and consequently produced philosophical thoughts to understand this phenomenon.

When Greek philosophy was translated into Arabic, some Muslim philosophers were influenced by it and produced commentaries on Greek philosophers. They made attempts to lay down the foundation of philosophical thoughts in the Muslim society. However, they failed to have any impact as their efforts were countered by religious scholars like Ghazali, (1111 C.E) who condemned philosophy as a danger to revealed truth. The Muslim society therefore failed to produce philosophers and put an end to the creation of new ideas.

Those who tried to carry on Greek philosophical traditions were condemned and excluded from the Muslim intellectual traditions. Razi, Farabi, Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd were not given due recognition by the society. Abul Fazl, a brilliant historian and thinker was completely ignored. Ghazali was accepted as the champion of faith who saved it from blasphemous ideas of the philosophers.

On the other hand, the western society inherited the philosophical legacy from Greece and added to it new ideas and thoughts which enriched the western civilization. In the 17th and 18th centuries, there was a scientific revolution which presented the universe from quite a different angle. The enlightened movement was based on reason, knowledge and progress which gradually transformed the society. The age of enlightenment produced great philosophers and thinkers whose ideas guided the society to abandon outdated traditions and values and create new values for the new age. It unfolded a new truth which superseded old and obsolete ideas.

The process of western thinking and its search of truth did not end with the enlightened period. It continued to search for the truth. Later the Romantic Movement challenged the enlightened ideas and tried to understand nature and man differently with passion rather than reason. Positivism, nationalism, socialism and feminism movements followed, with the result that there were innovations and changes in art, literature, architecture and social and cultural values of the western society. The new philosophical thoughts created a dynamism which discovered new versions of truth.

The problem of Muslim society has been that it is afraid of new ideas and new truth. It is particularly fearful of philosophy as it creates doubts and questions the existing truth.

Iqbal, who is also called a philosopher, exhorted his community not to study philosophy as it challenged the prevailing values. He believed in the truth inherited from our ancestors and accepted it as it is. When the religious seminary of Deoband was founded in 1868, the subject of philosophy was not included in its curriculum.

In the absence of new philosophical ideas and believing in the unchanging truth, the society has become stagnant and intellectually barren. It fails to understand not only its own environment but also the global process. It relies on poetical and theological emotionalism and encourages our intellectuals to borrow western ideology without changing and understanding it. Although ideas develop as societies evolve, our intellectuals implant advanced ideas in a backward society which are not accepted by the majority of people.

As our society believes in absolute truth, it is not ready to accept any new ideas which contradict or challenge it. This leaves no space for thinkers and philosophers to create new thoughts. The only use of philosophy is to support religious belief. This is what the philosophy was used for during the medieval period in Europe when through scholasticism it subordinated religion. In the Muslim society it is known as 'ilm al Kalam. Philosophy plays a vital role in a society only when it is liberated from faith and can bring about radical change. Whether this is possible in the Muslim society or not, is a question we must analyze and respond to.

## The Rise of the Middle Class

In European history, the middle class played an important role as an agent of change to transform society. It was patronized by the rulers to encounter feudal lords who challenged their authority and rebelled against them. To empower the middle class, the rulers granted them charters to trade abroad and to take the responsibility of the administration of cities where they established municipalities.

Gradually, the emerging class or the bourgeois became prominent in the cities and succeeded in changing the prevalent feudal culture by building their own social and cultural setup according to changing times. For the middle class, time and work became important values. Time was considered precious and work was regulated on the basis of time.

Secondly, no work was considered degrading and people who worked earned respect in society. The middle class was keen on the promotion of education hence a trained professional class emerged which included bankers, accountants, doctors, lawyers, artists and scholars. Cities became the hub of trade, commerce and educational activities and the German saying, 'Stadtluft macht frei' or 'urban air makes you free' expressed the significance of the new culture.

The middle class played a significant role in making Renaissance successful. The city of Florence was ruled by the rising merchant class and the influential Medici family of Florence and the Borgia family of Rome patronized art, architecture and literature while the aristocracy was expelled from the cities. Architects, sculptors, and artists embellished the cities with new buildings, statues and decoration of churches and palaces.

Works of scholars, writers, poets, sculptors and artists including Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio, Machiavelli, Michael Angelo foreshadowed the dramatic change happening in Italy. The Italian Renaissance began in Tuscany, centered in the cities of Florence and Siena and later had a significant impact on Venice, where the remains of ancient Greek culture provided humanist scholars with new texts. After reformation, the role of the middle class shifted to central and western Europe. In the 17th century, England, France and Holland chartered their merchant classes for overseas trade. Trading and shipping companies led to the emergence of new professions such as insurance agents, shareholders, clerks, as well as impacting the structure of the market. With profit and professional skills, this class became rich, talented and useful to society although it had no political power which still lay with the ruling feudal lords.



In 1789 began a period of radical, social and political upheaval in France that had a major impact on the political, social, and economic structure. The middle class, with the help of masses was successful in overthrowing the old regime. The wave of revolution continued through 1830 to 1848. Likewise, the English parliament was forced to pass the Great Reform Act in 1832 which changed the British electoral system.

In India, the middle class appeared during the colonial period, when modern education produced new professionals required by new administrative institutions. Besides government officials, there were lawyers, bankers, doctors and teachers who were keen on playing an active role in politics. In 1885, when the Congress party was founded; it consisted mainly of the Indian middle class.

Bengal was divided by the British in 1905 into West Bengal and East Bengal, with East Bengal being more or less coterminous with modern Bangladesh. Since the new province had a majority of Muslim population, the partition was welcomed by Muslims, but it was fiercely resented by Indian nationalist leaders who saw it as an attempt to drive a wedge between Muslims and Hindus. The partition was withdrawn in 1911, but it had pointed the way to the events of 1947, when British India was partitioned into the states of India and Pakistan.

When in 1906 All India Muslim League was founded, its members belonged to feudal as well as the nascent Muslim middle class. When Waqar-ul-Mulk took it to Aligarh, it was under the control of middle class. The Simla Deputation of 1909 did not include any landlords as members. In fact, the Muslim League became a feudal party (1946) after partition when the landlords of Punjab and Sindh became its members.

The middle class in Pakistan became weak when Hindus, Sikhs and other non-Muslim communities migrated from Punjab and Sindh to India. These immigrants had no roots in the local culture and traditions and hence failed to become agents of change.

In Sindh the new middle class emerged in the 1950s. Since its emergence, it became involved in ethnic conflict. In Punjab, the middle class is associated with the army and bureaucracy which have hampered its role in political or social change. In Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the limited middle class survived under tribal leaders.

In Pakistan, the middle class cannot play a role in transforming society as it appears to be under the influence of landlords and tribal leaders who use it for their own vested interests.

## In the Middle

When political change, chaos and disorder in the country is discussed, a debate follows about the decline of political leadership. Decline is always compared with socio-economic and political development in the society which raises the question whether Pakistan has ever enjoyed mature leadership. History may help us understand the root cause of the decline of political leadership in Pakistan.

In the subcontinent, the Indian Congress and the All India Muslim League produced two main types of leadership. The Congress included members mostly from the middle class who wanted to establish their position in the colonial structure. Therefore it accommodated all people, irrespective of religion or ethnicity. On the other hand, the All India Muslim League was founded by and confined to the Muslim feudal class and consequently, a non-secular and anti-democratic approach to politics emerged.

After 1947, the Congress continued provision for people belonging to different religions, holding different ideologies and attracting talented people in its fold. Hence, there is no dearth of leadership in India.

On the contrary in Pakistan, the Muslim League closed its doors to religious minorities and remained dominated by the feudal class. So from very beginning, politics was controlled by the mediocre. The early leadership may have been mediocre but was not financially corrupt. Liaquat Ali Khan and his successors had no vision of building a new nation and miserably failed to solve controversial issues while the provincial leadership was involved in constant intrigues to humiliate their opponents. Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy was talented and brilliant but failed to play an active role in politics.

Why has mediocrity flourished in Pakistan? One of the reasons is the domination of feudal and tribal lords in politics and their stronghold in their representative areas or constituencies so that nobody could ever challenge them in elections. As *sajada nashin* or inheritors of Sufi saints, their disciples blindly follow them. Under these circumstances the feudal, spiritual and tribal families have always controlled politics without any question of talent and merit coming forward. The mere criterion of belonging to a privileged family has always been more than enough.

This domination resulted in the exclusion of other classes from politics, especially the educated and professional middle class. Since all parties are jagirs or properties of either landlords or tribal leaders, the middle class never had an opportunity to achieve top leadership of a political party nor to participate in politics.

Government servants are not allowed to become members of political parties nor do private organizations allow their employees to get involved in political activities. Hence it is an open field of play for landlords. Once the middle class is barred from politics, it loses interest in changing the society, becomes depoliticized and focuses on employment and career.

As the character of Pakistani democracy is feudal, political parties follow the hierarchy. In elections, the leader of the party decides who will contest elections. Unlike advanced democratic countries where parties bear the cost of election; in Pakistan, the candidate initially pays a huge amount as donation to the party. If selected by the chief, the contestant bears all election expenses. The involvement of heavy finances completely rules out the participation of the middle class in elections.

Landlords and tribal leaders are not well-educated, rely on the loyalties of their followers and are involved in financial corruption because they spend huge amounts of money to win elections. Their feudal character is evident in the parliament where they support legislation that promotes or protects their interest. If the same system continues, there will be further deterioration and decline of political leadership in Pakistan because of the lack of competition from other socio-economic classes. To achieve real democracy, feudalism and tribalism must be abolished which will allow talented people from different classes to emerge. As long as the tribal and feudal classes dominate, the middle class will remain too weak to challenge their political hegemony with no hope of any change in the near future. People will have no choice but to vote for the existing, dominant parties and will consequently suffer under their mediocre and corrupt rule.

## Knowledge is Power

Before writing came into being, knowledge was verbally transferred from one generation to another. Experiences and observations were added randomly but mostly knowledge remained static and lost its utility with the changing environment.

Writing brought a radical change as knowledge could now be recorded. However, knowledge was monopolized by those who could read and write. The educated classes who became empowered could now interpret religion as well as perform bureaucratic work.

The Brahmins in India preferred to confine religious and secular knowledge to their own class while the lower classes were denied access to knowledge and learning. Bhagat Kabir, one of the leaders of Bhagti movement, condemned knowledge gained from books and instead lauded knowledge based on observation and experience.

In most religions, knowledge was confined to the clergy and society relied on religious rituals performed by them. In case of Christianity, Latin was the language of the church and incomprehensible to the common man. The Church did not permit the Bible to be translated into other languages and when it was translated into English for the very first time, it was considered a crime to possess and read the Bible in English. It was only after the Reformation movement that the Bible could be translated into other languages.

In the subcontinent, when Shah Waliullah translated the Quran into Persian and his grandson translated it into Urdu, both confronted hostility of the clerics. When religious knowledge became accessible to people, the monopoly of the clergy and ulema ended.

A similar attitude prevailed among other professional classes who restrict the knowledge of their profession to themselves and their family. As a result, the Indian society may have lost indigenous medical skills and knowledge.

For centuries, silk manufacturing was kept secret by Chinese weavers as it was their vital source of income and they wanted to maintain their monopoly.

During the Industrial Revolution, technicians in European countries who wanted to learn skills were discouraged by the English. Similarly, when the Japanese were planning to emulate western technology, they were prohibited from

entering European factories. This is how knowledge was always guarded, but those who were determined to gain knowledge surpassed all difficulties and hardships to achieve their goal.

Knowledge played an important role in the downfall of the East and rise of the West. As it became stagnant in the East, the society failed to advance. In the West, there was thirst for knowledge which forced the society to search and learn. The Renaissance inspired Italian intellectuals to search new sources of knowledge and to get rid of the Medieval Period and its religiosity. They searched for Roman and Greek manuscripts in old monasteries in order to understand secular learning, developed the art of editing and the discipline of Philology.

When Constantinople was conquered by the Turks in 1453, some scholars escaped to Italy where the Greek manuscripts which they brought with them were translated and published.

The East was the other source of knowledge for the West. First by trade and later through political domination, the West gained access to eastern knowledge. In 1798, Napoleon invaded Egypt and brought shiploads of scholars and archaeologists along with the army, to discover the ancient period of Egypt. It was the result of his adventure that hieroglyphic writing or the ancient Egyptian script was deciphered.

Later, European archaeologists deciphered the cuneiform script of Mesopotamia which revealed information about the civilization. In 1778, the Asiatic Society of Bengal was founded which took upon itself the task of publishing the classical literature of Sanskrit and Persian. The opening of trade routes to China provided opportunities to learn the ancient Indian and Chinese culture, languages and literature. They were inspired with the Islamic civilisation and its achievements and eastern knowledge became a part of the curriculum in western universities.

Based on Roman, Greek and eastern knowledge, scholars produced original work which contributed in modernizing Europe. Since then, western universities have created knowledge and maintained their domination over the world.

In the modern age, all nations are free to acquire knowledge; armed with which, a nation can control its own destiny. But those who rely on the knowledge of others remain subordinate and backward.

## Lessons Learnt & Not Learnt

Throughout history, Bengal has resisted a central government and its domination. Therefore, from the opposite end, traditionally, Bengalis are portrayed as rebels, troublemakers and miscreants. During the Sultanate period, for instance, there were a few uprisings against Delhi, the capital.

During the reign of Ghayasuddin Balban (b. 1200; d. 1287), there was a rebellion so dangerous and widespread that despite his old age, Balban personally led the expedition to crush it. He erected gibbets on both sides and the rebels were hanged in public to warn the insurgents, in this case Bengalis, of the dire consequences of rebelling against the central government. But the province remained a hotbed of rebels throughout the reign of the Sultans of Delhi.

During the colonial period, Bengalis were the first to adopt European education and competed in the ICS; they also demanded that the ICS examinations be held in India instead of London. But the Hindu and Muslim aristocracy of northern India opposed this demand.

In his address to the Patriotic Association, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) said that it would be easier to obey an Englishman as their officer without any knowledge of what class he belonged to. According to him, the Rajputs and Muslims would not accept a Bengali as their officer.

He remarked that Bengalis were cowards who went into hiding at the mere sight of a naked sword. His derogatory comments against Bengalis were applauded and appreciated by his audience, largely the Muslim Ashrafiya (aristocracy) but Bengalis proved him wrong.

In 1905, Bengalis protested against the English decision to redraw the boundaries of the Bengal Presidency and divide it into two parts. A campaign was launched to boycott English for good. Initially they agitated against the government through peaceful means but later when they felt that their voice was being ignored, they resorted to violence and forced the government to annul Bengal's partition in 1911.

Learning no lessons from history, the Pakistani bureaucracy and the ruling classes inherited the racial prejudice against Bengalis which had originated in northern India. In reaction to being treated as inferior, Bengalis first demanded equal rights and dignity and failing in this quest, they launched a movement for separation.

Every year many Pakistanis mourn 'the fall of Dhaka' without realizing the plight, the suffering and the pain that Bengalis went through as a virtual colony of the then West Pakistan. This resulted in bloodshed, massacre and uprooting of hundreds of thousands as a result of the army action in 1971.

As a nation, Pakistanis seem to have no sense of guilt as the majority in what is Pakistan today supported military action against Bengalis. Even the intellectuals, except a few, kept silent about the barbaric acts committed against them, to the extent that the separation of Bangladesh is ignored as a gruesome chapter in our history.

