**Principles of good governance**

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**Random thoughts**

January 7, 2020

On the one hand, the batsman from the ruling team are unable to achieve a double figure score, while on the other hand, the players from the opposition team are hitting boundaries against the ruling team.

Governance in this country is in an appalling state. The promises made by the rulers have not been kept. The good governance practised during the eras of the caliphs is praiseworthy and worth emulation. In addition, as a guide ‘Siasat Nama’ by Nizam-u-Mulk Toosi is also available.

The universally acclaimed famous Persian poet, Shaikh Sa’adi of Shiraz, has given many principles of good governance in his book ‘Bostan-e-Sa’adi’, some of which are:

“I (Sheikh Sa’adi) have heard that when Khusro (Pervez) was taking his last gasp before passing away, he advised ‘Sharoya’ to remain steadfast to his commitments to the public and devote his full attention on the welfare of his people. Beware; never turn away from justice and fairness and from receiving counsel (advice), so that the public do not turn against you. The public is wary of, and hates, oppressive rulers. Stories of bad rule spread like wild fire and the faulty rule collapses in no time.

“The groanings of the helpless and the weak brings down the rule of despots and no amount of weaponry can protect them. You may have observed that the fire ignited by the sobbing of a widow burns the entire populace. Who could be a more enlightened ruler than the one who rules with justice? Because of the justice and fairness of your rule, people will pray for your salvation after your death. Good as well as bad persons have to leave this world; is it not better that people should remember you with good words?

“You should appoint God-fearing persons as your administrators to deliver justice. A pious and a sober person is an architect of the nation through his just deeds. An administrator who considers that exploitation of the masses is beneficial for the ruler is actually damaging to your rule. Affairs of the state should not be given into the hands of such persons.

“A bad ruler should never be encouraged; such a person should be banned from statecraft so that he does not hurt the public. You should never permit a despot governor to exploit people, and the arrogance of such a governor should be curbed from the very beginning. An emperor who hurts businessmen and entrepreneurs, actually forecloses the development and security of the state.

“When sane and wise persons hear stories of bad governance they turn away from such states and countries. If you wish to earn the good will (of the public), then look after businessmen and entrepreneurs and listen to the advice of counsellors. Elders and the community should earnestly look after tourists and travellers, so that the good reputation of the country travels far and wide.

“A state collapses fast when tourists are put to difficulties and inconvenience. It is better to protect yourself from a stranger, as a stranger can be an enemy in the garb of a friend. Do not punish a foreigner or a tourist who is a mischief-monger; it is better to extradite him from your country. It is better to send him back to his country of origin. Value your benefactors; it is impossible to deny their favours. Provide financial benefits annually and regularly to your servants who become old and indigents.

“If advanced old age prevents your servants from serving you any longer, do not deny them your kindness. I, (Sheikh Sa’adi RA) have heard that when Khusro refused to look after Shahpur (a painter and/or wrestler of that time) then Shahpur fell into bad times. Shahpur then wrote to the king: I spent my youth serving you; do not to drive me away, though I am not old. Delegate authority to someone who knows how to value a large-hearted person, as a large-hearted person is no threat to anyone.

“When an honoured functionary/administrator of the government indulges in cheating and deception, appoint a supervisor over him to keep an eye on his subordinates. And if this supervisor also compromises on honesty and integrity, then terminate the services of both. An administrator should be God-fearing. He should not be afraid of accountability before a court or be afraid of reprimand or of death.

“Distribute your wealth among the deserving and keep only a little for yourself and live off contentment. When you dismiss someone from his position or authority (as a punishment) then forgive his mistakes after some time. If you want your name to be remembered, then do not suppress the good deeds of your elders; disseminate their good deeds for all to know. The good achievements and deeds of kings who preceded you should be followed so that these are remembered after you are gone.

“Do not punish anyone on hearsay alone and without verification of the facts. Persons making a mistake without mala fide intentions may be forgiven when they seek pardon.”

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