

The great politician



JINNAH is the founding father of Pakistan.

But to Pakistanis, he was something more: he is their role model. A role model if only because of the principles he had owned up and practised during his long political career, and, moreover, because of the congruence of his behaviour pattern and politics with his professed principles throughout his public life. While Jinnah's own public life and political behaviour provide a role model for the rulers, administrators and politicians, he showed a remarkable perspicacity in identifying the problems that would be encountered in building up Pakistan as he envisaged it as a welfare state. The most critical problems confronting Pakistan today are, above all, those of law and order, corruption, nepotism and jobbery, and of greed, ineptitude, hypocrisy, and the insensitivities of those in power, whether in the government at various levels or in the opposition. On these problems Jinnah dwelt repeatedly during his tenure as governor-general, beginning with his August 11, 1947, address to the Constituent Assembly.

Now, consider how relevant are the following guidelines he had set out in that memorable address. i) The first duty of a government is to maintain law and order, so that the life, property and religious beliefs of its subjects are fully protected by the state. ii) ...

everyone...

no matter to what community he belongs, ... no matter what his colour, caste or creed, is first, second and last a citizen of this state with equal rights, privileges and obligations...

we are all citizens and equal citizens of one state.??? (This dictum in the present context should logically be extended to include various sects and ethnic groups). iii) ???... always be guided by the principles of justice and fair play, without any..

. prejudice or ill-will,... partiality or favouritism.??? iv) ???...

the evil of nepotism and jobbery ... must be crushed relentlessly ..

. Never tolerate any kind of jobbery, nepotism or any influence directly or indirectly...

v) ??? One of the biggest curses...

is bribery and corruption. We must put that down with an iron hand...??? This includes political bribery and corruption and saleable loyalty as well, which have corroded our entire political system and institutional structures, and have spawned the present political crisis.)In these precepts the one relating to united nationhood, being ??? equal citizens of one state???, with equal rights, privileges and obligations is the most important. Therein, he laid down the doctrine of a united, indivisible Pakistani nationhood, without any distinction of language, culture or ethnicity. During the struggle for Pakistan period, it is true, he had pronounced Hindus and Muslims as two major nations in the subcontinent and, on that basis, demanded a separate homeland for Muslims.

But with both the nations having attained statehood, there was a paradigm shift, and the two nations in the post-partition context were and are India and Pakistan. Jinnah was the first statesman to recognize this basic shift.

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Hence he declared Pakistan, which was and is multi-racial, multi-linguistic and multi-religious, to be a pluralist state, with equal rights, privileges and obligations for all its citizens, whatever their race, religion or creed.

He had invoked the Madinite model of statehood in his reply to Lord Mountbatten on August 14, 1947, and that model was based on the Misaq-i-Madina, which Dr. Hamidullah describes as the first written constitution in the world. The Misaq-i-Madina, promulgated by the Prophet (PBUH), had envisaged a pluralist state (articles 1, 2, 25-35, and 46), bearing in mind the multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-religious character of Madina, and its defence was made the collective responsibility of all its citizens (articles, 24, 44, 45a, and 45b).

Hence Jinnah's pluralist doctrine for Pakistan is, by no means, in conflict with his declaration of Pakistan being an Islamic democracy. And his pluralist doctrine continues to be extremely relevant in the context of the divisive forces and voices that have for long plagued Pakistan. As for those who, while swearing by democracy, opt for an authoritative style of governance, a phenomenon much too familiar in Pakistan, he warned, representative governments and representative institutions are no doubt good and desirable, but when people want to reduce them merely to channels of personal aggrandizement, they not only lose their value, but earn a bad name.

.. and it is possible (to avoid that) ..

. if we subject our actions to perpetual scrutiny and test them with the touchstone not of personal interest but of the good of the state.??? In the task of state-building, the bureaucracy plays a very vital role.

It helps build institutions, mans the administrative structure, provides continuity to the system, helps identify, diagnose, and find solutions to problems, addressing itself to the larger task of nation-building. Hence, Jinnah tried to define its role, duties and responsibilities, its do??™s and don??™ts. His exhortations to the civil servants are still very relevant. In brief, he told them that their duty is to serve the government ??? as servants, not as politicians???.; and to ??? act as true servants of the people even at the risk of (annoying) any minister ..

. trying to interfere with you in the discharge of your duties as civil servants???.; that they ??? should not be influenced by any political pressure, by any political party or individual politician???, but do their duty ??? as servants to the people and the state???.; and that they should ??? make the people feel??? that they are ??? their servants and friends, (and) maintain the highest standard of honour, integrity, justice and fair play???.

Simultaneously, Jinnah assured the civil servants security of service; he also admonished the politicians (and ministers) to ??? realize... how it demoralizes the services???. when they try to ??? influence this department or that department, this officer or that officer???.

And in doing so, such leaders and politicians ??? are doing nothing but disservice to Pakistan???. These pronouncements are in the nature of guidelines, delineating the first steps towards establishing a welfare state.

This we have ignored rather callously, to arrive at the sorry state in which Pakistan is today. Likewise, our political leaders have miserably failed to follow the principles Jinnah had scrupulously followed in his public life. The core principle he had stood for is that of clean, honest and unstained politics.

Even when he had established himself at the bar, he refused to enter politics until he had saved ??? enough???, so that he did not have to live off politics. To him, politics was not meant to secure power and pelf, but to serve the community and the country. He spent his own personal funds to finance his political activities (including travel, boarding and lodging). Even as governor-general, he set an example in austerity. Ispahani tells us that he cancelled the orders for a Lincoln (car) and for an aircraft because Pakistan could not afford to pay for them. For the same reason, he would not go in for installing a lift in the Governor-General House despite his old age. Also, he would see that the lights were put off before he had himself retired to his bedroom.

Finally, if we would own up and actualize these guidelines, Pakistan, in goodtime, could become a model welfare state, as envisioned by its founding father.