

NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN PAKISTAN THE ACTUAL NEED OF THE DAY

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I. Introduction:

Pakistan was sought for, and achieved in, the name of Islam at the cost of person and property of lacs of innocent Muslims — Men, women, children, young and old — of the undivided India. Pakistan is an ideological state. Its ideology becomes at once clear when one finds that this long and arduous struggle was directed not only to drive away the foreign usurpers and to get rid of the foreign yoke, but also to have a separate homeland for Muslims of the Sub-Continent where they could establish a true Islamic State so as to freely preach and practise Islamic way of life without any fear, within or without. Achievement of Pakistan was not an end in itself, but, rather, a means towards an end. The end was to establish an Islamic Society in the true sense.

II. Process of Ideological Transformation Of Pakistani Society

Since, achievement of Pakistan was not an end in itself but a means to an end, it was warranted that, as soon as the initial difficulties that this newly born state faced at the time of its emergence were overcome, its true mission of ideological transformation of the society into a unified nation, bringing all the ethnic groups nearer to each other, should have started in right earnest. But, unfortunately, for well over thirty five years, we have been only talking about our ideology and trying to define it, doing very little towards its actual implementation. The result was horrible. Generally speaking, the negative social forces at work, slowly and gradually, kept the people far away from adopting the true Islamic way of life on one hand, and on the other, the various ethnic groups with, more or less, distinct and powerful subcultures, could not be drawn nearer to one another. The young state had to pay a heavy price for it and lost one of its two wings within 25 years of its existence. This was due to national disintegration.

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One can easily observe that despite the stress that is laid on switching over to true Islamic way of life, the process of transformation is very slow. It is due to the sole reason that there is a vast difference and distance between 'What we preach' and 'What we practise' Our قول and فعل are poles apart. This attitude of difference between *saying* and *doing* is condemned in the Holy Quran. The Holy Quran thus addresses Muslims as:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ. كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ (ص)

(O true believers, why do ye say that which ye do not? It is most odious in the sight of God, that ye say that which ye do not.)¹

And it is termed in Quran as MUNAFIQAT (مُنافقت) that is hypocrisy and Holy Quran reprimands MUNAFIQEEN (مُنافقين) that is hypocrites, as:

إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِي الدَّرَكِ الْأَسْفَلِ مِنَ النَّارِ (نساء)

(Moreover the hypocrites shall be in the lowest bottom of hell fire.)²

The transformation of any society depends upon the transformation of the ethnic groups and individuals it is composed of. The individuals and groups influence the society and society influences the individuals and groups. The influence is reciprocal. All great events in the history of mankind have taken place because of the constant, continuous and selfless struggle and efforts of certain individuals, who, despite hindrances and handicaps, hurdles and hardships in their way, at last succeeded in their missions and attained their goals of reshaping their societies.

In fact, immediately after independence, re-socialization of our people in accordance with the injunctions of Holy Quran and Sunnah should have been started in right earnest. It was the time when the people belonging to different ethnic groups, but gathered at one platform in the name of Islam and Pakistan, would have easily accepted the desired change. In high spirit as the people were, the process of re-socialization would have been much easier and rapid. The factors and forces responsible for accomplishment of re-socialization and national integration would have then worked effectively. The process having been considerably delayed, it is very difficult now to get rid of the multifarious negative forces hindering it. Old habits die hard. Our society is engulfed in so many vices. The traditional values of Patience, Forbearance, Gratitude, Sympathy, Simplicity, Honesty and Piety have all received a heavy set-back. Greed for accumulation of more and more wealth, by fair means

or foul, has increased manifold. Fellow-feeling, Sympathy, Mutual aid, Co-operation etc. appear to have become relics of the past. Individuals' own interests are considered as superior and supreme to those of the society at large. In such a state of affairs, a great deal has to be done to augment and accelerate the process of Islamization to bring about firm national integration in Pakistan.

III. Nation, Nationality, Nationalism and National Integration Defined.

The Dictionary of Sociology (edited by H.P. Fairchild) defines *Nation* as "a nationality that has achieved *the final stage of unification represented by its own political structure and territorial establishment*. A nationality may exist without political identity or state, may exist without harmony of nationality. *The true nation is probably the most stable and coherent large scale human group yet produced by social evolution.*" The *nationality*, on the other hand, means: "A human group bound together by specific ties of *cultural homogeneity*. A true nationality is animated by consciousness of kind and has a fundamental similarity in its mores. There need not be, and seldom is, complete uniformity in all cultural traits; but there must be conformity, or at least sympathy and cooperation, with reference to a number of the basic institutions such as language, religion, dress and ornamentation, recreation, moral code, political system, family pattern and ethical ideas. The essence of nationality is we-feeling. The members of a nationality feel a bond of sympathy to each other different from that they experience toward the members of another nationality. They desire to share a common life. This desire may not be realized but as long as it exists it serves to give reality to the nationality. The component units of a particular nationality may be scattered among various political units. . . a well-knit political unit may include several nationalities (i.e. Switzerland) and what is particularly a single nationality may be divided into two or more political units (i.e. Canada and United States). In other words, political unification is not an essential component of nationality. The term nationality may be used to refer to the group itself or to the culture complex that unites the group." *Nationalism* is "emphasis upon the realities and bonds of nationality. Any principle or doctrine which recognizes the nationality — or in practice the nation — as the basis for group action."³