There is no mention of the tragedy that preceded the creation of Bangladesh in our textbooks. Sadly, those who committed crimes against humanity got away with no retribution. They were neither put on trial nor investigated for their gross violations and cruelty.

History tells us that nations who deny their crimes against humanity are likely to repeat such actions. We have the recent example of the US that committed such crimes in Vietnam with no sense of guilt and then years later repeated the same in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay prison in Cuba.

Similarly, Pakistani security forces repeated similar acts in Sindh before and during the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) from 1978 to '87; in Balochistan it is an ongoing practice, where there are endless missing people today who dared to demand their fundamental rights.

The Bangladesh crisis showed how propaganda mobilized the nationalist sentiment of the people in Pakistan, with the state dubbing the Bengali opposition as foreign agents, justifying action against them and going for their elimination. The media had portrayed Bengalis as being influenced by a Hindu conspiracy to divide Pakistan. This worked on a majority of Pakistanis. Even today when facts have become known; Pakistanis are not ready to acknowledge their guilt.

With the separation of Bangladesh, Pakistani politics suffered because Bengalis were more politically conscious and active. Since their leadership belonged to the middle class, their approach to politics was liberal and secular. Once Bangladesh became independent, the landowners and feudal lords of Pakistan became the unchallenged leaders and dominated politics and power.

In the absence of a strong opposition, the army has had opportunities to overthrow constitutional governments and rule with an iron hand. The

separation of Bangladesh further weakened the trade unions and students movements in Pakistan. The small provinces which enjoyed active support of Bengalis were now deprived of that strength, and they became victims of the strong centre.

It is high time for the Pakistani nation to admit its guilt and apologize to Bangladeshis. Instead of mourning the fall of Dhaka, it is the guilt that should be owned and atoned for. Bangladesh won its independence, from us, of all people, and that is shameful.

Today Bangladesh provides an important lesson to Pakistan. Its liberal and secular state structure, its good relations with neighbours and the strength of its democratic institutions have helped it develop as a progressive nation. In this liberal milieu, its educational institutions contribute new ideas and thoughts to society.

East Pakistan under the domination of West Pakistan was underdeveloped and backward; with freedom, Bangladesh has expressed its potential, energy and vitality as a nation. It has learnt lessons from history and changed its social and political structure after experiencing military rule. Freedom and independence are blessings if they are correctly understood and utilized by the rulers.



## Mughals and the Religious Movements

Akbar (1556-1605) laid down the foundations of an empire after conquering and occupying territories of local Indian rulers. He introduced many reforms which consolidated the Mughal rule. His rule was based on three elements. First, he inducted Hindus in the state structure and integrated them socially and culturally on equal basis. Secondly, he welcomed the Iranians to his court who were excellent administrators and literary people. Thirdly, he indianised the Mughal culture by adopting Indian customs, traditional festivals and celebrations.

These efforts brought Muslims and Hindus together. His attempt to establish a house of worship and allow followers of different faiths to come and discuss religious issues there not only helped to spread knowledge of various religions but also created religious tolerance.

Akbar's religious policy was supported by the majority who felt comfortable and secure under its umbrella. However, there were some elements, though not very powerful and influential, who opposed it. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi was one who was concerned by the process of integration between Hindus and Muslims and by the adoption of Hindu cultural practices; this line of action was, in his view, a threat to Muslim identity and he criticized the culture policy of the Mughal rule.

For example, earlier on, Babur (1500-1530), in his testament, advised Humayun to not slaughter cows as it would be against the Hindu religion. Ahmad Sirhindi, (d. 1624) on the other hand, pleaded that sacrificing cows was an important element of Shariah.

Akbar abolished the jizya or tax on Hindus in order to bring them to the fold as Mughal subjects on an equal footing with Muslims. Sirhindi, opposing this move, proposed that Hindus pay jizya because it was a sign of their humiliation and subordination.

Mughal emperors invited Iranians who were Shia, and never interfered in their beliefs. Ahmad Sirhindi fiercely opposed Shias and their influence. Mughals promoted the integration of Hindus and Muslims while Sirhindi condemned this trend and in one of his letters protested that Rahim and Ram were not one and the same. He tried to convince the Mughal nobility to promote Islamic teachings at the royal court but he was not successful in his endeavors.

Akbar's personality was so strong that Sirhindi remained in oblivion. During the time of Jahangir, he was summoned to the court because one of his letters infuriated the orthodox *ulema* and Muslims in general. In this letter he recounted a dream in which he appeared in the presence of Almighty God; he claimed that he went so close to God that the great friends of the Holy Prophet remained behind. Jahangir sentenced him to prison and he was incarcerated at Gwalior Fort as punishment.

The interpretation of history changed during the communal politics of the 1920s. Akbar and Ahmad Sirhindi emerged as two important figures who had opposed each other. Akbar was condemned as secular and irreligious because he had patronized all faiths and consequently weakened the Muslim community of India. As he encouraged the policy of integration, he was said to have polluted the purity of Islam.

On these bases some Muslim historians blamed him for the decline of Muslim power in India. This scenario was based on Ahmad Sirhindi, who was resurrected from historical oblivion and presented as the champion of Islam who saved the faith in India. His orthodox views, his zeal to revive the purity of religion and his uncompromising attitude towards Hindus and Shias were appreciated by some Muslim groups. In Pakistan history textbooks he is a hero and by default Akbar a villain of sorts.

During the later Mughal period Shah Waliullah (d.1762) emerged as an important force who made efforts to unite the Muslim community by acting to eliminate differences of jurisprudence and sectarian disputes between Shias and Sunnis. He also made attempts to convince Muslims to abandon Hindu practices and customs. Seeing that Mughal emperors of his time were too weak to arrest the growing power of the Marhattas, he invited Ahmad Shah Abdali to invade India.

Like Ahmad Sirhindi, he was also not well known in his own time. His influence was confined to his students and to a section of the nobles. He was also brought to light during the communal politics and presented as a reformer and revolutionary to inspire the Muslim community to fight for their identity and survival. Ubaidullah Sindhi's book *Shah Waliullah ki siyasi tehreek* or the 'Political movement of Shah Waliullah', presents him as an important leader whose teachings could be implemented in modern time to reform Muslim society.

We have inherited two trends. One is the Mughul heritage which is liberal, secular, enlightened, religiously tolerant, multicultural and multi ethnic. The other is from the religious movement which is culturally, socially and religiously rigid and thus intolerant. Now it is up to us to choose which one we want to

adhere to, because Pakistan, despite the state's advocacy of an official ideology, remains a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multicultural society.

## Power of the Mob

In Pakistan we are witnessing two types of gatherings of people: political and religious. Every political and religious party, to show its strength and popularity, organizes mass meetings by spending lots of money and making efforts to collect as many people as it can.

The importance of a crowd in the political process of the country emerged after the foundation of cities. As professionals belonging to different arts came to reside together in the same area, they gave rise to a town or city; as their population increased, the inhabitants started to play a role in the social, cultural and economic life of their city. Whenever a victorious general returned to the city of Rome, bringing war booty and prisoners of war, the citizens gathered to welcome him and raised slogans in his praise. Therefore, every general tried to please the citizens and get their support.

In order to keep the citizens happy and on their side, the Roman emperors organised games at the Colosseum where people could gather and enjoy chariot races and gladiator fights. The government also took care to supply them with a regular quota of bread; the idea was to not give the citizens any opportunity to create trouble in the city. Besides games, entertainment and a supply of bread, politicians regularly delivered motivational speeches to the crowd. Such public meetings were held at forums where politicians and generals addressed the population to keep popular opinion on their side so as to retain power.

The Parisian crowd made the French revolution a success. They not only demolished the Bastille castle but brought the royal family from Versailles to Paris. As a result, the Assembly passed revolutionary resolutions such as abolishing feudalism and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. Universal male suffrage was granted to the people of France by the 1793 revolutionary constitution. This provision legalized the participation of people who, so far, had no say in the political process, and politicians started to appeal to people for their votes.

The 19th century saw two revolutions of note in Europe; in 1830 and 1848, in which people learned how to resist the army and barricaded the streets to keep the soldiers out. Later on, the governments of certain European countries rebuilt the cities with a view to enable better mob control; the police was also trained on how to effectively restrain mobs and manage crowds in narrow lanes.

After the process of democratization and mass politics, scholars turned their attention to studying and analyzing the psyche and mentality of a crowd. Various studies show that crowds become a monolithic unit in which every individual loses his individuality and becomes a part of the crowd. A crowd acts and moves uniformly; when it is happy, it sings and dances; when it is angry, it burns, demolishes and destroys whatever comes in its way. It behaves irrationally and emotionally.

Unity gives it a sense of power. It challenges legal authority and asserts its presence. The mentality of the crowd is evident from the incident at Chauri Chaura in 1922, when the crowd set fire to a police station along with the policemen who took refuge inside it. It horrified Gandhi who suspended the Non Cooperation Movement after this incident.

At the time of Partition, there was great communal frenzy among the Muslim as well as Hindu communities. Such was the intensity of hatred that friends attacked friends and neighbours refused to help people they had lived alongside their entire lives.

After the fall of Russia in 1989 the crowd ousted the despotic rulers. In Germany, the power of the crowd demolished the Berlin Wall and once again united Germany. Recently, the common people took to the streets in the Arab world, changing the political landscape of the region.

However, political parties and leaders also use the energy of crowds to fulfill their own political designs. The Nazi party in Germany controlled the crowd by using all kinds of psychological tactics and unleashed it to terrorize the Jews. On the other hand, the African National Congress organised the crowd to resist the apartheid government and made it impossible for it to function. Subsequently, it forced the government to release Nelson Mandela and his friends and ended the racist rule. Therefore; it appears that a crowd can be used for constructive as well as destructive purposes.

In Pakistan we are continually witnessing spontaneous demonstrations and strikes against government policies. These are small crowds which are dispersed by the police. No political party is interested in conducting such demonstrations countrywide with uniformity and it is obvious that such sporadic protests neither reform nor change the social and political structure. Political leaders are not worried about the problems or grievances of the people. They are fully satisfied that people have no alternative but to vote for them. Therefore, neither the peaceful nor the furious crowds are playing an active role to transform this society.

## Puritan and Popular Religion

Throughout the history of religion, the question that arose from time to time was whether religion should evolve according to social, political and economic needs of society or should it retain its original teachings. Those who are in favour of purity of religion argue that despite changes in society, believers of a religion must observe its original teachings which should be retained in their original form and shape.

But generally the result is that such people alienate themselves from other sections of society by living in their own world with a separate identity. On the other hand, progressive thinkers point out that if religion cannot respond to emerging challenges, its utility is lost and it becomes stagnant. Therefore, in order to survive, it should be reinterpreted and reconstructed in view of the requirements of the modern times. The two trends are seen in every religious movement. Puritans emphasize on the textual meaning of revealed books or revered scriptures. According to this view, nobody has the right to change the meaning and interpret them in view of one's own time and ideas. Modernists, on the contrary, believe that they could reinterpret religious texts and adjust according to the changing ideas and thoughts of their time which would make religious teachings more workable and useful to society. The two trends remain in conflict. Puritans accuse the modernist of distortion of religion and polluting its purity by interpretation which benefits or is in the interest of the ruling classes. One can find examples in Islamic history when jurists and *ulema* interpreted religion to fulfill the wishes and demands of rulers.

For instance, when the institution of kingship was introduced, religious scholars justified it on the basis of religion. When aristocracy accumulated wealth, private property became sacred. Being in the service of the monarch, the jurists validated their actions by issuing *fatwas* and it became a norm for the rulers to consult jurists and ask them to find religious justification for their debauchery and exploitation.

The modernists believe that by reinterpreting religion they could protect it against the onslaught of modernity, so that outdated traditions in religion could survive new challenges. When a society passes through a crisis and modernists or secular ideologies fail to solve problems of the masses, puritans gain support and popularity. At this stage, puritans attracted the deprived and the poor by offering them solutions for their grievances to make them believe that it would end class differences and restore their dignity in society.

Puritans regard themselves as the custodians of original teachings and look down upon others as misguided heretics. They believe modernists or progressives are against religion which creates in them a sense of arrogance. It is interesting to note that the puritans' teachings were more suited to the economically well off classes. For example, their women could observe purdah, while women belonging to lower classes had to go out and work in the fields and in the houses of rich people to earn some money. This created a gulf between the rich and the poor.

The masses generally favour religious interpretation that bears religious and spiritual recreational value for them. They participate in festivities at shrines of Sufi saints where people can sing, dance and listen to devotional songs as well as partake in food and sweets being distributed as offerings to the shrines.

The two trends are known as puritan and popular religious culture. The former is led by religious scholars who study religion minutely while a popular religious movement is led by ordinary mullahs and Sufi saints. The puritans are always in a minority while popular religion has a large following. In the subcontinent the puritan and the popular trends are represented by the Deobandi and the Barelvi schools of Islamic thought respectively.

## Resentment in Response

After the defeat in the War of Independence in 1857, the Muslim community suffered politically, socially and economically.

Destruction of the cities of Delhi and Lucknow devastated culture, prominent families became scattered all over India and an atmosphere of disappointment, disillusionment, helplessness and insecurity prevailed.

The despair was further aggravated when the British administration introduced changes which were against traditions and customs, hence creating a new environment which the community was unfamiliar with.

People were now exposed to new technology, cameras, radio, telegraph and the postal system, loudspeakers and the printing press. The onslaught of European medicines, bakeries, modern schools, European dress, food and eating style made them nervous and it seemed to them as though their world was falling apart.

Initially, the Muslim community responded by establishing a madressah at Deoband in 1868 in order to protect its religious identity. Both the founders, Maulana Qasim Nanotvi and Maulana Rashid Gongohi, belonged to the noble families of northern India. The project was funded by rulers of the Muslims states and rich individuals of the community.

In the beginning, the madressa remained distant from politics confining its services to imparting religious education to Muslim children. Its curriculum consisted of studying the Quran, Hadith, Islamic jurisprudence and logic. Social sciences and humanities were excluded from the curriculum while studying philosophy was especially prohibited.

A proposition to provide vocational training to students in carpentry or shoemaking was opposed and regarded by most as undignified. Learning calligraphy was readily accepted. However, structured on modern lines, the madressa had different departments, a library, hostels and an examination system of its own.

It was not just an educational institution, but the harbinger of a religious movement aiming to maintain a sense of religious identity among the Muslim community and to keep a check on the process of modernization. The main department of the madressa was jurisprudence where Muslims from all parts of



India could seek information for their social, political and religious issues in view of the transforming society.

As a result, every year, a collection of the fatawa or the religious edicts was published reflecting the problems of the Muslim community and their concern on how to retain their traditions.

For example, there was a religious opinion in regard to listening to radio, sending money by money order, photography, painting human figures, using English medicines and eating biscuits or cakes. The Deobandis at the time believed that modernization was a serious threat to religion and efforts were made to separate and isolate the community and safeguard its traditions and culture.

The main thrust of the movement was to preserve and protect orthodoxy. In this sense, it was revivalist and a puritan movement. Therefore, all those sects which had different religious interpretations were condemned as heretics. Cultural relations with Hindus were condemned, and Shias were considered unacceptable as belonging to a Muslim sect. They preached for revival of all religious traditions which could not be practised during the Mughal period.

