**Remembering my late father: Senator Abdul Rehman Malik**

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We had never imagined that the coronavirus, about which my father was the first in Pakistan to take notice—as the Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Interior, he was creating awareness among the people and had alerted the government about its devastating consequences on our society and economy—would one day take his life. He was the first who had called the meeting of Senate Standing Committee on Interior on an urgent basis when the pandemic broke out in our neighbouring countries and proposed a 27-point plan to counter coronavirus to the government. He also wrote letters to the United Nations Secretary-General, DG WHO and Mr Bill Gates requesting them to help Pakistan and other developing countries during the pandemic, while also pleading to thoroughly investigate the origin of coronavirus.
Besides four other books, he had also written one on coronavirus titled, “Coronavirus: A Threat to National Security” in a very short period. There was not a single issue of national and public importance—whether it was terrorism or any foreign conspiracy against Pakistan in FATF, the World Bank, and the IMF—on which my late father had remained silent. He always took the initiative to raise his voice for the country and the nation at every forum without caring for his life.
He wrote several letters to the FATF President about discrimination against Pakistan and the favouring of India and had charge sheeted Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his unprecedented crimes against humanity in Indian Illegally Occupied Kashmir. He wrote a book, ‘Bleeding Kashmir’ exposing Indian forces’ brutalities and the ‘Modi War Doctrine’ in which he elaborated on Modi’s war crimes and malicious intentions of pushing the region into war and terror. He had also written several letters to the Prime Minister of Pakistan urging him to take the case of war crimes in Indian Occupied Kashmir to the United Nations and the International Court of Justice (ICJ). He always stood by the oppressed people of Kashmir, raised his voice for them at every forum, and always participated in their protests. He said that seeing an Independent Kashmir, free from India’s cruel clutches, was the dream of his life.
Many friends, including family members, advised him not to speak so harshly against terrorists as they could target him, but he always dismissed our fears saying that terrorists are enemies of humanity and Pakistan and he can never be a silent spectator to their cruelty. He said that the night destined in the grave can never be spent at home.
His love for Pakistan was matchless and it was the most difficult time of his life that he spent away from Pakistan during his exile; the return to his beloved homeland, seeming like a distant possibility at the time.
After he retired from the Senate of Pakistan, the family urged him to spend some time with his loved ones and to get some rest, but he always said that he could never stop serving his country.
I have never seen such a generous and kind person in my life who had not the slightest hatred for anyone in his heart. He was always forgiving and did not teach us to despise anyone for any reason. In his long career, he made friends at every step, and in his legacy, he left us love, respect, care, loyalty, helping others, and generosity and left no hatred and enmity for us. Whenever we talked to him or asked him about his political opponents, my father used to say that his opponents were his strength, which never let him be lazy and always forced him to struggle hard, so that he could face them with grace and dignity. He used to advise us that instead of wasting time defeating enemies, use the precious energy to elevate yourself, and that way you will have more positivity, less animosity, and more peace and happiness in your life.
Once, he said that only the weak think of revenge against their enemies. He always forgave those who spoke against him, those who made false accusations, those who did evil behind his back, and those who pulled his leg but rather always stood by those who asked him for help. He loved and respected people of every religion, sect and race and was a great messenger of interfaith harmony for the promotion of which he had taken many initiatives. He always spoke for the rights of minorities, of women and of every subjugated section of our society.
He was not born with a silver spoon in his mouth and was proud of his relatively humble beginnings. Whenever he met students from various universities of the country, he would mention his unprivileged background and always taught them to believe in their capabilities and hard work with dedication and devotion. He used to tell us about the difficulties he had faced as a student and his daily struggles as he was a self-made person. Despite all difficulties, he worked tirelessly to obtain a master’s degree in statistics from Karachi University and began his career at the same university. The same university later honoured him with an honorary PhD degree for his services to the country and as a pride for its alumni. He was a man who believed in constant struggle which led him to achieve the highest position in the politics of Pakistan, bravely overcoming all challenges.
He had, in the last year of his life, started the Institute of Research and Reforms (IRR) , a non-governmental body, with the aim to bring about social and economic reforms for the betterment of the common man—a legacy, which I will now carry forth.
My father’s devotion and respect for Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto were beyond comparison. Whenever we remembered the time we had spent with her in exile, tears would well up in my father’s eyes. My father stayed steadfast with his leader Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto during the long exile, and they were highly excited for their return to their beloved country. However, on the day they returned, they faced a huge bomb blast near Karsaz Karachi, in which hundreds of PPP workers were martyred. Our father used to tell us about his memories associated with Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and her mother Begum Nusrat Bhutto as he, then Director FIA had also investigated the murder of Shahnawaz Bhutto, a detailed account of which can be found in his book.
For my father, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was his leader, his sister and his mentor, and during her exile, he left no stone unturned in her service, assistance, and care. My father had reserved his residence in the UK for the party’s political activities where later she signed the historic Charter of Democracy (CoD) with Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. Today my father is no longer amongst us and the whole house seems empty, devoid of his energy and zest for life. A vacuum that no one could ever fill. It is strange to us but we feel we will never be alone in his memory. In his legacy, he has left with us an undying desire to serve the nation, loyalty to the country, adherence to Bhutto’s philosophy, compassion for the poor and needy, raising our voices for the oppressed and standing with the truth which we, my brother Umar and I, will carry forward. We are grateful to all those who gave us love and support during this difficult time of our lives