Nationalism is first and foremost a state of mind, an act of consciousness. The nationalities come into existence only when certain objective bonds delimit a social group. A nationality generally has several attributes; very few have all of them. The most usual of them are common descent, language, territory, political entity, customs and traditions, and religion. The most essential element is a living and active corporate will. Nationality is formed by a decision to form a nationality. The Muslims of the un-divided British India, therefore, by an overwhelming majority decided and gave a verdict to form a separate state and nation, Pakistan, despite the fact that they hailed from different ethnic and sub-cultural groups. Pakistan was not achieved for economic benefits but solely for Islam.

Integration means 'the social process which tends to harmonize and unify diverse and conflicting units, whether those units be elements of personality, individuals, groups or larger social aggregations.'⁴ National integration, therefore, is a process of harmonizing and unifying diverse and conflicting units of a nation.

IV. Ethnic Groups In Pakistan and Their Relations

In Pakistan, there are five major ethnic groups differing, more or less, in their local or sub-cultures, languages, folkways, but having common values, common morality, common philosophy of life, common ideology, and existing and flourishing within the framework and under the domain of a common Culture i.e. Islamic Culture and above all, tied up with the bond of Islam.

Sociologists hold that the ethnic groups are characterized by *Ethnocentrism*. Ethnocentrism is "an emotional attitude which holds one's own group, race or society to be superior to other social or cultural entities, combined with contempt for the outsider and his ways." (H.P. Fairchild)⁵ It is that view of things in which one's own group is the center of everything and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it." (W.G. Sumner) "It is an assumption, often becoming a conviction, that the values, the ways of life, the culture, of one's own group are superior to those of others." (Samuel Koenig)⁶ In other words, "it is a belief that one's own group, race, society and culture is good, normal, right and superior to other groups, culture, society and race that are inferior, wrong, abnormal and bad." (Chaudhry M. Iqbal)⁷ Experts maintain that every group, small or large, primitive or civilized, past or present,

is ethnocentric, while, it has a positive side to it, in that it is an important factor in the preservation of the group, particularly when the group's existence is threatened, it must, on the whole be considered as *a menace to society. It is at the root of the group antagonisms and prejudices.*⁸

Careful observation and analysis of the major ethnic groups in Pakistan would reveal that, as is the universal characteristic of ethnic groups, they are *ethnocentric*, and which is natural. One who may deny this fact, will only be denying corrective or constructive measures to bring about maximum harmony and co-operation among the various ethnic groups in furtherance of national integration.

When various ethnic groups come into contact with one another, there is always a process of acculturation. The process of acculturation may be slow or rapid, which depends upon the degree of the intensity of social interaction, sympathy, toleration, and co-operation shown by the interacting groups to each other. "Acculturation is a preliminary step to assimilation. It takes place when one cultural group which is in contact with another appropriates or borrows from it certain cultural elements and incorporates them into its own culture, thus modifying it. Contact between two groups inevitably affects both. Although there is usually one group, the culturally 'weaker' which does most of the borrowing from the culturally 'stronger', the latter is far from passive, taking over elements from the former as well."⁹ In our case, every sub-cultural group is "culturally stronger". Consequently, the process of acculturation is slow.

Assimilation is the final product of social contacts. In any continuous contact between two cultural groups, acculturation is a natural and inevitable result. If such contact is between two numerically unequal groups and if the culture of one, particularly of the smaller group is the "weaker", assimilation of the weaker to the larger and "stronger" group is inevitable, provided that the contact is close and the conditions are favourable. While certain factors facilitate, others retard, assimilation. Among the factors facilitating assimilation are: toleration, equal economic opportunity, sympathetic attitude on the part of the dominant group towards the minority group, exposure to the dominant culture, similarity between the cultures of the minority and dominant groups, and amalgamation or inter-marriage. These factors are listed by Gillin and Gillin. On the other hand, the factors hindering assimilation are isolating condi-

tions of life, attitudes of superiority on the part of the dominant group, excessive cultural and racial differences between the two groups, and persecution of the minority group by the majority group.¹⁰

When the process of acculturation is retarded, assimilation, which is its final product, cannot take place, and the ethnocentric attitude becomes stronger ultimately resulting in Prejudice. Prejudice **تعصب** is the product of Ethnocentrism **عصبيت**. A sense of domination, whether real or imaginary, by one group over the other, gives birth to Prejudice. Prejudice may ultimately cause conflict, or the groups may remain in the state of *Contravention* — the social process intermediate between competition and conflict — the state in which social relationships are characterized by hidden animosity or hostility towards, and uncertainty regarding, the person, group or issue involved.

