

An Advice To Our Brothers In Jammat-e-Islami

The recent political drama in Pakistan gives us all a reason to think over the current political climate that has become all too familiar to the Muslims. Unfortunately, most Islamic parties and activists in the Muslim world have become impervious to the deceitful tactics employed by the regimes and parties who operate within the corrupt political system in the Muslim world.

The Supreme Court verdict in Pakistan may have surprised many among us, but what really lies beneath the mirage may unfold in due time. The restoration of the Sharif Government by the Supreme Court may perhaps be in the interest of those who benefited by the 'Guilty' verdict of the Supreme Court on the same issue involving Benezir Bhutto government, not too long ago!

Our focus here is not the recent political changes in Pakistan nor the verdict itself. We would like to direct our concern to the role that Jamat-e-Islami has been playing in Pakistani politics and the recent change of strategy it has employed in carrying its message to the people.

The experience of Jamat-e-Islami is not by any means a unique one, rather it is typical of all those Islamic parties who have chosen to participate in the system implemented in their region of work. Participating in elections, joining Ministries and forming alliances with secular parties has been a consistent plan of action of such groups. In the Pakistani context, it has repeatedly failed to achieve any of the intended objectives. Jamat-e-Islami in Pakistan has been unable to influence any of the political decisions. On the contrary it has always been used by either the ruling party or the opposition for entirely different objectives. For instance the support that Jamat-e-Islami extended to Nawaz Sharif when he first came into power was a mistake that the Jamat acknowledged several months ago. However the motive for supporting Nawaz Sharif suggests the 'reactionary' approach Jamat has been indulging in ever since its decision to enter the mainstream of Pakistani politics since the mid 50's. Jamat had maintained that what they aimed to accomplish by supporting Nawaz Sharif was defeating Benezir Bhutto from gaining power. Now it maintains that both Benezir and Nawaz Sharif are equally guilty and not worthy of its support. This was the reason for not voting into confidence Nawaz Sharif after his recent come back. The examples of the ever changing stance of the Jamat are numerous and well known. That is one reason that many Muslims have turned away from Islamic activists altogether...they see no difference between the secular and 'religious' groups who are engaging in a battle for power.

Jamat-e-Islami has now embarked upon a new experiment for the future. It all started with a highly publicized but not explicitly acknowledged group under the direction of Jamat-e-Islami known as the "Pasban". Its declared objective was to create a sense of awareness and popular support for the cause of Islam. Pasban engages in tactics that can be best described as street politics. From social work, folk dances to violent clashes, Pasban has defined a rare kind of Islamic activism...one that emotionally charges the masses without any sense of direction. After the recent come back of the Nawaz Sharif government, Jamat-e-Islami announced another experiment that is supposed to help promote Jamat's agenda in a secular environment. This new experiment is the 'Ittihad (alliance) Front'. The Front will comprise of all those who in a broad sense agree with the idea of a democratic/Islamic Pakistan. The membership will not exclude any but will be as well geared towards those who have the potential to galvanize enough support in future elections. The Jamat will then support such candidates from the Front by providing them its ticket to run in elections. The candidates in the Front may be secular or religious, as long as their reputation is not popularly tarnished. This time the alliance is not between religious and secular parties rather it is an expedient truce between secular/pseudo-religious individuals and the Jamat. What Jamat-e-Islami aims is to muster up a consolidated opposition at the expense of Islam. The Jamat has yet to realize the serious implications of this new venture. The Islamic revolution cannot come about by compromising with the secular forces or by recruiting people without changing their "Fikr" i.e., thought. The misleading concept of "Hikmah" (expediency) has led many of our Islamic groups far from the Sunnah of the prophet(saaw). There are no short cuts in the Islamic Da'awah and we should not try to seek them.

Jamat-e-Islami has erroneously allied with whoever lured them through empty promises. But this could have been avoided had the Jamat insisted on a firm stand of No Compromise. Moreover the mere participation in the political structure of a secular State such as Pakistan, has blurred the Jamat's view towards the State of Pakistan. The first mistake that the Jamat made was to legitimize the "Kufr" constitution of Pakistan, and until that issue is revised it is uncertain how much of Islam is the Jamat willing to give up. We at Ar-Raya sincerely advise Jamat-e-Islami to declare its withdrawal from the parliament and all positions of ruling. We further iterate that participation in elections for the purpose of sharing power with the secular forces should be immediately stopped, for that only results in compromises and unfulfilled promises. The brothers in the Jamat should focus on an intellectual and political struggle against the regimes and other secular elements in the society, instead of extending their hands from time to time towards the very enemies of Islam. The road to the establishment of Islam on earth is only one... that of the prophet Muhammad (saaw). It was not the prophet's way to join an un-Islamic government in order to implement Islam in certain aspects, such as the judiciary. The Prophet (saaws) refused the offer of kingship since it involved a compromise. The gradual implementation of Islam means the mixing of truth and falsehood which is impossible. The objective is not power for the sake of power. There is no meaning in establishing the authority if we deviate from the method of Islam.

Tauqeer Ansari

Ar-Raya Magazine, April 1993