**Love thy State, not the Individual**

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Pakistan is a postcolonial state with inherited legacies of a colonial mindset, harbouring some of the prejudices developed during that time, including love for the person instead of the state. This marker of Pakistani identity has harmed us as a nation more than it has served because it proved a significant hindrance in strengthening state institutions and pooling together the diverse energies of the Pakistani people into a nation, especially a state-loving nation. Even seven-and-half decades after its inception, we still blame each other for not becoming or making Pakistani a nation and still thinking in regional or provincial terms rather than national. The recent years and its political paradigm added fuel to the fire and are about to pave the way for further polarization of society. In contrast and leaving aside the colonial heritage, almost every major state has turned into a robust national discourse for its people and the country. For example, look at the US, inhabited by people hailing from multiple geographical tracts and socio-cultural setups who still love America and have proved themselves to the lovers of their state in all kinds of circumstances. The same is the case with China, Russia, Canada, and Australia.

Pakistan came into being in 1947 after passing through a tumultuous political struggle involving the sacrifice and struggle of so many. Still, unfortunately, we have not been able to honour those sacrifices and struggles because Pakistan is a glaring example of a polarized state where people do not pose a joint front as a nation for the love of the state. This polarization is further deepening and scattering its roots among the youth because of the fiery speeches of the political parties to align significant vote support, but they forget the young mind being trained for violence, hate and intolerance during the whole process of access to power corridors. This youth would be the following controllers and managers of the state. If today, we fail to induce love for their state in their minds, they would be a sorry picture of a society where individuals become more muscular than the state and love for the state fails to yield its fruit and dividends. In reality, the role of the politician should have been to unite the country for the love of the state because they do command a vantage position when the persuasion of the young is a matter of need.

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It is high time that these tendencies should be curbed, and we should learn to love our state by respecting and honouring the institutions that make a state. Literature can significantly generate the spirit of love for the state and the state institutions. Literature should be written in the national language and regional and international languages and should be read throughout the country. This literature must remind us of our forefathers’ sacrifices and our national heroes’ contributions to Pakistan. It should be compulsory that the children at the school level are made familiar with the stories about our past and present with a colour of love for our country. Besides, we must learn harmony with diversity which can go a long way toward creating a sense of nationhood and love for the state. Literary and cultural even should have more frequency and variety, and access to these events should be easy and comfortable. The same is the case with the games and sports events which may provide healthy competition with the spirit of sportsmanship and comradeship. Legislation and implementation of people-friendly laws and policies should be ensured for equality, and the state should give equal opportunities for participation in national development and progress.

At the politico-social level, we must shed our prejudices for the national cause and democratic values to promote love for democracy. The state can be further strengthened by providing platforms for healthy debates and discussion instead of fiery and hateful speeches dividing the already polarized society. This is the age of the fifth generation of war in which social media like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube are the weapons instead of the guns and their explosive powders because these weapons control the minds. The international conspirators are ever ready and constantly posing this threat to the integrity and honour of our state and the state institutions through malicious propaganda campaigns. The youth can be easily trapped in such a type of war. The only solution is to develop love and honour for the state to contain and manage such electronic war machines. Freedom to use these media can be made available with a sense of responsibility towards the state and society. Healthy criticism should be given space for the evolution of society. Moreover, cultural plans for upward “mobility” of the people and national “imaginary” at the national level should be popularised through the education of arts and humanities.

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