By the middle of the 20th century, the policy of the madressa changed under the leadership of Maulana Mahmudul Hassan. In 1919, he founded the Jamiat-ul-ulama-i-Hind, a political party, which engaged in nationalist struggle against colonialism.

The Deoband madressa became a bastion of orthodoxy in India.

After partition, the policy of the followers of Deoband changed. In Pakistan, their policy was to establish an Islamic state. In India, they favoured secularism, which they believed was best system that suited the Muslim community there.

The other Muslim response to colonialism was by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, whose main concern was to rehabilitate the Muslim community after 1857. He was the first in India who presented a progressive interpretation of Islam. He made attempt to re-adjust religious teaching according to the modern demands of the changing world.

He founded the Aligarh Muslim Oriental College which provided modern education to Muslim youth. He was not in favour of indulging in politics and encouraged the Muslim community to acquire modern education and become a part of government structure.

These two trends played an important role in shaping the mindset and attitudes of the Muslim community which continue to the present day.

## Survival of the Fittest

When Charles Darwin published his book *Origin of Species* in 1859, it immediately became a success and 20,000 copies were sold within a week. The book challenged the religious views on creation, substantiating the evolutionary process of human beings. Darwin argued that strong species survive in nature while the weak are wiped out.

Darwinism did not imply superiority of a race. His argument actually meant that it is the rule of nature that the strong are privileged to sustain hardships of nature and continue to exist while it is the fate of the weak to succumb to death. Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), an English philosopher, coined the term social Darwinism and applied it to prove racial superiority of the white race. In the 19th century, European imperialism flourished and acquired political, economic and cultural domination over Asian and African countries. Since the theory of social Darwinism provided them with a moral tool that it was the law of nature for the strong to survive and rule over weak nations, they continued to occupy colonies, exploit their resources, and to enslave or massacre the colonized people. Later, the theory provided an effective ideology for the Nazis to purify the German or Aryan race from other elements which, according to them, were polluting their race.

Hitler admired the British for occupying the Indian subcontinent, affirming the superiority of the white race. Some scientists even measured the size of skulls of different races in order to determine their racial superiority and status.

Herbert Spencer further argued that it was useless to introduce reforms which protected the weaker section of society and contradicted the law of nature. He was against the concept of a welfare state or any reform which would sustain the weak.

Darwinism was soon challenged by the emergence of a new theory of Nationalism which inspired colonized nations to rebel against their colonial masters and challenge their authority and superiority. Supremacy of the white race ended after the first and second World Wars and the European imperial powers were forced to leave their colonies and grant them independence.

On the other hand, democratic institutions and values provided the weaker sections of society new ammunition to fight against the domination of the stronger groups of society who controlled politics and maintained hegemony over the common man.

This ammunition included strikes, boycott, civil disobedience and demonstrations to assert their demands; completely changing the concept of power. In the 1960s, the civil disobedience movement of African-Americans compelled the government to abolish racism. In South Africa, the Apartheid government surrendered because of the National African Movement and released Nelson Mandela. Finally the theory of social Darwinism came to an end. Sadly, the theory of survival of the fittest is the order of the day in Pakistan. Politically and socially powerful feudal lords and tribal leaders monopolies and mistreat the common man. Since they control all political parties, they use state institutions to protect their power and privileges.

Following the theory of Herbert Spencer, the ruling classes are unwilling to introduce social and political reforms to empower the masses. They are kept educationally and socially backward so that they can be exploited easily. Deprived of their democratic rights, their protests are crushed by using the police or the army. Perhaps, it will take time for the weak and subordinate groups of society to achieve their basic rights.

## The Inside Story

Every year, the French celebrate July 14, as their national day in remembrance of the day when the people of Paris revolted against a corrupt and despotic government. It led to a revolution which not only transformed France but impacted the whole world.

The French are proud of the revolution and have since remained a paradigm for other nations to change old and corrupt systems. Doubtlessly, it inspired revolutionaries and radicals throughout the world to learn lessons from.

In Pakistan, people and politicians both talk about a revolution being the only solution that will eradicate corruption and bring about a change in the country. The French revolution was a product of enlightened ideas generated by French philosophers as reflected in all three phases of the revolution.

The first phase (1789 to 1792) was known as the period of constitutional monarchy. During this period, the National Assembly passed radical laws to change the French society politically, socially and culturally including the Declaration of Rights of men and citizens, which guaranteed freedom of expression, worship, protection of private property, and full citizenship rights for the Jews. The major concern of this period being liberty, although women were excluded from these human rights.

A feminist activist Olympe de Gouges protested and published a booklet on declaration of the rights of women. It created the concept of one nation of which all citizens of France became a part of.

Education which was previously controlled by the church became nationalized. The church lost its influence and now came under state control.

The moderate first phase came to an end when Jacobin, the most famous and influential political club came into power. Their emphasis was not so much on liberty as on social equality and the purification of the whole society from corrupt and obsolete tradition.

To eliminate all traces of the old regime, they adopted the policy of purging. The guillotine was introduced to France and all those who opposed the revolution including the king and queen were executed. It is estimated that nearly 40,000 were guillotined; Robespierre being the last victim.

During this period (1792 to 1794), the Jacobin tried to convert France to becoming a completely secular country by ending the church domination. The French Republican calendar was introduced to represent an era of liberty.

The third phase (1794 to 1799) ended the terror of the Jacobin and brought peace and order. This period emphasised Fraternity, the third slogan of the French revolution. In 1799, Napoleon staged a coup d'état, installed himself as First Consul and assumed political power. This changed the character of the revolution from universalism to nationalism.

The French revolutionary and Napoleonic wars between 1792 and 1815 ranged France against shifting alliances of other European powers producing a brief French hegemony over most of Europe. In 1815, at Waterloo in Belgium, Napoleon Bonaparte was defeated at the hands of the Duke of Wellington, bringing an end to the Napoleonic era of European history which led to the restoration of monarchy in France. However, the characters of the old regime failed to crush the spirit of revolution. This opened a debate between the conservatives and progressives on political, social and cultural issues.

The revolution was welcomed by the intellectuals of Europe who wanted to change their political system. It created two groups; the conservatives and the progressives or liberals.

The main spokesman of the conservative ideas was Edmund Burke. He expressed his hostility in 'Reflections on the Revolution in France' (1790), emphasizing the dangers of mob rule, fearing that the Revolution's fervor was destroying the French society and discontinuing a historical process. He believed that society should be changed by evolutionary reform and not through sudden change.

The progressives on the other hand argued that revolution was the only solution to change centuries old traditions and institutions. To achieve liberty, equality, and fraternity, people could not wait for long.

In Pakistan, only the bloody aspect of the French revolution is discussed to punish the aristocracy. We overlooked that secular rights were granted to all citizens irrespective of their religion caste and ethnicity while feudalism and all privileges of the upper classes were abolished. The revolution granted human rights and assured freedom of worship and expression. By eliminating religious obscurantism, it established tolerance.

The legacy of the French revolution is rich, if Pakistan wants to replicate it but all aspects of the Revolution should be understood thoroughly.

## The Means and the End

The influence of religion in society has become increasingly contentious in recent years. In the past few centuries, most stable societies have been underpinned by a single religion. There have been competing factions, organizations and sects contained within a society. Often, as in the case of different sects, there has been a division within the society on religious grounds as well.

Nevertheless, there have been indisputable conflicts, often politically based. These have been present in all the major religions of the world for several centuries. A number of factors have led to the importance of religious divides in recent decades.

Religion has influenced societies mainly through two kinds of religious organizations - reformist and political.

A reformist organization generally has a flexible framework. There is no hierarchy and the leader does not have absolute authority. As merely the head of an organization, he remains obscure and does not assert authority. There are no low or high ranks and all members have equal status with membership open to all. The only restriction is to strictly devote their time to the organization; the main approach being to change a society immersed in corruption and worldly affairs.

A reformist organization believes in an evolutionary process to change the minds of the people, emphasizing mainly on simple preaching for the misled. The best methods advocated to convert people are meditation and praying. The organization holds its general gathering

regularly to bring all its members and sympathizers together which creates a social bond. One of the best examples being the Tablighi Jamat, an organization founded before partition by Maulana Ilyas in 1926. Its main task was to counter the Shudhi movement to reconvert those Muslims who had reverted back to Hindu practices.

To restore Muslim communities to Islam, Maulana Ilyas adopted the simple approach of asking them to repeat the kalima saying that the person believed in God and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). He did not force them to forsake their tribal customs or cultural practices. After partition, the Jamat continued to work both in India and Pakistan. Every year a large congregation is held where thousands of people participate to show their devotion to and sympathy with the

organization. Besides, their members travel in delegations to different cities and towns to preach religion.

The Jamat does not believe in propaganda. Its motive is 'na kharcha, na charcha, na parcha' or no expense, no propaganda, no pamphlets. They are not interested in politics and stay away from political disputes. They are not in favour of issuing statements on Palestine or Kashmir and do not condemn any country as imperialist, nor as an enemy of Islam.

Their belief is to convert the whole world to Islam, and that would ultimately solve all disputes and would, in their opinion, bring about world peace. Their policy therefore is tolerance, not violence. They do not interfere in the country's politics; neither support any political party in elections.

Being non-political, they devote their energies to reforming the corrupt society. They remain silent on government matters and do not criticise democracy or dictatorship. Since they are in no conflict with the government, their non political character suits every type of government.

The Tablighi Jamat's popularity is increasing in Pakistan. This is indicated by the huge public attendance at their annual gathering. It attracts retired civil and military officials who can not only find time to go on trips and missions to different parts of the country and abroad but can also bear their own expenses.

The main reason for their success is that the Jamat communicates with the common man. Since they believe that human nature is basically good, therefore it is possible to change the people from evil to virtuous. The Jamat is not looking for radical change or revolution but only for people who join and promote its mission sincerely and not for any personal or political benefits.

The other type of religious organization is politically oriented and wants to transform society from the top. Many believe that human nature is evil and can only be reformed by force and coercion. They are well organised, have a systematic structure where the leader enjoys absolute power and authority and all its members are obliged to obey him.

Since the political organization has an advisory board or council, its membership is based on certain requirements: one should be religious according to their standards alone, which makes the organization hierarchical. The main agenda is to achieve power by any means, be it through a revolution, armed struggle or democracy.



A political religious organization propagates its agenda, uses all available sources of publicity and often has its own publications. It organizes public meetings and processions. Its policies include supporting causes like Palestine and Kashmir and condemning America and other powers as anti Muslim.

The Jamat-i-Islami is an example of such a politically oriented religious organization. It has contacts with similar organizations in the Muslim world such as the brotherhood in Egypt. They have compromised in the past with dictators to share political power in order to change and reshape society according to their manifesto. They form a coalition with different parties to contest elections and are intolerant of liberal and secular groups.

Such religious organizations have an impact on all political parties which include religious issues in their manifestos. Moreover state institutions such as bureaucracy and the army are heavily influenced by their religious teachings and make attempts to impose Shariah. Though religious parties cannot win an absolute majority in elections, even the so-called liberal political parties are prepared to be Partisan to their agenda.

## The Pirates' Legacy

For centuries, the subcontinent was renowned for its richness and resources in the ancient as well as in the medieval periods. Which is why, foreign powers would return time and again to plunder its wealth.

When Muhammad Bin Qasim conquered Sindh and finally occupied Multan, he sent treasures from the temple to Basra along with a letter saying that the value of the treasure was more than what has been invested in the conquest of Sindh. He further remarked that the head of Raja Dahir should be considered a bonus.

After the Arabs came the Turks. Mahmud Ghaznavi invaded India 17 times and took away the wealth as war booty to Ghazna. He was followed by Muhammad Ghauri whose slaves finally established their rule in India.

After defeating Ibrahim Lodhi in the battle of Panipat in 1526, he generously distributed the late king's treasure amongst the grieving family. He sent gifts to Kabul and was so pleased by the acquired victory and wealth that all the inhabitants of Kabul got one shah rukhi as a gift from him.

For the years to come, the Mughal rulers accumulated wealth in their treasury and ruled India without any danger or fears of any foreign invasion.

But in the 18th century, the Mughal decline began as its wealth and weakness attracted foreign invaders. Nadir Shah Afshar invaded India in 1737 and looted the Centuries old accumulated treasure of the Mughals. According to an estimate, he acquired the equivalent of over Rs30m from the royal treasury and about Rs15m in the form of jewelry. He took away the peacock throne, the value of which was Rs 30m. He extorted another Rs150m from the royal karkhanajat or factories.

Nadir Shah was followed by Ahmad Shah Abdali who invaded Delhi in 1757 and continued the pillage. He forced nobles to hand over their wealth to him. So pressurized were they that some of the nobles committed suicide. Armed soldiers were posted in all parts of the city, houses were searched and valuables seized. Some royal ladies were also taken to Kabul. Ahmad Shah Abdali continued his raids in North India, Kashmir, Sindh, and Punjab and swept away Indian wealth to Afghanistan. The people of Punjab were so accustomed to his plunder that it was commonly said, "Consume whatever you have because the rest belongs to Abdali". Ranjit Singh, the Sikh ruler brought to an end the Afghan marauding.

In 1757, after the Battle of Plassey, when the East India Company became a political power, its servants started to loot. After accumulating wealth, they returned to England where they purchased property, a seat in the parliament and would be called nabobs.

After the Battle of Buxar in 1862, the Company got the right of diwani or to officially collect revenue from Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The officials brutally extracted revenue from the peasants which steadily reduced the most fertile province of Bengal to ruins resulting in famines, droughts and extreme poverty. In 1857, the Indian army was defeated and the city of Delhi was occupied by the British soldiers who looted the city and took away war booty to their country. Jang Bahadur who came from Nepal to assist the British in crushing the rebellion took full advantage of plundering Awadh. He carried away war booty in 150 carts to his country.

During the colonial rule, Indian wealth and resources were regularly transferred to England. The richness of India became proverbial and the British proudly called it 'jewel in the crown'.

The wealth of the Indian subcontinent was not only ransacked by foreign invaders but the ruling classes as well. After independence, the ruling classes treated this country as 'conquered' and pillaged its wealth as war booty. The only difference being that in the past, the looted wealth was shifted to Damascus and Ghazna, today it is deposited in the Swiss and American banks.

The subcontinent became rich and resourceful because of its peasants, artisans and people who worked hard to produce the wealth. The foreign invaders in turn extorted money from them so that those who created and produced wealth suffered exploitation and were left in poverty and misery while ironically those who had power and authority extorted their hard-earned money from the poor and shamelessly spent it on luxury.

Pakistan has plenty of wealth, resources and production but the tragedy is that the rulers take away all leaving the people in a deplorable economic state. For people, there is no difference between foreign invaders and local looters. To them, they have the same faces and same methods of extortion.

## The Pros and Cons of Technology

It is said that when someone presented a printed book to the Mughal Emperor Akbar (1556-1605) for the first time, he found it crude and rough as he was accustomed to books with beautiful calligraphy and illustrations by the court painter. Actually, during the medieval period, the literate elite class had no problem accessing books as there were scribes who immediately copied the manuscripts onto paper. These books and manuscripts were not just available in the imperial library but also in the libraries of nobles and scholars. Therefore, medieval India had no need for the printing press.

In its early period Christian missionaries published only religious literature to help them in preaching. Therefore, these publications did not do much to increase the overall knowledge of the common man nor did they bring any change in society.

