

THE SLEEPING NATION

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A serious and humorous outlook of a land called pakistan

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The PM of Pakistan was standing at Mens Store deciding would he look better in an Armani or Versace Suit. His English Instructor was due at his residence at 10 Am. Of course speaking English would be instrumental in passing him as an educated man and help deliver him from the scathing reviews of those damn Journalists who would suggest that he was illiterate and uneducated. Right now choosing these expensive suits would help boost his image as being someone trendy and fashionable. After all when he met foreign dignitaries and rulers from other nations, he had to look smart and trendy. Right now he was accompanied with over fifty commandos to protect him lest some person decided to take him out. Already he had imported a bullet proof mercedes vehicle. Infact all the ministers had followed his suit. You never knew when someone would try killing you. As he came out of Mens Store after purchasing about three Armani Suits and four Versace Suits he emerged out of the store with the commandos shielding him from either direction. He looked at pride at the seven toyota pickups filled with armed commandos ready for any eventuality. He would be heading back to his palatial residence where his english instructor would be ready for him.

His schedule included an hours instruction in english which would be followed by a visit from his excellency Roger Odumbo, the PM from Kenya. Just the other day he had met the President of Congo. Why couldnt he be graced by the visits of Presidents and Pms from America or those European countries. Surely those would boost his image and popularity amongst the people. Any way, he was looking forward to the photo sessions and his being able to address the journalists in English. Prior to any of his meetings, he would often have hairstylists and image consultants working with him. He also had to rehearse the delivery of his speech. On some occasions, he had bungled up and read the wrong speech out. And those moments had embarassed him deeply.

He had been lost in deep thought and contemplation when the damn mobile phone rang out. It was the President. Oh what did he want now? Was it another one of those damn terrorist attacks? When he picked up the phone, the President spoke out in his typical broken english asking him how he was. The PM had replied that he was quite well. "So why have you called me up?" the PM asked the President.

"Well I am pretty scared, my astrologers have forecasted my death due to the biting of a poisonous snake" he replied and "I dont know what to do".

"Well you must hire a number of snake charmers who ensure that if there are any snakes about your palace, they should be removed?" replied the PM.

"Now that is a brilliant idea Gillani" barked the President. "Thats why you are the PM".

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As he studied the newspaper, he read articles which had lambasted the corruption of the government. He had been labelled as an incompetent fool and the President as the King of Corruption and Dacoits. But he had become immune to these remarks. For the first time in his life, he was getting a large share of the pie. He had welcomed the numerous businessmen and their bribes for giving them various favors. Of course he was a true and conscientious Muslim. Ah ! Life was sweet for him and his family. He did not care what happened to the masses or to the country. Everything was there for the taking.

It was at that moment the other mobile rang . This time it was the hotline. Oh its Pentagon. And at once he was alert and when he picked up the phone it was the CIA head informing him that they were about to make another drone attack somewhere in Waziristan. " No problem sir" he replied " I am but a humble servant to you" . PM Gillani was only sorry to hear that it wasn't the US President or Vice President.

Faraway in his billion dollar bomb proof palace, the Pakistani President sat alone in his room hidden from the public and the world. He had hired a double to address the stupid masses. Using teleconferencing and skype, he would often address the members of his political party. At the moment his palace was swarming with snake charmers trying hard to find the bloody serpent that an astrologer had predicted would kill him. He had handpicked his guards and was paying them large amounts of money to ensure that he was not shot to death like the governor Salman Taseer had been shot to death by his own security guard. Life had become difficult. He had also a professional taster who would check all the food served for poison before the President had a morsel of food. At the moment, though he was in the confines of his palace that sprawled on 22 acres of land, he was wearing a bullet proof vest. He had put a call through to the Swiss Banks and was ensuring that his ill gotten wealth was intact. He had been wheeling and dealing a long time now. Though he had been declared mentally ill and unstable by the American Newspapers, the intelligent Pakistani race had voted him in. It had been unbelievable.

Now a man notorious and named Mr. fifty percent by the international media was at the helm of affairs in the country. Playing corruption corruption had been easy in a country where the people were greedy and blatantly corrupt and without character. The masses were naïve, submissive and easy to mislead and deceive. Now the slogan of roti, kapra and makan, had been replaced by electricity, gas and employment for the ruling political party. Using fancy advertisements, empty promises, lies, deceit and treachery, they had nearly completed five years of democratic rule; of course in the garb of democracy, the landlords, industrialists and tribal leaders, had looted the national exchequer and mismanaged the resources. They had evaded taxes and looted Billions of dollars and yet the people had remained quiet and submissive. It was their silence that had allowed the government to carry out its heinous ambitions of destabilizing the country. Of course their wealth and properties lay abroad. In case of civil war, they would soon fly away to foreign lands. Who would stop them? That he was illiterate had not mattered for half of the sitting ministers were like him. Only they had fake and forged degrees and certificates. A President and minister needn't be educated to lead a nation. That's what President Gardari thought.

