**The Parched Land of Promise**

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My land is parched by neglect while rivers raging destruction pass close by. These flow from the highest heavens but run wild. The streams have run dry because the land shifted and rivers were not harnessed. The once rich orchards were never pruned and don't fruit anymore. The flora and fauna died long ago; once jungles of concrete and asphalts twining like venomous serpents and grabbed lands blocked their flow. The foliage has drifted with howling winds that blow with the scorching heat into the arid desert. There the water is bitter and kills; the dry quicksand swallows everything but yet life thrives. The land of plenty and world’s biggest river system is parched, hostile and becoming inhabitable through infestation of vampires, leaches and pests that sucked its blood for decades.

The land of our combined dreams is a fertile valley whose gushing streams and rivers need to be tamed. The flowing disruptive magma needs to be checked.  The parched lands hungry for water will sprout and fill granaries. The virgin high mountains are like a mother ready to suckle its children. The milk flows with precious metals, minerals, jewels, emeralds and energetic elixirs of life.  Beneath our inhospitable desert lie the world’s oldest civilisations, lost river beds, black gold and treasures.

There is gold, antimony, copper, emeralds and diamonds that run right through the juggler artery. Thermal reservoirs and hydrocarbons remain untouched.  The treasures once promised and buried deep below are guarded by serpents and daemons that debouched from every corner of the world. Pythons are wrapped around every sinew around a nation that refuses to die. The plenty is denied because the land is under a curse by our own Voodoo.

Our body is torn, battered, decimated but alive and kicking.

Seventy years ago we witnessed the biggest and bloodiest migration to the land of promise. Like Moses the prophet, our father died too early. There was strife with a brief period when the flowers blossomed, the fields bloomed and the harvest was great. We drank from fountains and rushing streams and savoured grain and fruits that were aplenty. We shared our harvest with the world. Children from third world as far away as South East Asia, Middle East, Africa and Eastern Europe flocked to our schools and universities, We gave them free education and lodging. They learned from our latent talent and became tigers while the tigers in us were starved.

That is when tragedy struck. We became a broken family. The elder brother was pushed out of the house. Other siblings stuck it together with hope. We endured violence and bloody mayhem for four decades. Our once unpatrolled frontiers have become a nest of venomous creatures. They keep infecting our veins but we keep surviving.

Like the Psalm 42 of Prophet David, we are like the deer that, pants for water,

“I am standing here depressed and gloomy, but I will meditate upon your kindness to this lovely land where the Jordan River flows and where Mount Hermon and Mount Mizar stand. All your waves and billows have gone over me, and floods of sorrow pour upon me like a thundering cataract”.

But Moses had the Prophet Joshua who delivered Bani Israel from bondage. For seventy years we have chanted Jinnah’s dream and yearned for his Pakistan. The time has come and you must internalise the vigour of Prophet Joshua, organisational skills of Hazrat Umar and imagination of Hazrat Omar bin Abdul Aziz. You are our Godot the Greek legendary character who has arrived.

Kaptaan, we know your romance with the welfare model; the state that spread from Arabia to Persia, Balochistan, Africa and most of Europe; the state that educated Europe and contributed to the house of knowledge. There is an Abu Ali Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Ibne Rushd (Averroes) in many amongst you. Also remember that that state through the Covenant of St. Catherine promised more rights to Christians than even Muslims by the Holy Prophet’s own seal. It stated that “any Muslim violating any clause of the charter should be regarded as a transgressor of Allah’s commandments, a violator of His testament and neglectful of His faith”.

We know that the Lahore Resolution and Jinnah’s speech of 11 August 1947 to the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan is dear to your heart. We know that you are the one who dug it out and played it at Minar e Pakistan on 30 October 2011.

That’s when Pakistan turned the corner. The green over the red started to appear. Like our fathers and mothers, we were all there, old and young, fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, hungry, emaciated, teary eyed and full of hope. The journey to the Promised Land had begun.

Take us all, across the horizons and through the rainbows, infested ponds, peaks and valleys to the highest summit. Take us to our land of promise which is also your land of promise. We will endure the rigours, torments and poisonous darts to reach the cherished goals of humanity, egalitarianism and self-esteem. Together we will celebrate the unity of being diverse. Take us to Jinnah's Dreamland.

Your people are your biggest asset. They were given a decade and they changed the world around them. They are emaciated and deprived but will spring to life in an instance. Their battered body could never kill their resilience. They like you are survivors and high performers. They have evolved through generations of pre historic and Islamic civilisations with latent skills. They have ingenuity embedded in their genetic pool.

But please spare a thought for the martyrs and maimed of this journey, the body bags in Karachi, those killed by state brutality and terrorism. They were all your tigers who sacrificed their lives for our shared hopes. Remember them with names etched in gold through a monument on the hill top.

And remember, nothing is more effective than prayers and intercession. It was destined through prayers that you survived a disaster. It is prayers and prayers alone that propelled you to the highest. Our families are extended and when one suffers all help; when one benefits all offer thanksgiving. Your hospitals have healed the poorest of the poor from Pakistan and Afghanistan. They pray for you. Your universality educates the poorest but most deserving. They pray for you. Your successful interventions in disasters and calamities left behind many hands raised in prayers; for you who believes in help and not words alone.

Already, you have shown great forgiveness. Keep forgiving those who do not know what they do. But also put iron knuckles around the corrupt and those who pillaged the land.

Unlike the chosen 11, you now have a diverse and dexterous team of 200 million Pakistanis. Value each one of them. Their prayer will strengthen you and inject elixir in every sinew. Make Pakistan great and everything will fall in place. I have no doubt that the lost forty years will be reclaimed in the next five years.

Nahi hai naumeed Iqbal apni

khuste weeran se

Zara nam ho to ye matti barhi

zarkhaiz hai saqi

(Iqbal is not disappointed

by his parched field

A drop of water will give

them fertility)

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