During the Ottoman Empire, the printing press was first set up by the Jews. First, the government set up restrictions regarding the publication of any religious text. Later on, when another printing press was established, the sultan ordered that no book should be published without the permission of a board of *ulema*. The press soon closed down as there was no demand for any book that would have passed through such strict scrutiny.

The printing press which brought a revolution in Europe failed to create much impact in Muslim societies. Perhaps the reason was that the literature produced by the scholars was religious; there were no creative writings in the 15th century on philosophy or science. As the production of knowledge was limited, so were the consumers. There was no large demand for varied forms of literature. The limited demand of scholars was fulfilled by scribes who copied books for them.

The authors of *Why Nations Failed* enumerate some technological inventions which were not implemented because of the vested interest of rulers. During the reign of the Roman Emperor Tiberius (37 BCE-14CE) a man presented him an unbreakable glass in the hope of getting some reward. The emperor asked him if he had told anybody about his invention; when the man said no he ordered his servant to take him away and kill him. The reason was that by implementing this invention, he did not want to make thousands of potters jobless.

The same story was repeated when another man invented a mechanical machine which could carry marble columns from mountains to the city. Another Roman emperor rejected his offer on the plea that it would make thousands of workers

unemployed. Fortunately, he merely dismissed the man and did not kill him. In the third example, William Lee invented a knitting machine; he brought it to Queen Elizabeth the First (1558-1603) and requested her to patent it in his name. The Queen refused and dismissed him saying that she did not want to see her subjects being made jobless. The reason for rejecting these inventions by different rulers was that they wanted to keep society intact without disturbing the structure. In case of unemployment, there would be discontent and turmoil which could result in rebellions and chaos.

Before the arrival of the British, Indian textile was the best in the world. After the Industrial Revolution, textile manufacturing factories in the West replaced the hand-woven Indian cloth and captured the market. The Indian weavers became not only jobless but, after losing their skills and profession, were reduced to unskilled labourers. Gradually they were absorbed in different professions and India lost its status as the leading textile manufacturer.

After 1857, Punjab became the centre of book publishing. The growing demand for calligraphers was fulfilled by private centres where master calligraphers trained students in this art. There were entire villages which consisted of scribes who inscribed books for printing. The best calligraphers held titles such as Shirin Qalam or Gohar Raqam (sweet pen and pearl light, respectively). Sadly, this profession suffered when computers arrived and text composing became a simple, computerized process. It made the whole class of calligraphers jobless within no time.

Those societies who are in touch with modern developments can easily adjust in the new circumstances. Those who are not conscious of the latest trends suffer a setback. It is difficult for them to accept new realities and adjust to them.

## The Real Revolution

When a society becomes politically unstable, economically weak and socially disintegrated, people become concerned about reformation and change. Pessimists regard the situation as bleak and hopeless with revolution seen as the only solution.

History bears examples of the French, Russian, and Chinese Revolutions which changed societies by abolishing outdated systems and traditions. Discussions and debates in socio-political circles often overlook the fact that each revolution in history had its own characteristics particular to that society. In Cuba, where the state was captured through armed struggle may not be a workable option for many countries.

In the 50s and 60s, armies in the Arab World staged coups in Egypt, Iraq, Libya, and Syria with the objective of modernizing these countries and to rescue them from Western imperialism. However hopes of any reformation were dashed to the ground. In most cases where attempts were being made to change the society, the motive of leaders was to abolish the old order and bring about a change from above. Since they were overly concerned about preserving their own political power, they imposed so many restrictions that the countries were converted into fortresses. Consequently, these oppressive governments became exhausted and collapsed without bringing about any change. Some became despotic while in some cases, power struggle led to bloodshed creating even more turmoil and chaos.

Another way to bring about a change in the country is to form a political party, involve people, contest election and after winning the majority of seats in the parliament, the system is changed through new legislature. This approach requires the participation of people to introduce reforms.

Considering the present political situation of Pakistan, suitable options must be analysed to bring about a change in its political, social and economic structure. A revolution is hardly possible because of the lack of ideas and strategy. Moreover, there is no chance of capturing the state through an armed struggle because in both cases, a well organised, disciplined, trained and radical party is required. Revolution is not only meant to abolish the outdated system but also to construct institutions on a ground-breaking model which would herald a new era. Intelligence, talent, innovation, and ingenuity are needed to construct new institutions and one sees no such attributes in the Pakistani society.

Since Pakistan is a feudal and tribal society where landlords and tribal leaders are the winning candidates, there is little or no chance for a radical or reformist political party to win the elections. Feudals have a strong hold on their permanent constituencies and no one stands a chance against them. Political parties seek feudal support to win elections and therefore join hands with them to maintain status quo. Under these circumstances, it is well-nigh impossible to succeed for any political party whose manifesto is to uproot corrupt institutions and reform the society.

Violence, insecurity, uncertainty and chaos has become a disturbing but regular feature of life as a result of the social, political, and economic breakdown in Pakistan. At this juncture, people are ready to change their traditional mindset.

To bring about change is a gradual process but there is a crucial need to create political awareness among the young generation.

Given the immigration scenario, there are little or no opportunities for the young and educated people to pursue careers in developed countries. They must realize that their only chance to have a respectable and good life is in their own country and hence it is their responsibility to bring about the change.

A democratic and secular society is what we need to survive. If our society fails to avail this opportunity for change, it may take a long time to get rid of the confusion and chaos. It is high time for the Pakistani society to decide whether to continue to observe old traditions or adopt relevant values and an institutional framework which would lead to progress.

## Two Faces of Greece

The conflict between rich and poor is as old as the hills. History shows that sometimes it became so bitter and bloody that it created chaos and disintegrated the society.

The rich being powerful and resourceful always managed to subdue the lower classes and spared no endeavor to protect their status and privileges.

In ancient Athens, the aristocracy augmented its power and wealth by acquiring agricultural land from peasants, enslaving them for non-payment of loan. When the peasants reacted against the injustice, a legal system of Draconian laws was introduced to control them.

Founded by Dracon, an Athenian statesman, these laws were very strict and the death penalty was applied to almost all crime. However, the situation and disorder prevalent in the society could not be improved.

Realizing the serious political and social situation, Solon (638 BC), another Athenian statesman, lawgiver and reformer implemented a new legal system of reforms to prevent bloody clashes between the rich and poor. Solon annulled all mortgages and debts, limited the amount of land anyone might add to his holdings, and outlawed all borrowing in which a person's liberty might be pledged. The last reform put an end to serfdom and slavery. Other economic reforms included a ban on the export of all agricultural products except olive oil and the granting of citizenship to immigrant artisans. Solon also made important constitutional changes. The assembly was opened to all freemen.

His legislature made Athenian democracy strong and allowed the common man to take part in decision making. After completing his work of reform, Solon surrendered his extraordinary authority and left Athens.

Cleisthenes (508 BC) further empowered people and is known as the founder of Athenian democracy. Under his system, all men 18 years of age and older were registered as citizens and as members of the deme (village or town) in which they lived. All male citizens over the age of thirty could serve for a term of one year on the Council and no one could serve more than two terms in a lifetime. Such an organization was necessary, Cleisthenes believed, so that every citizen would learn from direct political experience. With such a personal interest in his democracy, there would be no citizens to conspire and attempt to abolish the system.



Once democratic institutions were established, the Athenian society flourished culturally and socially. Philosophers like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle introduced radical views in human thinking, enriching the human thought so that Athens became a centre of learning. Its reputation as a city of culture attracted Roman scholars to Athens in quest of knowledge.

Around the 5th century BC, Sophists like Aristotle, Plato, and Aristophanes influenced Athenian politicians who learnt to argue and present their case in the democratic assembly. Orators such as Pericles and Demosthenes emerged and rhetoric became an art. Consequently demagogues would now exploit the emotions of people to win their support.

The Epicureans and Stoics further continued philosophical traditions and the Athenian democracy produced the best dramatists. Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides wrote tragedies; Aristophanes earned fame as a comedy writer, while architects, sculptors and artists embellished the city.

The free democratic environment led Herodotus (484 to 425 BC) to write the history of war between Greece and Persia. His book on history became the first systematic writing on historiography. He was followed by Thucydides (455 BC) whose work on the Peloponnesian Wars combines a personal knowledge of several main figures of the time with a determination to discover the truth. The work of Thucydides provides us with one of the greatest works of ancient history. In ancient Greece, the main city of Laconia in the Peloponnesus was Sparta, a powerful city-state, the development of which was quite different from Athens.

As Greece moved into its Classical period, Sparta extended its control over nearby city states, maintaining a rigid, militaristic culture that prized discipline, loyalty and athletic prowess. Most Spartan men were soldiers and Sparta played almost no role in the celebrated scholarly and artistic achievements of other Greek city-states (particularly Athens). Individualism was not valued; instead a communal and patriotic spirit was forged among its citizens.

Lycurgus, (820-730 BC) the mythical law maker transformed the whole city of Sparta into a military camp. Boys were indoctrinated to fight and die in the battlefield. By law at the age of seven, they joined camps where they lived till they were 30. They were rigorously trained for war, walked barefoot, slept on the rough floor, ate sparsely and wore a single outfit for the whole year.

Girls were also physically trained like boys. Their strength and dexterity was also aimed at being healthy mothers. When they gave birth, the baby was presented

before a committee and unhealthy babies were thrown from the top of a mountain to die.

Sparta produced the best soldiers and its army was invincible. But at what price? It produced no philosophers or writers. When its military power collapsed after 70 or 80 years, having no heritage or culture, Sparta disappeared in the mist of history.

Athens was a democracy, the result of intellectual innovation, contributing richly to civilization of mankind. Whereas Sparta, a warrior state failed to contribute to culture and wasted energy and talent on war.

There is a choice for Pakistan either to become an intellectually barren, warrior state like Sparta or a democratic republic like Athens with rich cultural and intellectual traditions.

## When History Fails

After the battle of Plassey in 1757, the East India Company became a political power, gradually expanding its hegemony over India. In 1803, when Delhi was occupied, the Mughal emperor fell under its tutelage and the East India Company became the de facto ruler.

Social and agricultural reforms were seen in Bengal which was the first province to fall under the control of the East India Company. The permanent settlement implemented by the British government slowly eliminated the Muslim landlords leading to the rise in power of the Hindu zamindars.

The new change created a conflict between the Muslim peasants and the Hindu feudal lords and although initially it was an economic issue, it eventually turned into a religious matter and led to the emergence of Faraizi, a new religious movement.

The founder of the movement, Haji Shariatullah (d. 1840), championed the cause of the Muslim peasants and united them by creating a spirit of brotherhood. He urged them to observe the original teachings of Islam. To give them a separate identity, he introduced a particular dress and advocated different styles of beards for his followers.

The peasants clashed with the feudal lords to fight for their rights creating a law and order situation for the British government which intervened on behalf of the landlords and crushed the resistance against them.

After the death of Haji Shariatullah, his son Dudu Miyan was unable to take the resistance forward and after compromising with the government, abandoned the cause altogether. As a result, the Faraizi movement collapsed and ended in failure but it left a religious impact on the peasant community.

Another religious movement appeared in northern India under the leadership of Syed Ahmad Shaheed (d.1831). This part of India went through social, political and economic changes under the British rule. After the decline of the Mughals, the *ulema* lost court patronage and employment becoming insecure and helpless. The agenda of the new movement known as Tariqah-i-Muhhamadiyah was to purify the tenets of Islam from Hindu customs, traditions and cultural practices. Shah Ismail Shaheed (d. 1831), one of the followers of Syed Ahmad, wrote two books *Taqwiat-ul-Iman* and *Sirat-al-Mustaqeem* or the 'Strength of Belief' and 'Right Path' respectively.

His motive was to convince the Muslim community to purify Islam from Hindu influences and Shiite rituals. He was harsh in his criticism and believed that religion should be practised in its original form; a thought process which gradually evolved into a Jihad movement.

The mission of Syed Ahmad was to establish an Islamic state where the Muslim community could observe pure teachings of Islam. Since it was not possible to materialize his ideology in India where the British rule was powerful, so he decided to migrate to the north western frontier (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) to establish a religious state there. His migration was believed to symbolize the migration of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) from Makkah to Madinah.

Before leaving British India, he visited several important cities and towns mobilizing the Muslim community for a holy war against the Sikhs of Punjab who also controlled those parts of the frontier to which he was migrating. It appears that the British government silently supported the movement without checking its activities.

Some Muslim rulers also provided financial support and funds were collected from Muslims without government interference. Most probably, the British government wanted to shift the troublesome elements from the territory under their control to that of the Sikhs' in order to weaken the Sikh rule.

When the holy warriors reached the frontier, the Pathan tribes who were unaware of their arrival were taken by surprise. There were clashes between the tribes and the followers of Syed Ahmad. Initially, he succeeded in defeating the tribes and established an Islamic state, proclaiming himself the caliph implementing the Sharia. His followers wandered through the villages and tribal settlements and publicly punished those who missed their prayers or violated the Sharia. They forcibly married Pathan girls and started to collect zakat and ushr.

There was a clash between tribal customs and the Sharia as well as among the ethnic groups. As a result, a conspiracy was hatched in the city of Peshawar and in just one night, Pathans massacred the holy warriors. Syed Ahmad escaped with a few of his followers but was finally defeated by the Sikh army at Balakot in 1831.

Traditional historians accuse the Pathan tribal leaders for not supporting the movement and betraying the holy cause. A more comprehensive study of the movement shows that it was launched on the assumption that Pathans as orthodox Muslims would support the movement without any hesitation.

But the leaders of the movement did not actually study tribal opinion, culture and their language and decided to establish an Islamic state there. They also assumed that the Muslim population of Punjab would rise against the Sikh rule which did not happen.

In fact, it was not a betrayal by Pathans but a miscalculation of the leaders of the movement to understand the feelings and sentiments of Pathans by interfering with their culture and everyday lives. The implementation of harsh punishments without providing any benefit in return resulted in a strong reaction against the movement. It was an example of dictatorial rule without consent from the people. Both Faraizi and Jihad were revivalist movements aimed at creating an Islamic society. The Faraizi movement failed because it was propagated in the British territory and was crushed as soon as it became a threat. The Jihad movement failed because of the mistakes of its leaders and their lack of understanding of the social and political situation of the place and the people where they wanted to establish Sharia rule.

The failure of both the movements suggests that an attempt to revive the past in view of the present situation is not feasible.

## A Lesson from China

Throughout history, civilizations have flourished and disappeared. When a civilization disappears into oblivion, all traces of its people and their development as a society are lost.

The Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman civilizations flourished with grandeur but after reaching their zenith vanished from the map of the world. In some cases, what they have left behind remains unknown even to the settlements that developed later.

The Indus valley civilization lay hidden beneath the earth without a trace for centuries until it was discovered in the 1920s. Despite its discovery, the script unearthed remains un-deciphered and most of its aspects are still unknown to us. It was due to archaeological studies and excavations that ancient civilizations were discovered and history reconstructed through the remains found. In Iraq Saddam Hussein tried to restore the old glory of Babylonia and project his image as Nebuchadnezzar riding a war chariot. However, the attempt failed to convince his own people to recognize him as a great leader. Instead, he retained his power by using coercive methods.

It appears that perhaps the inheritors of past civilizations have lost their capability to contribute like their ancestors did in the past. The Iraqis, the Egyptians, the Greeks and the Italians are there as nations but their present contribution to world civilization compared to the past is negligible.