Faraway in the city of Lahore and within his own Palace, the leader of the opposition, Mr. Nawaz Sharif sat reminiscing about the times he had been at the helm of the country. Hanging from the walls of the palace were

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pictures of the late General Zia Ul Haq, who had handpicked him as the Chief Minister of Punjab. In another corner hung a picture of him announcing the testing of the Nuclear Bomb. It had been a feather in his cap. However times had changed and the country was reeling from social and economic problems. Of course because he had never thought beyond power and wealth, he had never used his brains for improving the condition of the people. Of course he was devoid of the capacity to think for there was no brain, only brawn in his case. The fat from eating too much chicken, mutton and fish had clogged his brain and the grey cells that helped with cognition and thinking had gone haywire. He spent most of his days eating the numerous food dishes that his chefs prepared for him. Eating for 45 minutes a day and then sleeping in the afternoon devoid of the problems that the country faced was not a taxing occupation. In the confines of his RAIWIND palace with 500 commandos and security guards at his behest, the Sharif family lived like Kings, Queens, Princes and Princesses.

Mr. NawaZ Sharif and Shahbaz Sharif were striking off the days on their calendar. They had been pretty busy distributing laptops amongst students, money amongst the people in their constituencies and upon projects that did nothing to alleviate the suffering of the 65 million people living in abject poverty suffering due to the lack of access to health, education, proper drinking water and other facilities and amenities. Neither had they done anything to alleviate the suffering of the local industry due to the massive energy crunch and crises in the country. And yet they wanted to be voted into power.

Mean while in the main port city of Karachi, local political parties were busy battling it out on the streets to gain a control over the octroi in the city. As a consequence terrorism and bloodshed was uncontrolled in this city of lights. The land mafias and political institutions were all involved in using militancy to gain a control over all criminal activities that could be used for generating money and terrorizing the common man. There was a lack of political will to bring peace to Karachi, Baluchistan and NWFP. As a consequence, spiralling violence, terrorism and bloodshed had become a normal routine thing in the country. The country was plagued by sectarianism, a Baluchistan seperatist movement, the incursions of Taliban in NWFP and much more. There was chaos, disorder and lawlessness.

In Baluchistan, Sardar Raisani sahib, the Chief Minister of Balcuhistan, sat drunk and intoxicated in his bed room. The television was on but he couldnot make sense of the news flashing on the tv screen. Hazara Shias had been massacred ! But he was too drunk to do anything. And even when he had regained his senses and he learnt what had happened, he was undecisive. Baluchistan was a dangerous place to be at right now and none of the politicians or bureaucrats were willing to risk their lives. So even though it was freezing cold outside and the relatives of the dead Hazara Shias had refused to bury their dead unless governor rule was applied in the province, it was 72 hours before a politician named Imran Khan showed up. It showed the character of the local politicians in the country.

Meanwhile PM Gillani nearly had a heart attack when the international newspapers broke the news of his son being caught trying to smuggle a banned narcotic into Australia. The local newspapers and media channels soon lambasted him and then he received a call from the President Gardari to step down.

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Ah, it was immensely painful. After all, he had been looking forward to wearing those Gucci and Armani Suits. And his cherished dreams of speaking English before dignitaries from USA and Europe had suddenly vanished.

And soon another corrupt politician named Raja Pervez Ashraf who had been formerly been the country's Minister for Water and Power in the country was crowned as the next Prime Minister. It did not matter that he had been involved in numerous corruption scandals.

Faraway a young man who was an honest officer of the National Accountability Bureau had been gathering and piecing together damning evidence which would damage the Presidency. And before he could present it, he was murdered and it had been presented as suicide. Like always the facts had been distorted and the case hushed up. The penalty for speaking out the truth was a sentence of death in this God-forsaken country.

The only institution in the country that was functioning properly was the apex court of the country namely the Supreme Court of Pakistan. And the honorable Chief Justice, had stood like a solid rock and helped check the corrupt ways of the politicians, bureaucracy, businessmen, industrialists and the police.

