**My thoughts on superannuation**

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The day of retirement comes with a mixed feeling of joy and sorrow. A recognition of your whole life work, and gratitude but with a soft note—your time is over! And life is all about letting it go, though not easy by any means. This day comes in the life of every government servant, barring few who either are forced out or leave for other pastures before time. Lucky are those who retire with honour and dignity and still have the energy and potential to be invited by other organisations who would love to take advantage of their experience and expertise. Some people opt to do some business and flourish. Those who call it a day, the night also befall upon them soon.
I started my journey in Civil Services on November 1, 1998 and it came to an end on April, 24 2022. Thirty-three years and five months, to be precise. The road from the start till the end was exciting, at times smooth but often bumpy, rough, and challenging. Enroute, I came across accidents, dacoits and messiahs. I often had to stop to replenish, take a break, rejuvenate and start again with a new resolve. There were temptations of breaking the red light but attached consequences, principally conscience, and my family travelling with me held me tight from breaking the rules. I was never a tortoise nor a rabbit but reached the destination every civil bureaucrat would love to arrive at.

In my formative years, I grew up as a happy going cricket player and satchel carrying schoolboy in the 70s and 80s of Islamabad. Earlier, I intensively travelled with my dad working for the foreign service of Pakistan. After graduation, my family moved to Karachi, and I did a Masters in a subject very close to my heart—Philosophy. Luckily, after passing a prestigious examination, I joined the batch of 16th Common of Civil Services of Pakistan and got into the Police group. My mother was worried. Maternal love feared her son would be booed or may die in the hands of a criminal.
However, delighted friends urged me to visit their homes in uniform with the blue strobe light to create an impression on their neighbours. This desire eventually faded, rather the appeal now was not to come with a marked police car, to avoid the impression of a raid or misdemeanour. During training, as we boasted of making a difference in a putrid system, I still remember my Commandant telling us, “The best among you will maintain the status quo, the rest will simply decline.” I leave it to my colleagues to judge where I stand. In the line of duty, I came across hardened criminals, terrorists, and shrewd thugs. On the other hand, I also found that there was no dearth of honest and pious people.

It was the wheel of fortune that brought me many prestigious appointments. During service, I always remained a strong proponent that the leadership must stand up. Betraying an oath taken on the day of joining and not performing when tasked with leading and managing is dishonesty, and intentional and intellectual dishonest behaviour must be condemned. When confronted with a wrong order, I used to ask the same in writing. Honestly, this technique earned me some ire of the authorities but saved me from many ills that were to follow afterwards. Policing was never an easy job. People from the outside see a lot of power with the police officer. They don’t see the vulnerability and external pressure being exerted upon them. I don’t remember even a single day when I did not receive a call from the power corridors for some Sifarish or an order to get aside from the right path.
To succeed, I profess that being a steadfast professional is the key. While progress has been made in many spheres, not all is well. Giving up is not an option. Rather, we will flourish by doing good deeds. Worldly wealth is the biggest threat to the civil servants. Few of us fall prey to this invite but many resist as well. My thoughts are firmly rooted in the notion that progress can be achieved through ‘rule of law’ and when ‘right is might’. Luckily, the police service gives you an ample opportunity to take care of the oppressed and stop the hands of the tormentors. Blessed are those who grab this opportunity and cursed are officials who by not following the righteous path earn the wrath of poor people and their Lord. I was fortunate to have energetic and professional subordinates and exemplary seniors who provided sage advice, always full of wisdom and sanity. In moments of doubt, sincere colleagues held me up. Inspiration quotes like “Live a life to make a difference”, “Hard work finds you good luck,” “The malice of wicked should not be allowed to be bolstered by the weakness of virtuous,” and to strive for seven out of ten in all you do in life kept me going. Today, as I sit back and ponder upon the days passed, it looked like the time passed in the blink of an eye. Life was breathtaking, filled with ups and downs. Thanks to my stars that the uniform of the police did not sojourn me from the quest of learning. “Yes, I’ve loved, laughed, cried, had my fill and share of losing.”