The Chinese nation however is an example of a civilization that re-emerged with a new force and fresh vitality after having gone through the same process of disintegration as other civilizations of the past. Old China, in the last days of its glory, was cut off from the rest of the world and referred to as barbaric and uncivilized. Clinging to its old and outdated traditions, it remained far behind the new emerging nations.

As a result, European nations equipped with new technology and modern ideas left the Chinese far behind and exploited them for China's wealth and resources. China suffered but learnt a lesson. In response to the challenges, it chose to revive the spirit of nationalism to unite its people and restore order. A socialist China eliminated its old and obsolete traditions and laid down the foundations of a new system providing basic needs to its people.

Emphasis on education and healthcare renewed the energy of the nation which was reborn without burdens of the past and looked towards the future for its development and progress. In this unique experiment, a fallen nation rose again. The reason for China's success was based on abandoning the old system and accepting change. Its modern ideology created in the people a new enthusiasm to restructure their society. Socialism provided society with a fresh outlook with which to reshape institutions. The Chinese leadership decided to significantly change the classical socialism according to modern challenges and their people's needs.

Today China has become a world power because of its policy to recognize change as a crucial need of time. It chose not to blindly follow the socialist ideology but tailored it according to its needs. As a result, China emerged from humiliation and earned respect from its erstwhile oppressors.

Likewise, instead of revivalism today, we too have to think about new ideas which could transform our society from backwardness and create a new spirit to respond to modern challenges. We have to abandon the idea that the thoughts of our past reformers and intellectuals could guide us today.

In Pakistan, it is believed that Iqbal's philosophy and ideas could rescue us from our slumber. But we have to realize that we live in quite a different world today where the challenges and issues we confront are also very different from those confronting Iqbal's generation. A new philosophy and new ideas are required. We must rid ourselves of the baggage of the past and look at the future with a fresh perspective.

The Chinese experiment teaches us a lesson. Once, they achieved internal strength, they turned to their past only to preserve and celebrate it; never have they since allowed themselves to become victims of the past glory that was all but lost.

## Ceding Power Piecemeal

People are increasingly concerned about the dismal state of affairs in the country. In the absence of any comprehensive ideas and thought, conspiracy theories provide all sorts of answers to the prevailing confusion.

It is easy to blame others for corruption and weakness and to hold them responsible for all that is going wrong while considering yourself innocent.

One of the reasons for this frenzy of our thought process is the fact that we do not learn from history. Being a repository of past events, history has a store of wisdom for those who want to understand and learn from the past. For instance, we could study the recent history of the subcontinent and how the East India Company arrived as a trading company and subsequently became the ruler.

How did it happen? It was the result of a compromise and surrender by the Indian rulers who wanted to save their privileges even at the cost of surrendering their sovereignty and independence. When Lord Lake occupied Delhi in 1803, after defeating the Marathas who were the masters of the Mughal capital, the Mughal emperor became a stipend holder of the Company.

However in Mughal documentation, the payment of stipend has been referred to as a tribute. Indeed it was self-delusion not to accept the harsh reality. Initially, the officers of the Company observed Mughal court protocol.

When they appeared before the emperor they presented him a nazr as a sign of obedience and paid homage to him in accordance with Mughal etiquette.

Soon the Company realized that the power and authority of the emperor was on a steady decline.

No longer were there enough financial resources to patronize the nobility and literary figures. The Mughal ruler lacked political power to rule over his own people, who had been alienated.

Consequently, the attitude of the foreigners began to change. The Company gradually withdrew from observance of etiquette at the court, demanding a seat for the governor-general, should he desire a meeting with the emperor at the court. The emperor meekly resisted but being powerless, he eventually accepted the request and also the governorship of the Company.



During the period of Bahadur Shah Zafar, Charles Metcalfe was the Resident to the Mughal Emperor's court and also briefly the provisional Governor-General of Bengal.

It now became clear that power had shifted and that the Resident was the actual ruler. The house of the Resident became the symbol of political authority where all executive decisions were taken and implemented.

Delhi's Red Fort, on the other hand became a cultural symbol, where the emperor resided along with the royal family and spent his days in festivities, celebrations and mushairas or poetic gatherings. For the solution of administrative problems the emperor routed all matters through the Resident. He had no powers or decision-making authority regarding even the succession to the throne. The Company would select the successor at the recommendation of the Resident.

Bahdur Shah Zafar wanted to nominate his youngest son Jawan Bakht as his successor but the Resident had his own plans and independently negotiated with the fifth son of Bahadur Shah Zafar, Mirza Fakhru, who agreed to abandon the title of the emperor and to leaving the Red Fort as the imperial residence after succeeding his father.

This was what the Company wanted but later when Mirza Fakhru died of cholera, the Company conspired to end the rule of the Mughal dynasty after Bahadur Shah Zafar. Studying the history of that period, Bahadur Shah Zafar comes across as a sorrowful figure with no resources, authority and honour while on the other hand; the British Resident had power, authority and plenty of arrogance. After the War of Independence in 1857, the emperor was tried as a traitor and exiled to Rangoon where he died. Before Bahadur Shah Zafar, Wajid Ali Shah, the ruler of Awadh had met the same fate. His ancestors compromised and surrendered to the Company, while he paid the price for it. Awadh was integrated into British territories despite Wajid Ali Shah's reminders of their treaties and promises. Later, he was exiled to Calcutta.

With this historical background, the relationship between Pakistan and the US can be compared and analysed in the backdrop of compromise and surrender. History may not repeat itself, but parallels can certainly be drawn. Similarities can be seen between the role of the US ambassador and the Resident of the British government of colonial India, and how candidates for higher posts today seek the ambassador's support just like the Mughal princes sought the Resident's consent for their succession to the throne.

## Decline and Rise of the Gentry

With the downfall of the Mughal Empire, the nobility declined and lost its high status, wealth and power. As a united class which was loyal to the emperor, it disintegrated further as civil wars divided it into different groups. Emerging regional powers deprived the nobles of their landed property and hence their income which meant that they were gradually reduced to poverty.

Some nobility left the royal capital and migrated to Awadh and Deccan in search of patronage where they could continue the Mughal cultural heritage. Those who remained in the capital survived as ordinary people burdened with memories of their ancestral glory. Trying to retain their social status in society, members of the nobility now came to be called the ashrafiya.

After 1857, the English acquired power and realized that the patronage of a feudal class was important to control the people.

Therefore, the nobility was revived by granting them landed property and privileges distinguishing them from others but controlled by the British government. Throughout the colonial era this class of feudal lords played a subordinate role supporting the British government. They expressed their loyalty on several occasions including coronation celebrations or in case of war to which they contributed generously and recruited soldiers to the British army.

After partition in 1947, free from the British control, a powerful class of jagirdars emerged in Pakistan. Their subordinate role to the British came to an end but since feudalism was neither abolished nor reformed, this class assumed political power and revived its lost status, privileges and powers. Once again, the noblemen of the Mughal era resurrected themselves within the new environment; actually becoming even more powerful without the presence of a controlling central authority, which they coopted by becoming a part of the ruling elite.

Even today, Mughal traditions can be found among the elite class of jagirdars, army officials, bureaucrats, and industrialists who love luxury, comfort, grandeur, and a lavish lifestyle. The Mughal legacy is exhibited through their wealth, palatial homes, latest and expensive models of cars, an army of servants, exclusive dresses and luxurious furniture which determine their high status and rank in society. Thousands of guests are invited to their weddings and served huge banquets. The ceremonies usually become the talk of the town and are attended by the president, the prime minister and leading politicians.

It is customary for the elite to be accompanied by a large number of sycophants whenever they go out to attend a meeting or a conference. If they are invited as speakers, they are never punctual but deliberately arrive late to mark their importance and a busy lifestyle while the audiences wait. When they speak, their followers applaud and they leave as soon as their speech ends, showing no courtesy to stay back and listen to the other speakers. The icing on the cake is that newsmen report their speeches, and ignore the lesser beings.

Members of the elite class they regard themselves as being above the law. To abide by law would make them equal to ordinary people. From committing murder to breaking traffic rules, violation of the law is an opportunity for them to show their power and high status. Many feudal lords and tribal leaders maintain their own private jails where people who fail to obey their orders are imprisoned. They use their power and resources to escape from punishment. Surrounded by armed guards, they jump queues and never wait anywhere like an ordinary person. They are status conscious and like to distance themselves from the masses.

In order to show how pious they are, they perform hajj and umrah, the latter quite often. Occasionally, they contribute to charity to earn a good name. They have separate residential areas, hospitals and educational institutions. Their only contact with the public is through their servants. Generally, they do not trust local institutions and prefer to go abroad for treatment and send their children to foreign universities for education.

As the elite classes share political power, the state institutions work to protect their interest and fulfill their demands, in turn these institutions are used to strengthen their status. One cannot predict how long this injustice and discrimination will continue and for how long will the ordinary citizens suffer because of this frivolous and extravagant elite.

## The Victors and the Vanquished

Warriors and conquerors that emerge as heroes have always fascinated historians and appear in their narratives as the main players of history. Why are they eulogized, admired and worshipped as heroes while scholars, scientists, and reformers are marginalized? Hero-worship is perhaps based on power play. Society projects those who have material resources, wield political power and authority and are projected as great and magnificent.

Historians write about the rulers' achievements, poets compose panegyric poetry; scientists and artisans invent either weapon for them or produce tools and instruments to further add to their comfort and luxury. In exchange of material benefit they surrender their talents and energy to the absolute ruler. It is ironical how people who invaded and occupied other countries, imprisoned women and children, massacred populations, burnt down towns and cities, pillaged and plundered are called great and are admired for their bravery, war tactics and strategy and earn the status of national heroes.

Presently, even though the concept of power has changed and history no longer remains under control of absolute authority, historians continue to use the title of 'great' for conquerors and invaders. In the past, when conquerors would return after conquests laden with slaves and looted wealth, they would be lauded by their subjects and welcomed back as heroes. The Romans would line up, watch and applaud the procession of their victorious generals as they passed by. Nobody ever spared a thought for the fate of the vanquished or defeated. History remains partial to victors, not the vanquished.

These conquerors were in fact ambitious murderers and criminals who invaded foreign territories for the acquisition of more resources, authority and power. History of Alexander or Cyrus does not show any greatness of character except brutality, cruelty, arrogance, moral depravity and bankruptcy. But to Greeks and the western nations, Alexander is great because he defeated the eastern country of Persia and established the domination of the Hellenistic civilization. Films have been produced and novels published to project his glorious image. He is regarded as a forerunner of the hegemony of the western civilization and an icon for European historiography.

Similarly, the Persians resurrected Cyrus as their hero and Muhammad Reza Pahlevi organised a celebration in his memory to legitimize his rule. In Iraq, after the revival of the Mesopotamian civilization, Hammurabi and Nebuchadnezzar became ideals for the Iraqi ruling classes. For Mongolians, Genghis Khan is a

national hero. To the Turks, Muhammad Fatah, the conqueror of Constantinople and Suleiman the magnificent are among honored rulers. The European nations glorify Charles Martel, Char Léman who founded the great Carolingian empire and Richard the Lionheart, who fought against Salahuddin Ayubi.

For the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent, Muhammad bin Qasim, Mahmud Ghaznavi and Muhammed Ghauri became heroes for defeating Hindu rulers. Scholars and thinkers who contributed to knowledge and learning, like Al-Beruni and others, were sidelined despite the fact that the empire of Mahmud Ghaznavi disappeared in the oblivion of history but Al-Beruni's work has survived and become a classic.

Solon, a poet, politician and lawmaker was considered to be one of the Seven Wise Men. He found democracy in Athens.

Socrates was declared the wisest man by the oracle of Delphi. Greece recognizes its philosophers and reformers and ignores politicians except Pericles. Our concept of power is related to politics and not knowledge. Thinkers, philosophers and their work and inventions that changed the world are ignored. To this day, politicians get more media coverage than scholars. It is time we changed our mindset and condemned conquerors of the past or present as criminals while scientists, thinkers and reformers who are changing the world in a positive way should be celebrated.

## Harsh Lessons

A dedicated and knowledgeable teacher plays a vital role in educating and training his students, inspiring them to challenge established norms and bring forth new ideas in order to change the obsolete structure of society. He sharpens and refines the intellect of students and encourages them to bring to light their hidden and dormant talents thus nurturing them into worthy citizens. A good teacher teaches his students not to imitate but to rebel, to seek knowledge, not just the degree.

The best example of teachers is of the Sophists of ancient Greek, who taught their students the use of logic and rhetoric in order to present their case convincingly. In traditional Indian society, the teacher was known as the guru/ustad and student as chela/shagird. There was a time when teachers were highly respected and revered as the embodiment of knowledge and virtue, not only in India but around the world; they enjoyed respect in society because of their wisdom and sagacity.

Some students were so inspired by their teachers that they immortalized them in their writings. Plato, a great philosopher, was so devoted to Socrates that he kept him alive in his book, *Republic*. Plato, too, was a great teacher who encouraged his students to develop an independent mind. Aristotle, who studied under him for 20 years, opposed him on nearly all aspects of his philosophy and earned his own place in history. Originality, and not imitation, creates new ideas and opens the avenues of knowledge.

However, in order to appreciate the talent and intelligence of a student, his teacher needs to be large hearted and humble. There is an interesting story about the great scientist, Issac Newton. When he was a student at Cambridge University, he showed his professor his research in mathematics. The professor, a leading mathematician of his time, was so impressed with this work that he resigned from his chair and recommended Newton in his place. This is indeed a shining example of a teacher's greatness.

We have another example in India regarding Dr Radhakrishnan, former Indian president and a prominent philosopher. When he appeared in his M.A. Philosophy examination, one of his examiners, after checking his paper, wrote 'the examinee is better than the examiner.' One requires great courage to recognise one's student's intelligence and acknowledge it openly.

Leaving the past, we turn to the present. In Pakistani society, relations between teachers and students have changed gradually under social, economic and political pressure. In the early period of Pakistan's history, teachers maintained their traditional, respectable position. Their life was austere and simple. There was no desire to exploit students to earn more money.

They were devoted to teaching and training their students. There was no concept of tuition. Students were free to approach their teachers if they wanted extra coaching. There were private schools but they were founded by welfare associations and were either free or charged a minimal fee. Rich and poor both had the opportunity to get education in public or private schools.

The change occurred in the 1970s when the state failed to fulfill the growing demand for education. The gap was filled by private educational institutions. It made education an industry. This created differences between private and public institutions. As the private sector, charging higher fees, catered to the elite, a class difference sharpened in society.

English, the medium of highly elite private schools, alienated the student community from the rest of society. This greatly affected the teachers too. Those who taught in the private sector earned more and subsequently had a high social status. On the contrary, those who were in public institutions suffered financially and so began a race to earn more.

Tuition became a tool for teachers both in the private as well as the public sectors and they exploited it to the full. This changed the relationship between teachers and students. Students became consumers to buy the services of teachers, not to acquire knowledge but to get through examination. This is the pattern that is still in place. Public schools that once turned out all our leading literary figures, politicians, bureaucrats and scientists have ceased to produce any prominent students.

Private schools, in spite of their costly paraphernalia, do not have the scope or vision to produce brilliant scholars, scientists or philosophers. They churn out individuals trained only to land a lucrative job.

