**State functionaries**

BY A M I N V A L L I A N I 2021-02-19

PAKISTAN was created in the name of Islam. It is a divine gift and a sacred trust that Allah has bestowed upon us. Nobody should dare to betray that trust. Allah says: `O` who you believe! Betray not Allah and His Messenger, nor betray knowingly your trusts`(8:27).

The present Constitution, enforced in 1973, contains many Islamic provisions. As per the Constitution, the state is supposed to take essential steps to make Pakistan a welfare state, enabling the Muslim citizens of the country to order their lives in accordance with the fundamentals of Islam.

However, the state is yet to assess its role visà-vis the fundamentals of Islam.

The present government has floated the idea of making Pakistan in the likeness of the state of Madina. What could be the state of Madina in modern times? We can imagine the state to be just, God-fearing and above all striving for the welfare of all citizens.

The life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) provides fundamentals for a just society. If we study the hadith texts, we come to the conclusion that the state is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. The end is the development of a community of people who stand up for equity and justice, for right against wrong or, to phrase it differently, for the creation of such conditions as would enable the greatest possible number of hum an beings to live spiritually, morally and physically in accordance with the teachings of Islam.

This makes every citizen of Pakistan dutybound to make this country a welfare state in the Islamic perspective. However, the primary responsibility of making Pakistan a welfare state lies with the state functionaries.

There are thousands of civil servants all over Pakistan who are paid from the exchequer. They are supposed to help the state operate government departments. But all of us know well how the government departments are run in this country.

The state functionaries, in order to help people solve their problems, need to follow Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah`s motto of faith, unity and discipline in letter and spirit. They have to emulate best practices prevalent in the developed world, doing their job well without succumbing to any pressure which might come in the shape of reward, bribe, threat, dismissal or demotion etc. They are required to be sincere, neutral and apolitical, especially while performing their duties.

Contrary to these principles, it is very unfortunate that a perception is built according to which government departments are characterised by politics, procrastination, lethargy, bribery and waste of time. Generally, people have to face tremen-dous dif ficulties in most government departments in getting their work done.

There is a need to rejuvenate government departments with a sense of duty, discipline, devotion and service. If one visits a government of fice in some rural or urban area, one usually finds a lack of discipline, no one is on time, floors are dusty, while tables, chairs and other equipment present a pathetic picture. The government servants are often busy sipping tea, gossiping or discussing political matters unrelated to their functions. This indicates that their sense of duty has become quite weak.

State functionaries can make Pakistan a glorious state with their contributions, provided their sense of service and duty is strong and impeccable. Therefore, it is important that their training have a component of faith, unity and discipline with special emphasis on service and duty to the state.

Their selection and appointment should be based on merit. Only those should beappointed as state functionaries who have in them a sense of mission, dedication and service.

We do have some examples of efficient civil servants in our short history of over 70 vears -individuals who had demonstrated an untainted character in the service of the state. They have resisted all kinds of pressure, displayed exemplary courage and patience and if their stories are narrated, then every Pakistani will feel proud.

They were the true heroes of Pakistan and their role needs to be highlighted in the training component of civil servants. This will help those who opt for civil service as their profession. They need good examples of efficient civil servants to move forward.

In short, the civil servants play an important role in the service of the state. Pakistan can only move towards development and advancementwhenits functionaries areefficient in their dealings, skilled in their fields, honest in their character, sincere in their opinions, serious in their job performance and above all patriotic in their worldview.

They must deal with every citizen equally and with integrity, impartiality and objectivity. As responsible and honest servants, they would be remembered for many years to come for their services to the country. The writer is an educationist.

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