Ethnocentrism in Pakistan, whether real or superficial, may be seen in the form of *Provincialism*. We are Muslims first and Muslims last, when the criterion for identification is religion. We are Pakistanis first and Pakistanis last when the criterion for identification is the nationality. We are anything else afterwards — Punjabis, Sindhis, Pathans, Baluchis and Urdu-speaking — the groups so called and identified because their mother-tongues are Punjabi, Sindhi, Pushto, Balochi and Urdu respectively. A careful observation would show that diversity of languages is not at all a barrier in assimilation. In fact, the critics of any language, would themselves be found fluently speaking that language, or at least, trying to speak it. Programmes in regional languages and regional cultural shows telecast on P.T.V. are equally enjoyed by all ethnic groups. The inter-mixture of various races over the centuries cannot allow any race or group to claim racial purity. Thus the element of common descent for national integration may be ruled out. No such claim exists here. Thus, process of assimilation is not hampered on account of different descent. Holy Quran does not encourage superiority of one ethnic group over the other on the basis of language or descent because their existence is only for identification. The Holy Quran thus says:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا

(O mankind: surely We have created you of male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. AL-HUJRAT: 11)

The Holy Quran makes it clear and tells that among these ethnic groups, only the group which possesses TAQWA (تقوى) is the noblest,

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَىٰكُمْ

(Surely the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Al-Hujrat:)^{1 2} Taqwa is, therefore, the only basis of inter-group integration and consequently national integration.

We have common territory, we have common political entity, we have common religion. Inter-marriages are also taking place among the affluent and educated class belonging to different ethnic groups. In spite of this, the various ethnic groups have not come so nearer to each other as to facilitate assimilation. The social process of accommodation may be said to be governing the inter-group relations. What is, then, the factor retarding assimilation? It is definitely not the non-existence of common mother-tongue; it is definitely not the superiority of any one sub-culture or ethnic group, and it is definitely not the sense of racial superiority. All Muslims are brothers to each other.

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ

(The believers are but a single brotherhood. Surah: Hujrat)¹³ Similarly no one is superior to other on the basis of caste and colour. The Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (peace be upon him) in his address at the Last Pilgrimage (حجّة الوداع) said:

لَا فَضْلَ لِعَرَبِيٍّ عَلَىٰ عَجَبِيٍّ وَلَا لِعَجَبِيٍّ عَلَىٰ عَرَبِيٍّ - وَلَا أَحْمَرَ عَلَىٰ أَسْوَدٍ وَلَا لِأَسْوَدٍ عَلَىٰ أَحْمَرَ

“There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab and for a non-Arab over an Arab; nor for a red-coloured over a black-coloured and for a black-skinned over a red-skinned except in piety”.¹⁴

Thus, in Islam there is no room for superiority of one group over the other on the basis of colour and caste. This checks any sort of exploitation of one group by the other. However, there exists a feeling among the groups that each one of them is being economically exploited by the others. This feeling may be real or imaginary, and it is for the sociologists of the country to thoroughly investigate into it. Equality and equal economic opportunities are very essential for the purpose of national integration. Inequality, injustice and every kind of exploitation give birth to ill-feelings, misunderstandings,

prejudice and enmity. But Islam teaches us to refrain from misunderstanding prejudice, disunity, separation and enmity. as the Holy Prophet of Islam Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him) says:

أَيَاكُمْ وَالظَّنَّ فَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ أَكْذَبُ الْحَدِيثِ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا تَحَاسَدُوا وَلَا تَكَاذَبُوا وَلَا تَبَاغَضُوا أَوْ كُونُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِخْوَانًا“ صحيح بخارى - كتاب لآداب.

“Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the worst of false tales, and do not look for the others faults and do not spy, and do not be jealous of one another, and do not desert (cut your relation with) one another, and do not hate one another, and O Allah’s worshippers! Be brothers (as Allah has ordered you).” 15

Quran and Sunnah have laid repeated emphasis on unity among the believers. Thus Quran says:

وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا (ال عمران)

(And hold fast, all of you together, to the cable of Allah and do not separate.) 16

And in Surah Al-Imran (ال عمران) it is said:

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وُخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

(And be not as they who are divided and disagree in the matters of religion.) 17

Holy Quran also lays emphasis on Justice. It says:

إِعْدِلُوا - هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَى (مائدة)

(Do justice which is nearer to Taqwa.)

V. Conclusion

Thus, it is by practising Islam in letter and spirit that the various ethnic groups can be brought close to one another, which will ultimately bring about highest degree of national integration.

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9. Samuel Koenig, op. cit., p. 272.
10. Samuel Koenig, pp. 273 & 276.
11. Sale, *Koran*, p. 499 & Marmaduke Pickthall, *Quranic Advices*, p. 40.
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13. Sale, *Koran*, p. 498, *Pickthall*, *Quranic Advices*, p. 37.
14. *Tarikh-e-Yaqubi* (Arabic), Vol. II, p. 110, Shibli Noamani, *Seerat-un-Nabi* (Urdu), Vol. II, p. 192.
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