On the other hand, public universities and colleges have been greatly affected as a result of political changes in the country. When successive martial laws banned political parties and student unions, political parties helped their student wings to gain control of higher educational institutions. Nearly all universities and colleges are now ruled by these students who control the administration from admission to allotment of hostel rooms and even appointment of teachers. They also supervise cheating in examination. Those who oppose them are harassed

and tortured. In some cases, they don't hesitate even to thrash their teachers and force them to obey their command.

Under these circumstances, teachers have lost their traditional role. They are afraid of their students and cease to guide or inspire them. The time has gone when they had close and fatherly relations with their students. Neither teachers nor students are capable of contributing any new ideas or responding to the social and political problems of society. People like Newton's teacher or Radhakrishnan's examiner have gone forever. There are neither such teachers nor such students left in our society.



## Divided we Stand

Every religion has evolved through two movements, namely revivalist, and progressive. A revivalist movement emerges in a backward and intellectually bankrupt society where political, social and economic problems appear to be unsolvable, and disillusionment and disappointment set in. In these circumstances, the slogan of revivalism is raised by a cleric or a policy maker to regain past glory.

Instead of creating a new system and producing new ideas and thoughts, a revivalist movement attempts to bring back the past model to solve problems of the present time. Revivalists believe that the past model of religious teaching is still relevant and would work miraculously to reform society.

On the other hand, progressive movements emerge in a society which is in a process of development and needs a new interpretation of religion. But such a movement requires intellectual creativity to readjust religion to the changing situation and justify its advancement in various social and cultural aspects. In this way, revivalists and progressives contradict each other.

One adheres to the past as an efficient model whereas the other creates a new system by re-interpreting religion. Religious movements do not convert the majority of society and appeal only to a minor section which consequently becomes a sect that strictly follows its teachings.

Every sect then tries to assert its identity and attempts to preserve it by not integrating with other sects and communities. Each sect views the other with suspicion, condemning the other group's teachings as irreligious and misleading. As a result of sectarian interpretation, religion no longer remains a monolithic faith. Divided into different units, it serves the interests of different groups. In fact, this keeps religion alive and workable.

However, each sect is threatened by the majority which condemns the formation of sects and adopts a policy either to reconvert them or crush them. When it becomes difficult to survive among the majority, they retire from the centre and take refuge in the periphery where they can follow their beliefs without interference.

In Muslim societies, the Druz are perhaps the best examples of those who chose to live in the mountainous area to live far away from central authority. In Christianity, the Amish sect living mostly in the United States follows their own

teachings based on medieval times and a lifestyle that does not involve modern technology. In the US, the Amish have survived due to democracy and their own geographical location available to them. They enjoy rights as a community to observe their own teachings which does not conflict with the constitution.

In the history of the subcontinent, we have an example of Mandarin movement in the 15th century. Its founder was Sayyed Muhammad Mahdi Haunpiri, who claimed to be the Mahdi in 1490. He wanted to purify religion from pollution and revive its original teachings. Historians are perplexed about the emergence of this movement at a time when there was no crisis that led to such a radical, reformist movement.

A group of historians argues that it was the product of the political and social circumstances when Muslim states were insatiable and threatened the existence of the surrounding Hindu states. Moreover, as the Sharia became weaker in India the Muslim community was in danger of losing its identity.

Rizvi extensively worked on this movement, and he believes that during this period there were Sikander Lodhi (1489-1517) in northern India and Sultan Mahmud Shahbegra (1458-1511) in Gujarat, who were very powerful rulers and were not threatened by the Hindu states. However, he could not find the real cause of this movement. Perhaps the cause of the movement was more spiritual than political.

Its teachings required that the followers shun all worldly affairs and live in a *daira* (circle), where nobody should own any property. All members should share whatever they have with other fellows. It also emphasised on meditation and strict observance of the Sharia. The main motive of the sect was to create a community which would be virtuous and spiritually pure to become a model to other Muslims.

It had no political ambitions. It was difficult for other Muslims to adopt the rules and teachings of this sect and to abandon all worldly affairs, to share their wealth and property with fellows of the same religion and to live in poverty.

This confined the movement to a limited circle of disciples. As the followers were very zealous in matters of religious beliefs, they were hunted down by the orthodox *ulema* and the rulers. To escape from their wrath, the followers took refuge in Gujarat, Khandesh and Ahmadnagar but survived despite victimization; the movement still has some following in India and Pakistan.

When we study the history of religious sects we find that the majority regards a breakaway faction as a serious crime and makes attempts to bring it back to the

mainstream fold. This creates intolerance in society. Some sects prefer not to involve in politics and utilize their energies in trade and commerce and become a financial power.

Religious sects are a product of social, political and economic needs of a particular time. Many vanish after fulfilling their mission. This is how old sects disappear and new sects come into being as a demand of changing times.

## Knowledge Transformation

To maintain its hegemony and prevent any liberal and secular ideas from burgeoning, education in Europe was controlled by the Church during the Middle Ages. The purpose was to strengthen religious belief and realign history according to the teachings of the Church. This system of education known as theology or the study of divinity was used as knowledge to justify religion.

The Church severed all relations with knowledge of the classical period except where the ideas of scholars were relevant to the teachings of the Church. Aristotle's philosophy was adopted and Christianized by the authorities. As a result educated people focused on salvation of the soul rather than on changing the world in which they lived.

During the Renaissance period emerged a class of intellectuals known as humanists who aspired to change the system of knowledge by abolishing the outdated ideas of the middle Ages. Instead of theology, they developed the study of humanities where the focus was to understand man and his needs for knowledge.

This led artists, sculptors, scientists and writers to discover the human body and its beauty, Michael Angelo's David being an example. The human body, the physical being, no longer remained a punching bag as it was used during the middle Ages when many were tortured in various ways to accomplish salvation for the soul. In some religious sects, starvation and self-flagellation was practised to achieve spiritual blessing.

As the study of humanities changed the concept of the human body, intellectuals and artists now concentrated on its beauty and grace. Since diseases were considered enemies that damaged the body, medical science developed to cure diseases. Man desired longevity of his life to enjoy worldly pleasures and humanists wanted to free the world from crises and transform it into a place where man could live his life happily.

Humanists searched literature and studied the classical period of Greece and Rome. They found manuscripts in the libraries of monasteries where monks as part of their daily routine would copy classical manuscripts on parchment and carefully preserve them. Eventually, the skill of editing developed along with the new discipline of philology.

Authenticity of the original form of literary texts and written records was established and their meaning determined. Manuscripts were compared with others and insertions and additions marked. This raised the question that the Bible should also be edited for mistakes. By this time the printing press was invented which increased the circulation of books leading to the spread of knowledge.

Humanists believed that education could transform society. They introduced a new curriculum with rhetoric, mathematics, law, philosophy, philology, history, classical literature, art and music. A group of philosophical thinkers, known as the Sophists, emerged who concentrated on teaching rhetoric and undertook to provide a stock of arguments and present a case on any subject, or to prove any position. They had the ability to make the worse appear better and to prove that black is white.

The significance of the new education system was not to deny a universal truth but to understand its relativity. It was no longer targeted at pleasing a divine power to secure an exalted high position in the other world but to appreciate other cultures and celebrate life in this world. Previously, the purpose of history was to unfold the divine plan but according to the humanists, every period in history had its own characteristics, was interrupted by changes and had a beginning and an end. Instead of imitating classical periods of Greece and Rome, new knowledge was born.

The humanist's education system changed the social and political structure of the European society; it broadened vision of the people and opened them to new ideas. This foundation of humanities in the education system later introduced social sciences to study social problems.

Presently in our educational institutions, humanities and social sciences are neglected while natural sciences and IT are emphasised upon. But without understanding the human mind and society, it is impossible to respond to the challenges of time.

## Struggle for Independence

It is a familiar motif in history that powerful nations seek to conquer and occupy lands governed by the weak and exploit their resources. We find that sometimes the occupation is accepted under duress and sometimes the occupied people put up a strong and persistent resistance until they get independence.

In some cases, new countries came into being as a result of the decline of an empire. When an imperial power lost its control over its far off provinces, their governors, taking advantage of the weakness of the centre, declared their independence. When Alexander died, his empire was divided among his generals. The same happened in case of the Roman Empire. In this case, occupied nations threw off the yoke of slavery and declared their independence.

With the decline of the Abbasid Caliphate, new ruling dynasties emerged in the eastern and western parts of the Caliphate. In the subcontinent, when the Mughal dynasty declined, successive independent states of Awadh, Deccan and Bengal emerged. These newly independent countries achieved their freedom not as a result of a struggle by the masses but under the leadership of some dynasty.

The concept of freedom movements or struggle for independence or war of liberation is a modern concept which emerged against European colonialism where the masses stepped up the struggle and fight for their independence. To achieve this objective, people launched protests by going on strikes, doing agitation and boycotting the colonial administration. In some cases there were bloody clashes in which thousands of people sacrificed their lives for freedom.

The participation of the people changed the character of these movements. Under the banner of nationalism, all classes of society were united for one cause and people became politically conscious. These movements were sometimes led by individuals who belonged to the elite class but often individuals from the masses assumed leadership.

Sometimes the colonial powers could be persuaded to leave the country after negotiation but mostly they departed only after bloody clashes. Those leaders who successfully led nations to independence were revered as great men after their goal was attained and people looked to them to fulfill their agenda and build the new country on the foundations of peace and prosperity.

One of the models against colonial resistance is the war for independence fought by the 13 American colonies against England. However, instead of calling it a

war of independence, the Americans called it the American Revolution. In fact, in the truest sense it was not a revolution but a war of independence as it gained them independence from English colonialism.

After that, a new type of history came into being. Those leaders, who fought successfully against colonial powers, were given the status of 'founding fathers'. With it emerged the concept of 'birth of a nation' and a new history was written for the state. Its founding fathers were given a high place and elevated to the status of heroes while the history of the colonial period was ignored because it was the history of defeat and shame. All those persons who collaborated with the colonial powers were condemned and those who resisted were remembered as heroes.

All newly independent countries, after the end of colonialism, used the phrase 'birth of a nation'. It shows the desire of new nations to write their history from point zero. It is a denial of the colonial past but sometimes a resurrection of the pre-colonial past and its heritage.

Keeping in view this background, when we analyze the history of Pakistan, we find that it did not come into being as a result of the people's struggle but through negotiations. Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah said many times that Pakistan was created by him and his typewriter or his steno. Later on, the Muslim League took the credit for the creation of Pakistan and excluded the role of the people.

However, following the accepted tradition, we have our founding father or fathers, and the birth of a new nation. There is, however, no denial of the colonial past. On the contrary, there is a pride in inheriting its institutions such as the legal system and the bureaucracy. The older generation speaks nostalgically of the British rule when there was rule of law and peace and prosperity. However, we hesitate to recognise the pre-colonial Indian past as our own.

Every year we celebrate Independence Day as a joyous occasion without any real understanding of it. On the contrary, people are asking questions about the very concept of independence and the historical struggle. Some believe that after independence from colonial powers there is a need to struggle against the continuity of colonial institutions. Without decolonizing the mind, there is no real freedom.

## Company Bahadur

In our earlier articles we have discussed the arrival of the English and how they set up factories in different cities of India in order to manage trade. The question is, how did a trading company, over the passage of time, become a political power? What were the circumstances which helped it to acquire a political status and gradually dominate the political scene?

It appears that in its initial phase the Company had no political ambitions; its only interest was to gain maximum trade concessions. However, Ram Krishn Mukarjee, in his book *Rise and fall of the East India Company*, argues that the Company had political designs from the very beginning and systematically interfered in Indian politics to gain advantage for its business. The Company required political influence because without this it could not get trade concessions; these in turn led to better profits which was the ultimate aim.

On the other hand, some historians disagree with this argument and point out that the Company had no intention of interfering in the political matters of India. It was not the Company but the Indians who forced it to get involved in politics. The rival political powers used it for their own advantage. The decision whether or not to support the ruler who requested help was taken by those officials who were present on the scene; they did not ask the higher authorities in London for their consent.

According to some historians, the reason which motivated English traders to look to the East for trade was that it was customary for the English to slaughter animals in winter season and preserve the meat with salt and spices. Spices were initially procured from Venice, whose traders had close contacts with the East. Later on the Portuguese and Dutch supplied these commodities.

When the new sea routes were discovered, English traders established their own trading companies for the spice trade. These companies were awarded charters by the government allowing them to trade with the East. There was no plan to occupy any part of the land.

During this period the term 'West Indies' was used for Indonesia which was the main source of spices. In India, Kerala and Mysore were the regions where spices were available. These two became the centre of English interest when, in 1623, the Dutch expelled them from Indonesia and monopolized its trade. The East India Company set up its factories at Surat, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai and



started to import cotton, silk, and textile. Later on it included indigo and saltpetre in its trade items.

In the 18th century, as the Indian rulers became involved in civil wars, they sought military help of the English and the French. This provided the Company a chance to interfere in Indian politics and demanded territories in exchange for their support. This interference was without any planning and no approval was sought from the authorities in London. Decisions were taken by those who were present on-the-spot. It was not feasible to get consent from London because, up to 1828, it took two and a half years to get a reply from England.

The conquest of Bengal was the first victory of the Company and it was not as a result of their military power but due to conspiracy from within. The Company was not interested in ruling directly; it wanted trade concessions and placed the candidate of its choice on the ruling seat, who was ready to accept its demands. However, this system could not continue and in 1764, the Company gained the rights to collect revenue from Bengal. This made it financially powerful and ultimately led to their political rule.

Some historians claim that the Indian conquests did not provide any profit to the Company and it always required loans from the British government. In 1828 it had to pay the government four million pounds. The government also wanted to keep the company away from war and conquest.

Robert Peel, the Prime Minister of Britain, instructed Lord Harding, who was appointed as Governor General of India, not to engage in any war but to promote trade activities. According to him, peace was more conducive than war for trade and business. However, those officers who were in India decided to engage in wars in order to get benefits for the Company.

Wellesley fought against Tipu and the Marhattas to defend the authority of the Company against the French. The British occupied Sindh to check the threat of Russia and subsequently had to fight two Afghan wars. Therefore, on the basis of this argument, one can say that, though all conquests were made unintentionally, they made the company a political power in the end.

## Response of Change

History is a continuous process where periods of calm stability are disrupted by phases of violent or silent change. In case of a radical change or revolution, the common people fully take part and sacrifice for a cause, believing that it will change their condition. If the movement for change fails, these people pay the price. They are crushed, slaughtered and massacred by the ruling classes. If the movement succeeds, the leadership excludes the common people and appropriates the benefits for their own class. To prove our argument, we will discuss the Reformation movement of Luther, Cromwell's movement against the English monarchy and the French Revolution.

When Martin Luther challenged the Catholic Church in 1517, he was asked to appear before the Imperial Diet and explain his position. Luther travelled from Wittenberg to Worm to attend the Diet and was surprised to find crowds of people gathered on both sides of the road to cheer him and express their support. Perhaps when Luther refused to recant his religious views at the Diet, the support of the people gave him courage and confidence. As most of the German princes also wanted to get rid of the Catholic Church and its hold over them, they also supported Luther. The Duke of Saxony protected him and hid him in a castle in defiance of Papal authority.

While Luther was in hiding he received news that the people of the city of Wittenberg had revolted against the Catholic Church. They smashed the statues and disfigured the paintings in the churches. Luther was horrified and immediately went to the city to control the riots.