A Mercedes bearing the Pakistani flag was followed by a convoy of vehicles which included two more Mercedes vehicles, three police vehicles filled with armed commandos, an ambulance and a fire brigade vehicle. Of course the PM was making his way back to his residence in Lahore. As usual all the traffic on that route had been brought to a standstill so that the PM and his entourage could move without delay on their way to their destination. It did not matter that it was a hot summer month when the temperatures regularly touched 40 degrees Celsius and beyond. It did not seem to matter that people were made to wait 40 minutes or more. No one seemed to note the birth of a child within a rickshaw carrying a pregnant woman stuck in the traffic.

Pakistan had four provinces, Punjab, Baluchistan, Sindh and NWFP. Each one of them had their own share of problems and the people had been divided into various castes, races and religious sects. There were sentiments of provincialism and sectarian violence was being fanned by power-hungry illiterate mullahs. None of them was on the true path of the Quran and Sunnah. Lip service paid to the religion and a lack of understanding and application of the commandments of God as given in the Quran had turned the people into liars, hypocrites, turncoats and indisciplined and intolerant men and women. Infact Shirk was being practised by many men and women who prayed to saints to help them in their lives. Others had turned to rascals practising black magic and men pretending to be spiritual beings. Evil of every sort and imagination had spread through the length and breadth of the country. The people were turning to astrologers, black magicians and numerologists to guide them and help them. Usury and feeding on interest is prevalent in the country and despite the fact that God mentions men and women feeding or offering interest as His enemies, the people have turned a blind eye to His Commandments. The intermingling of sexes and dating, adultery, homosexuality and consumption of alcohol is not allowed in Islam and yet today there is a section of the society that practises this in the name of modernism and personal freedom. Most shopkeepers and businessmen are guilty of hoarding food items which is also not allowed in Islam and yet it is prevalent in this society. Therefore the hypocrisy within this nation is of labeling themselves as Muslims without practising what has been commanded by God. Of course

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it is for God alone to judge whose a disbeliever and who is not. However the prevalent character of the average Pakistani leaves much to be desired. The concepts of honesty, humility, tolerance, discipline, patience, tawqa and fear of God and patience seem to be missing in the society. It is as a consequence of a misplaced value system in the society, that today the nation is being ruled by men and women deprived of basic human values or a consciousness. And it is wrong to criticize politicians alone for the kind of country, Pakistan has become today. Quranic Hadith also suggest that the people of a nation will be ruled by the type of men and women, the society is made up of. And in Pakistan today in my many interactions with common men, there is an inherent feeling that it is okay to take bribes and to be corrupt if that is what is needed to run businesses in the country. Therefore if that is the case in this country, why do we call ourselves an Islamic nation for Islam and Quran forbids bribery as well as all social evils. Infact the Quran and Sunnah ask individuals to strive against evil in all its form and this striving against evil in all its forms is also called Jihad or striving against. Therefore there is no wonder that today the country has arrived at a point in time that it has become a hellish abode for its residents.

It is quite certain that if the current status quo remains in the country, there might not be a country in the near future. Even great civilizations and nations were destroyed by God when the people became arrogant, when they started practising evil and when they turned away from the commandments of God.

So why do we expect miracles to happen in a country where the people suffer from spite, arrogance and jealousy. They cant bear to see the other person prosper. Therefore in such an environment where social and moral corruption is rife, how can there be any progress. Most movie shops sell x rated movies to people regardless of their age. In such an environment where sources of immorality are many, what sort of characters would our youth have? With a majority of the youth illiterate or unable to find jobs, what sort of a future awaits the youth who form sixty percent of our population of 180 million people. Ours is a country where the teacher does not occupy a important position and nor are they paid salaries commensurate with their experience and the volume of work they have to do. With over 30,000 ghost schools in the country and a thousands more where the facilities are not proper, the educational system in the country is in direstraits. When you dont make education a priority, and spend barely 2 percent of the GDP upon it, how can you change the future of the nation or its masses.

The country lurches on grappling from multiple problems which if unsolved can spark a crises. One of those issues concerns lack of government spending on the health sector and the rampant corruption in this sector. There is only one doctor for over 1500 patients in the country. Apart from that there are 600,000 quacks as well. It is disturbing to find that the local government hospitals suffer due to a lack of medicines, vaccines, a lack of necessary machinery, bad sewage system, lack of sterilization of instruments, general lack of cleanliness, lack of hospital beds, the callous indifference of senior doctors and much more. With lax regulations and checks and balances in the health sector, these hospitals have become centres for killing patients.

Our much vaunted textile industry that contributed towards a major percentage of the countrys industry today suffers largely on account of power outages, gas shortages and high cost of inputs. Quite a number of textile

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firms shut down due to the energy crises. Today the textile industry remains closed on 175 days out of 365 days. Thousands of laborers and qualified technicians lost their jobs.

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