Another result of his religious views was the peasant rebellion in Germany which was led by the followers of Luther. When Luther argued that the authority of the Bible was above that of the Pope, the peasants, on this basis, demanded equality and justice. It was such a widespread movement that it shattered the German ruling class.

Luther, at this stage, decided to side with the princes rather than the peasants. His decision was to convert the princes and not the people. He advised them to crush the rebellion with an iron hand. He condemned the peasants as hooligans and rabble rousers. The rebellion was quelled and Luther's Reformation became the 'Magisterial Reformation'. Three decades later, after the treaty of Westphalia, 1642, it was decided that the religion of the prince would be the religion of his subjects. The movement re-established the authority of the princes. The aspirations of the people failed to change their condition.

The war between the English king and the Parliament in the 17th century was a unique episode in history. That was the period when the roots of monarchy were very deep and to rebel against him was an act of treason. However, in this case, the parliament won and the king became a traitor. He was tried on the charges of treason and executed.

It was a bold step to deny the old historic tradition and set up, instead of monarchy, a commonwealth. This encouraged other groups to change society according to their views. Two groups emerged who demanded a transformation of the system. The Levellers demanded right of vote, annual election for parliament, religious toleration, end of parliamentary corruption and judicial reforms. The Diggers wanted to abolish private property.

The demands of both groups reflected the concern of the lower classes regarding the prevailing conditions and their desire to take advantage of the change.

Cromwell, who was the leader of the gentry's class, was keen to keep the wheel of change in his control and not to go beyond the interests of his class. He and his party were radical as far as it was in the interest of their class. When other groups wanted to continue the process of change, it was halted with full force. He crushed both Levellers and Diggers.

On 14 July, 1789, the people of Paris revolted against the king and demolished the fort of Bastille to show their power as well as anger. The bourgeois class was at the forefront of this revolution. The National Assembly passed the Declaration of Rights of man which, along with other clauses, gave guarantee of private property.

When the peasants revolted in the countryside and attacked the chateaus of the landlords and burned the documents which were against them, the Revolutionary government sent forces to crush these rebellions. Thousands of peasants were slaughtered to silence their voice. The bourgeois class wanted to keep the revolution under its control and called a halt to it when it fulfilled their interest.

The lesson of history is that people are always used by upper classes in case of revolution or resistance movements but never allowed to benefit from the shift of power that takes place as a result of their sacrifices.

## Religious States

Generally, domination of religion over politics is a result of weakness of the state and its institutions. When they fail to fulfill the demands of the people and become inefficient in protecting them against internal and external threats, the gap is filled by religious elements who claim they will establish a society based on justice and get rid of the corrupt political setup.

In such an eventuality religion dominates politics and uses it as a tool for the implementation of its practices. There are two types of religiously dominated politics: in one case, a ruler, in the interest of his rule and the stability of his dynasty, implements religious law and allows the clergy to play a leading role in the affairs of the state; in the second category, the clergy, after capturing political power, establishes a religious state and forces the people to follow their religious agenda.

Such religious states, whether they were founded in the West or in the East, basically believed that human beings could be reformed only by coercion and control over their actions. Therefore, to set up a purified society, strict and exemplary punishments were given on minor crimes. It was also believed that worldly rulers were corrupt and evil-minded, therefore, only religious scholars could rule with honesty and work for the welfare of the people.

One such example is the city-state of Geneva that was established by the Christian reformer Calvin (d.1599). After acquiring political power, he was in a position to realize his religious ideals. The first thing he did was to announce that those who were not in favour of his religious ideals should leave the city. Those who stayed back faced his rigorous disciplinary action on different offences, including excommunication from Christianity, exile from the city, imprisonment and even the death penalty.

On his orders, all hotels and guesthouses which provided sexual gratification to the guests were closed down. Those traders and shopkeepers who were found involved in adulteration or were cheating customers by selling less than the weight were severely punished. Vulgar songs and playing cards were prohibited. Care was taken that the Bible should be available at all important places. Those who were found laughing during a sermon were reprimanded; it was declared obligatory for every citizen to thank God before eating.

As a result of these strenuous laws, every individual and family in Geneva came completely under the control and supervision of the spiritual police of Calvin.

Punishments were severe and no one was exempt; once a child was beheaded for the crime of having struck his father. It is said that in a period of six years 150 heretics were burnt alive. The result was that the citizens of Geneva were soon fed up with this system and ended it by expelling Calvin from the city.

In the Islamic world we see this model in Najd and Hijaz where in the 18th century a religious movement erupted and soon engulfed the whole region. Its founder, Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahab (d.1792) launched a campaign to purify Islam of irreligious practices. Muhammad Ibn Saud, the founder of the Saudi ruling dynasty, was influenced by his teachings and made matrimonial alliances with the cleric's family. When one of the members of his dynasty, Saud (d.1814), defeated his rivals and established his rule he made the Abdul Wahab's religious ideals his state religion.

As followers of Abdul Wahab believed in revivalism and purity of religion, they demolished tombs, took away religious relics which were kept there and banned pilgrimage to shrines. The new creed wanted to revive the ideal society of early Islam by ridding it of what they considered innovations; they destroyed historical monuments of the early Islamic history only because people had emotional attachments to them and regarded them as sacred. They implemented strict rules and regulations for observation of religious practices such as praying five times and those who tried to avoid these were hounded by the police and forced to go to mosques.

This model inspired religious reformers in other Muslim countries and a number of movements emerged to capture power and reform society on the basis of religious agenda. In India, the Jihad movement of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid (d.1831) followed this pattern. To fulfill his mission, he migrated from northern India to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in order to establish his Islamic state. In 1827, he proclaimed himself as caliph and Imam.

He and his followers used all sorts of coercive methods to establish a pure and virtuous society. Mirza Hyrat Dehlvi, in his book '*Hyat-i-Tayyaba*' writes that Sayyid sahib appointed many of his followers on important posts with the order that they should force people to follow Sharia. However, some of these officers misused their authority and sometimes forced young girls to marry them. Some young holy warriors forcibly took away young ladies from bazaars and streets to mosques and married them, observe Dehlvi. Officers appointed to look after the peasants also misused their power and mistreated the common folk. The result was that poor and simple villagers became fed up with their presence. The officers, in order to assert power, declared anybody who challenged them *kafir* (heretic). If an official found somebody's beard not according to the declared standard, that man's lips were cut off as punishment. If somebody's *tahmad*

(simple cloth to cover up lower body) was longer than the prescribed length, his ankles were broken.

We have seen such models applied in Afghanistan during the rule of the Taliban, and in an altered shape in the Iranian Islamic state, which was established after overthrowing the Shah in 1979. Such states use all coercive methods to implement their own version of Sharia.

## Broadening Horizons

Politics is like a game of chess in which rival politicians use clever ways and means to outwit, subdue or eliminate their rivals for personal success and political domination. Generally, political parties in a democratic society are given enough space to play their role. If they are not allowed to raise their voice or to express their views openly and freely, democratic institutions become weak and this way one party establishes its hegemony over others.

A democratic society needs diversity, not tyranny of the majority. Rivalry between individuals who wish to assert their supremacy in the party either breaks the party into two factions or leads to the establishment of a new party. A democratic society demands space for an individual or a faction to act without any hindrance.

In our brief political history, there have been many instances where individuals have been denied the space to play their roles. In order to create space for themselves and their political agenda, they either retire or form their own party. When Gandhi arrived in India in 1919, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had earned the reputation of a secular, nationalist and an anti-colonial leader in the Congress.

Gandhi from the very beginning tried to sideline him, depriving him of space in the political field because both leaders had different views, which contradicted their agendas in the struggle for freedom. Instead of reconciliation and accommodation of Jinnah's position, Gandhi made attempts to exclude him from his top position in the Congress.

As a result, Jinnah was left with no choice but to join the All-India Muslim League and demand partition of the subcontinent.

However, even after partition, Jinnah did not tolerate any opposition. G.M. Syed, a prominent leader who promoted the Muslim League in Sindh opposed Muhammad Ali Jinnah's political demands. Eventually, G.M. Syed was punished by the ruling party and marginalized from national politics. Successive governments followed the same policy and labelled him as an anti-state politician who was against the ideology of Pakistan. Consequently, he became a Sindhi leader and raised the slogan of Jiye Sindh and Sindhu Desh. National politics hence lost a talented leader who could have played a constructive role in making Pakistan a strong democratic country.

Similarly, in the Frontier region, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his party was declared anti-Pakistan and excluded from the mainstream politics. Consequently, the slogan of Pashtunistan was raised.

The history of Bangladesh is another shining example. The most recent is Balochistan where disappointed and disillusioned young people have resorted to an armed struggle for their fundamental rights in the same way that Baghat Singh and his associates had turned to violence after finding no space to express their views.

It is time for us to learn a lesson from history. Instead of denial, views of all political parties must be accommodated and politicians must be provided space to present their ideology and be involved in active politics. This would deter violence and solutions could be found constitutionally.

Violence either from the state or political groups cannot solve problems. The declaration of individuals or parties as anti-state and launching action against them is a failed strategy which only results in more chaos and disorder. We must adopt a strategy to include rather than exclude political groups and thereby create a broader political space.



## Reason vs Faith

In 1789, the French Revolution not only transformed France but influenced Europe as well. What paved the way for the political revolution was in fact an intellectual upheaval by the philosophers in the mid-18th century.

The philosophers emerged and unleashed new ideas and thoughts to fight the existing, obsolete system where the Catholic Church dominated the society as well as the educational system right up to university level. The church had a department of censorship which decided which books should be read or banned. All institutions of the state and even the king followed instructions of the church. The Protestants and Jews were discriminated against and there was no religious tolerance in the society. Anyone who was not allowed Catholic was considered a heretic and was allowed a burial in the church cemetery. The body would be thrown in a pit outside the city with other Protestants, prostitutes and heretics.

The philosophes undertook the task to eliminate the influence of the church, religious intolerance and extremism on the basis of new knowledge produced by the thinkers of enlightenment. From 1750 to 1770, the philosophers led by Denis Diderot remarkably accomplished the publishing of 17 volumes of an encyclopedia, encompassing the existing knowledge of that time on all subjects.

Nearly a hundred scholars contributed articles on special fields and the demand was met with pirated editions. Other European countries followed suit and a number of encyclopedias were published, contradicting the church curriculum, and preserving knowledge and its interpretation in order to secularize the mindset of the people. More books and tracts were published on tolerance, freedom of expression and protection of basic human rights while condemning persecution of religious minorities.

A conflict ensued between the church authorities and the philosophers so that whenever new books were published, the church censorship banned them. As soon as a ban was announced, the book immediately became a best seller indicating the curiosity and advocacy of the public to know and learn the alternative point of view that violated the authority of the church. The philosophers tried to empower the political system by encouraging the rulers to become enlightened and treat their subject with equality.

As knowledge of enlightenment spread and the thought process of the society began to change, the theological faculty of University of Paris issued a declaration that the king had no right to issue an Edict of Toleration. Frederick II

of Prussia being a proponent of enlightened absolutism and a correspondent of Voltaire opposed the declaration along with other European rulers.

Concerned about the injustices of the Catholic Church, which he saw as intolerant and fanatical, Voltaire propounded that persecution in the name of God was sinful. His work supported deism, tolerance and freedom of the press.

Our society today faces the same issues of religious extremism and intolerance which have divided the society into different segments. Each sect accuses the other of being heretic and infidel and intense hatred justifies killing each other as a holy act while the society pays a heavy cost by suffering economically, socially, and politically. Sadly, there are no philosophers in our society to launch a campaign against religious extremism. Individual voices have failed to prevent religious bigotry.

The society is not yet ready to respond to enlightened voices and silently accepts religious extremism as a solution of their problems. Political authorities, instead of eliminating extremism, have decided to become a part of it. In the absence of any intellectual challenge to the forces of intolerance, how long can the society bear this burden and survive?

## The Persian Prowess

History collects documents and narrates events but cannot determine the truth behind events which is bound to change with the discovery of new sources and formulation of new theories.

Nietzsche believed that history may not tell the truth because perspectives change with social and political situations.

An interesting example in history is of the Persians whose representation has changed over time. Herodotus, in his documentation of the Greek wars with the Persians, favored the Greek point of view. He viewed it as a war between democracy of the west and despotism of the east. This binary contradiction still continues.

The differences between the east and west originated in the Persian and Greek wars in the fourth century BC. Although the Persians defeated the Spartans in the battle of Thermopylae, Herodotus described the heroic encounter of the Spartans, as a 'glorious defeat in history'. Later, many films on the subject depicted the Spartans as heroes and the Persians as cowards who defeated their enemy.

Another Greek historian, Thucydides carried this image forward and hence Western historiography inherited the false image of Greek victories against the Persians with a sense of pride. The tragedy being that the Persians had no tradition of history writing and their voice was never heard.

When Alexander of Macedonia invaded and defeated the Persians, he emerged as a great conqueror while on the other hand, the Persians suffered again because of their lack of history writing.

Nations suffer when they do not document their own history which presents their point of view. After the Greeks, the Persians were further humiliated by the Arabs who defeated them and occupied their territories. As Arabs dominated history, the Persian point of view remained absent.

However, after conversion to Islam but finding no equal status in the Muslim society, the national pride of the Persians was injured and they launched the sha'biyyah or nationalist movement in an effort to restore their lost status. They supported the Abbasids against the Umayyads and brought a revolution which integrated them with the Muslim society on the basis of equality. Once in power,

the Persians transformed the Arab Caliphate into the Sassanid Empire. Baghdad, the capital became Persianised with the introduction of court etiquette and festivals including Nauroz, the spring festival.

After the disintegration of the Abbasid Caliphate, ruling dynasties like the Ziyarids, the Saffarids, the Samanids, and the Ghaznavids which emerged in Central Asia adopted ancient Persian traditions and modelled themselves on the Sassanid rulers of Persia.

In India, Sultan Balban claimed lineage to the family of the legendary king Afrasiyab in order to legitimise his rule. During the Mughal period, Persian nobles would arrive in India seeking better economic opportunities and enjoyed privileges and high status.

Firdousi's Shahnama which traced the history of ancient Persia, giving them a historical identity became the Bible of Persian nationalism. It is regarded a sacred book for Persians and is found in every Iranian home.

Modern Iranian historians are trying to correct their historical image by presenting their point of view on the Persian and Greek war of the ancient period and the invasion of Alexander, who is now considered an invader as opposed to his Western image of a hero.

Historical identity is important for modern Iran. Tracing the roots of their ancient history and their contribution to human civilization indicates that they are a nation capable of sustaining crisis after crisis. Instead of relying on their image created by foreign historiography, they are writing their own history and have successfully changed their negative image as depicted earlier by Western historians.

In the modern period, surrounded by hostile neighbours and struggling against the imperial hegemony of United States, the only thing which supports Iran is their historical identity and national pride.

## Citadels of Culture

Institutions like universities, libraries, publishing and media houses, art galleries, museums, theaters, cinemas, cafes, restaurants, salons, and stadiums determine the character and individuality of a modern city.

As culture flourishes, these institutions provide values, customs and norms for citizens which gradually become their identity, differentiating them from the rural population.

Because of their charm and cultural richness, cities often attract people from small towns and villages to come and settle down in the favorable environment. In the words of Oswald Spengler, the German historian, they would prefer to die on the footpath of a city, than go back home to their villages.

Universities encourage students and teachers to discuss academic issues. Being centres of higher learning, the teachers are supposed to produce new ideas and thoughts to enlighten the society. At research facilities, scientists are busy inventing and improving technology which subsequently changes the society.

Social scientists formulate new theories in order to understand problems and complexities of society. The young generation absorbs new ideas while bureaucrats, politicians, and businessmen benefit from modern learning.

For literary figures like intellectuals, scholars and artists, café and salons provide platforms to gather discuss and disagree with each other. They publish their work in newspapers and magazines. Artists exhibit their paintings in galleries or museums, musicians organise concerts in public halls, while poets present poetry in public gatherings. All these efforts disseminate culture to a city.

Cultural institutions are not only financed by the state but are also sponsored by private organizations and individuals. In more advanced countries, cities have acquired fame because of their cultural institutions. Cities like Paris, London, Vienna, Berlin, Munich, Amsterdam and New York are reputed for learning, art and culture. Their libraries provide facility for research, their theatre groups stage thought provoking plays, the films industry produces entertaining as well as meaningful films, their museums display artefacts from ancient to modern times.

One can meet in these cities famous writers, film makers, actors and actresses, artists, and scholars. Because of these institutions, citizens have a deep sense of belonging and pride.

Based on the above analogy, our cities and cultural institutions are disappointing. Most of the cities have three or four such institutions which are in no condition to contribute culturally. For example, most cities have universities which do not produce any research or creative knowledge. There are no museums, art galleries, bookshops, theatre, music and dancing and as a result of this cultural poverty, people from small cities come to Lahore and Karachi to fulfill their desire for learning and knowledge, art and culture.

Lahore was once famous as a city of culture because of its educational institutions, publishing houses and literary circles. After partition, most of its institutions disappeared and film studios became deserted. Its cafes, hotels, and restaurants which were meeting places for writers and artists are no more. Its public libraries are in a bad shape. Its universities are no more centres of learning but a battleground for students groups. However, some literary organizations are struggling to keep the old traditions alive.

Karachi may have emerged as a centre of cultural activity after partition but is now torn with ethnic, linguistic and religious strife. There is hardly any space for writers, artists, and scholars to grow and enrich the society.

One can imagine the dire results of this cultural poverty. It is evident that in absence of cultural institutions, citizens turn to religious extremism and sectarian conflict.

Having no sense of belonging, the citizens do not protest when the cities are disfigured and distorted by construction of new plazas or by cutting trees. With the emergence of chaos and anarchy, culture is headed towards a slow death.

## The Slave Story

In the ancient period, there were different ways in which a person could have become a slave. Predominantly they were prisoners of war in addition to poor people who had to pay back loans to landlords, but were unable to do that and became slaves.

Philosophers and thinkers in that society did not condemn slavery. In ancient Greece, slaves were engaged for all kinds of work, including forced labour. Some of them were forced to work in silver mines where not only the working conditions were dangerous but the atmosphere was so polluted that they did not live for very long.

As the great Roman Empire was being built, a large number of prisoners of war were brought to Rome where the aristocracy forced them to work on their agricultural plantations. There were domestic servants in every noble's house.

They were controlled through strict administrative measures. If a slave was found conspiring against his master, all domestic slaves would be executed as a punishment and warning to others. Slavery continued in nearly all ancient societies.

When the Spaniards controlled South America, slaves were imported from Africa and slave trade became a profitable business.

Africans were captured either by rival tribes or slave hunters and shipped to the new world in the most inhuman and miserable conditions.

In every city of America there were slave markets where slaves were sold. Families would be separated and no kindness or mercy was shown by slave dealers and purchasers.

So far our source of information about slavery is based on several books by Western writers. In 1847, for the very first time, Henry Bibb, an African, wrote about his experiences as a slave and the maltreatment he suffered at the hands of his owners in a book, *Adventures and Narrative of an African Slave*. The version of his book was verified by his former owners. He wrote how he suffered pain, humiliation and insults. It became the voice of a person who was not treated like a human being. He described the laws, customs, practices and traditions that favored slavery.

Slaves were forbidden to read and write or to attend religious meetings. Their marriages were not solemnized by a religious person. Slave girls and women were physically abused by their masters. They worked from morning to dusk with only half an hour for lunch break. There were no medical facilities or sick leave. In case of death, they were buried unceremoniously. A squad of supervisors would force them to work by flogging them in public and insulting them. For violating rules there would be severe punishment. If a slave tried to run away from his master, gangs of slave hunters equipped with guns and hounds would chase him and bring him back for handsome awards.

Henry Bibb was born and brought up as a slave. He married a slave girl but wanted to become a free man. He succeeded in his first attempt and reached Canada which was under British control and where slavery was banned. He did not stay there very long but returned to Kentucky to take his family to Canada. He was captured and resold along with his family to another person.

He made another attempt to run away with his family but once again was captured and brought back. This time he was sold while his family was retained by the owner.

His last owner was an Indian chief who was kind and more human in comparison to his earlier master. After the death of his Indian master, he ran away to Detroit where he learnt to read and write, and hence wrote his experiences as a slave.

He launched a campaign and exposed the horrors of slavery and the brutal treatment of slave owners in the southern states. He failed to reconcile with his wife and daughter, so he remarried and started a new life as a free man.

Henry Bibb's autobiography depicts how African slaves were exploited and treated inhumanly. Although slave owners claimed to be good Christians yet they violated all Christian values and victimized their slaves. Henry Bibb's writing helps us understand the institution of slavery in America. It is not surprising that even the founding fathers of America did not condemn slavery as there is mention of it in the American constitution.



## About Face

Institutions and traditions are products of time and space. Before they deteriorate and become irrelevant by losing their utility with the passage of time, they should either be reformed or abolished.

It is the responsibility of the politicians, intellectuals and the ruling classes to understand the degeneration of a system and hence introduce reforms to reconstruct institutions on fresh lines relevant to time.

Machiavelli, the scholar of Renaissance, in one of his books, *The Discourse* also referred to as *The Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livy*, advised that the political system should be reformed every 10 years.

Following his advice, Thomas Jefferson, the American president suggested that the American constitution should be redrafted after 20 years.

Both Machiavelli and Jefferson believed in change as every new generation has its own aspirations and ambitions to fulfill. Therefore, traditions and institutions which have become obsolete should be reformed in order to confront new challenges.

However, each society has conservatives who are beneficiaries of the existing system and oppose any change or reform. On the other hand, the progressives who are not radical or revolutionary but capable of dealing with new challenges wish to see a workable system.

The industrial revolution transformed the English society and the middle and working classes emerged powerful and ambitious to play a political role in the society. Previously the privileged English aristocracy dominated the political structure and refused to share political space with the middle class. They opposed the Great Reform Act in 1832 which was a law that changed the British electoral system. At this stage Wellington and Disraeli, both aristocrats who belonged to the Conservative party, warned the House of Lords not to oppose as any hurdle would cause resentment and anger in the middle classes. The members of the House of Lords decided not to attend the deliberation and the bill was passed which opened the gates for reform.

The 1867 Reform Act was the second major attempt to reform Britain's electoral process. This extended the right to vote still further down the class ladder,

adding just short of a million voters including many workingmen and doubling the electorate, to almost two million in England and Wales.

In France, the privileged classes including the aristocracy and clergy refused to change the structure of the traditional society. A bloody revolution followed that shook the society and disconnected it from the past.

In Russia, after the death of Stalin in 1954, when his successor Nikita Khrushchev disclosed Stalin's abuses and crimes, some people were thrilled and others disappointed and disillusioned. However, Stalin's diehard party leaders made Khrushchev's efforts unsuccessful and the result of their conservative policy was that the system remained corrupt until Mikhail Gorbachev introduced reforms.

In the 19th century, revolutionary movements threatened European powers. Bismarck, the chancellor of Germany believed that before becoming the victim of a revolution, it was advisable to implement reforms to economically improve the working class. It was a successful policy that prevented bloodshed and upheaval and yet protected the old system. Most European powers introduced constitutional governments which enfranchised more people.

In the case of Pakistan, now is the time to realize that our feudal, tribal and bureaucratic institutions have lost their utility as indicated by the chaos and disorder in our society? As no attempt is being made to revamp the institutions, they are on the verge of collapse. The only alternative is to abolish them and build new institutions to fulfill the need of the time. It requires a creative minority with a vision to initiate the process of building a new system. The question is: do we have a creative minority? For without one, there is no hope to bring about a change in the society.

## The Lonely Crowd

In European history, the middle classes played an important role to transform the social, political, and economic structure of the society. Before the revolution in France, the aristocracy was on the decline but it persisted to continue its status and privileges on the basis of birth and family.

More than 95pc of the people of France belonged to the Third Estate. These were more than 24 million people including serfs, still bound to the soil, members of the middle class and peasants. The average person of the Third Estate being a peasant, servant, skilled and unskilled worker, doctor, lawyer, teacher, storekeeper and labourer, and hence the backbone of the country. They paid the largest share of taxes, had very few privileges, were excluded from active politics and barred to hold high offices of government and the church. Therefore, the main obstacle in their progress was the social, political, and economic structure of the state and society which was controlled by the aristocracy. The middle classes of France supported the revolution which led to annihilation of old system. At the peak of the revolution, the national constituent assembly passed the Declaration of Rights of Man and of the Citizen which protected the rights of the middle classes.

Following the defeat of Prussia by Napoleon in 1806, the middle classes wanted to reform the society in order to eliminate its weaknesses. Their policy was not to damage the institution of state but to get its support to implement changes in the society. A Prussian diplomat once said to his French counterpart that France brought the revolution from below, while Prussia was interested to change the society from above.

To the German intellectuals, the state was an important institution and instead of weakening it, they wanted to make it powerful. To Hegel, it was divinity on earth so the institution of state was used to transform the German society from above.

The Pakistani middle class received a setback after Independence when the Hindu and Sikh middle classes left as a result of communal riots. This void was filled by immigrants who arrived from various parts of India, along with the existing residual of the middle classes who heavily relied on state patronage. So unlike the French, their interest was to follow the pattern of the Prussian model to strengthen the state and its institutions. The Pakistani middle class therefore fully supported the state and its nationalism, which was based on religion and the two-nation theory which later on became the basis of the Pakistan ideology.

The process of Islamisation began in 1949 after passing the Objective Resolution. It reached its zenith during the dictatorship of Zia ul Haq, when the middle class apparently accepted it, transforming their lifestyle accordingly.

Religious extremism which subsequently took the society under its strong grip was welcomed by the middle class who enthusiastically displayed and demonstrated the observance of religious rituals. Women began to demonstrate their attachment to religion by wearing the veil and hijab. Even their everyday language adopted popular religious expressions like 'remember me in your prayers'.

Although, the Pakistani state has failed to solve the basic problems of society and brutally crushed all progressive resistance movements, there has been no active movement to destroy the state and its institutions. People either expect the army to rescue the country from disorder and anarchy despite the previous experiences of army rule. Or they hope that the judiciary would eliminate all corruption in the society, while at other times, democracy appears to be the universal remedy for leading the country towards progress and prosperity.

However, the middle class has not yet learnt a lesson and still prefers to stick to old, rusty traditions and beliefs. Due to its opportunism and hypocrisy, there is no hope that it could play a radical and revolutionary role in transforming the state and society. It will continue to support corrupt institutions of the state, follow the path of conservatism and prevent any enlightenment and progress. In short the middle class is responsible for preserving backwardness and extremism in society.

## Religion vs State

After the Edict of Thessalonica was put forth in 380, the Roman Empire officially adopted Trinitarian Christianity as its state religion and the Church adopted the same organizational boundaries as the empire. There were geographical provinces called dioceses, corresponding to the imperial governmental territorial division. The bishops, who were located in major urban centres as per pre-legalization tradition, oversaw each diocese.

Every village, town and city had a church that not only dominated the landscape but supervised and fulfilled the spiritual needs of the society. Christian rituals, celebrations and festivals brought people closer to its domain. The hierarchical organization with people performing their duties at different ranks was similar to state bureaucracy.

The clergy in every European country was loyal to the pope. A religious tax known as the tithe was collected from every country and sent to Rome. If a criminal took refuge in a church or monastery, the local authorities could not arrest him. Therefore, in its organization, power and influence, the church stood as a rival to the state.

The most powerful weapon of the church was to excommunicate any Christian who defied the teachings and authority of the church, irrespective of being a common man or a ruler.

There are many examples of how the church asserted its power. Ambrose, (d.397) the Bishop of Milan condemned the emperor who brutally crushed the rebellious town of Thessalonica in 390. When the emperor learnt about Ambrose's condemnation, he became furious and wanted to take action against him but soon realized that his popularity with the public would suffer if he opposed the authority of the church. Instead, Ambrose visited the church and apologized.

Henry II of England (1133–89) wanted to get rid of the pope's authority and appointed his close friend Becket (1170) as the Archbishop of Canterbury. After assuming the post, Becket changed his loyalty and recognised the pope as his spiritual leader. Henry in frustration ordered his knights to kill Becket. When the pope threatened Henry II with excommunication, he not only apologized but to confirm his loyalty to Rome, also went to the extent of being flogged in public.

The pope had spiritual and temporal power over Christian rulers, who expressed their loyalty to him. The dominance of the pope was challenged in 1517 when

supported by German princes who wanted to limit the power and authority of the pope, Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg.

The institution of a nation state emerged after the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648, bringing an end to the Thirty Years' War, which had drowned Europe in blood in battles over religion. This defined the principles of sovereignty and equality in numerous sub-contracts and in this way became the constitution of the new system of states in Europe.

The institution of the European state fully asserted its independence from the church after the French Revolution in 1789, becoming fully secular. It also took away education from the control of the church and made it national.

After the separation of church and state, the secular authorities were in a position to change its structure and established independent institutions for judiciary and bureaucracy. Religion no longer remained a hindrance in the formulation of policies. A state neutral in religious matters allowed freedom for other religions to function and flourish without state interference.

In the history of Islam, the relation between state and religion differed from Christianity. Since there was no church or the pope in Islam, it was easy for political authorities to control religious leaders and use them for their own nefarious designs. The *ulema* had no choice but to submit to the state, issuing religious injunctions or fatwa to fulfill the wishes of the rulers.

History shows that Muslim rulers maintained a neutral state in religious matters and did not allow the *ulema* to interfere in state affairs. Neither the Sultans of Delhi nor the Mughal emperors implemented the sharia. Alauddin Khilji (1296 to 1316.) is known to have said once that he was illiterate and did not know anything about religious law. His only concern was to take measures which would benefit the people.

Ziauddin Barani in his book, *Fatawa-i-Jahandari* writes that regulations to rule required adopting a manner of pomp and glory, therefore the sharia should be kept separate from politics. Moreover, as the vast Sultanate or the Mughal Empire included people of other religions, it was important to adopt secular policies that would deal with all of them on the basis of equality and justice.

The change occurred after decolonisation, when religious parties emerged in the Muslim countries, demanding implementation of religious laws.

Generally, politicians exploited religious sentiment and declared Islam as the state religion in order to win public support. This significantly weakened secular

and liberal elements and empowered the *ulema*, who barred the process of modernization and made efforts to revive old institutions and traditions to solve modern day problems.

Recently, Bangladesh took a courageous step to declare its state as secular, opening the gates for reform and change. It remains to be seen how many Muslim countries will follow suit.