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Intellectualism has not been our forte in Pakistan. We have neither encouraged intellectual debate, nor fostered intellectual growth in our country. We have always regarded the pursuit of knowledge with some disdain or with an attitude that it is a historical luxury that can wait till we have looked after certain other more pressing issues. What those pressing issues are, we as a society have not chosen to define, nor have we had those capable and learned men who could help place these diverse views into some perspective. In fact, we have never really emphasised the importance of encouraging intellectual debate on important issues regarding our sociological, political and economic development. As a result, the debate on our past, present and future has been conducted at a most superficial level.

It is difficult to ascertain the cases of any deep-seated intellectual streak in our society. It is an important question that needs an answer. Unfortunately, for a satisfactory answer, considerable intellectual effort and investigation is required. The lack of accomplished intellect and intellectual depth in our society precludes the possibility of an answer any time in the near future.

An unfortunate and important result of the lack of thought in our society has been the excessive use of slogans and facile reasoning. Those who have taken over the task of intellectual leadership, lacking the intellectual wherewithal, have profited from this superficiality. Very seldom, if at all, do they seek to define their terms or slogans. Nor do they attempt to fully explain their reasoning to pressure the leaders of our society to explain their reasoning. This superficiality has not been without a cost to us. In fact, it can be argued that we have suffered considerably because of our inability to focus on, understand and analyze issues.

The lack of intellectual depth has frequently allowed our leaders to blame all our ills on some external event or on our past. They have blamed imperialism, superpowers, previous governments who are always wrong, and vague concepts like various "isms" for all that has gone wrong in our country. No problem or mistake is of our own making and especially not of the making of our leaders except for when they are gone.

A leader or a government has to but make a claim and the media and all the so-called intellectuals do one of the following two things: those who seek to profit attempt to back the claim those who do not idly moan against the claim. Neither side will analyze that was said or ask the individual or the government to clarify or define the meaning of the statement. For example; nowadays it is fashionable to blame all our ills on the martial laws of the past. There are a large number of questions related to this issue that remain unanswered. What is the operational difference between the martial law government and the democratically elected government? Is the government working any differently now? Is it a more open government? Is it more responsive to the needs of the people? Does it have any more di-

rection? Is the lot of the people going to be better under the new government? Are the elected MNAs of the government very different from those that profited from the martial law regime? Is the new government any more responsible or less corrupt? Despite our many problems and despite the government's many mistakes, has the government or any minister shown any responsibility? These are some of the questions that come to one's mind. Perhaps others will add their won questions and some of the more learned may present us with answers.

Among the terms that we have used loosely, the most important is "democracy". We are all for democracy as is every right thinking man. Every leader in the world, both on the right and left sides of the political spectrum, has been for democracy. However, as any student of political thought knows, the definition of democracy has varied from one political thinker to another. For the Marxists, the socialization of the means of production was the cornerstone of democracy. They could, therefore, reconcile authoritarian party rule with democracy as both Mao Tse Tung's and Lenin's writing show.

In Pakistan, we have had much talk of democracy as if democracy were a religion. Ask not. Question not. democracy, though we know not what it practically means, is our deliverance. Claims are made that "once we have democracy, all will be well", "all our ills persist because of a lack of democracy", and "democracy means freedom ad responsible government". What is this democracy that will give us so much? Where, when and how will we get it? The only answer that our leaders of thought give us is that democracy is the casting of votes one every five years. The mere act of voting ensures responsible government. The elected government comprising mainly of the same old oligarchy that has aided and abetted dictatorship, with the aid of the degenerated colonial institutions, will be able to fulfill all our Utopian dreams. Elections alone are supposed to be a cure-all. When the elected representatives start their age-old tactics for amassing their personal fortunes and corrupting the system further, our intellectuals can only look on helplessly.

Pressure these learned columnists, lecturers, and thinkers further on a definition of democracy and all you will get is what our colonial masters taught us and taught us too well: "Westminster-style democracy is the only solution". The English parliamentary style government with wide-ranging powers for the Prime Minister is the only way to go. No matter that the English took centuries and many revolutions to evolve that system. No matter that that evolutionary process developed many 'conventions,' such as the disgrace associated with crossing the floor for personal gain. Of course, other systems of democratic government, such as the American and the French systems have nothing to teach us.

Taking their cues from such thinking, the writers of our constitution merely copied Westminster paying little heed to the need for developing further checks and balances to allow the democratic institutions to evolve and take root. Remember England has a system that is fully in motion having evolved over cen-

turies. We, on the other hand, have to start a new system. As any mechanical engineer will be able to tell our learned controllers of thought, the laws of motion tell us that starting up a system is harder than maintaining the momentum of a system that is already running. We have to jump start the democratic system and then try to warm up the engine so that it will maintain its momentum. As our friendly mechanical engineer will tell us, this requires considerable power and careful monitoring. You cannot just turn the ignition of election once and have a perfectly working system. Other safeguards and perhaps continuous and rapid ignition thrusts may be required. For example, might not quick, annual election for, say ten years at least, enforce more responsible behavior from the politicians. And could more constitutional amendments not be made to introduce a variety of checks and balances that seek to distribute power and not concentrate it, for concentration of power is indeed corrupting.

For this purpose, perhaps we can learn from the separation of powers and the checks and balances of the American constitution. We should learn from the mistakes that England made in evolving its system as well as those of others in setting up a system of checks and balances that produce responsible government. The learned mechanical engineer can teach us much. But will our pundits learn?

Even in the face of historical evidence, the priesthood retains its old ideas. Time and again we have seen that elections, as currently conducted, return the same individuals that have pillaged the country both in our democratic and non-democratic periods. Elections alone, have failed to produce responsible government. The methods of government, the law books, and the institutions remain unchanged whether we have democracy or not. Success has not been achieved after many attempts at jump-starting. Our learned mechanical engineers would say, if consulted, look to the design of the engine. The engine of democracy is often clogged by a legislature that time and again involves itself not with its principal task of legislation but with personal aggrandizement and childish games. Perhaps some institutional mechanism that forces disclosure of the politicians' financial and legislative assets can be devised to allow the population to be fully apprised of their representatives' growing financial fortunes and declining legislative value.

Perhaps, it is time we learnt from our learned mechanical engineer. Let us carefully look at our design of democracy and see how we can alter it to achieve a democratic outcome and not just observe democratic form. Let us seek to better our defence democracy and that which we want from democracy. Having defined the term and our objectives, let us consider the best means available to achieve those objectives. Only thus might it be possible to foster the development of an elected leadership more interested in delivering democracy and our society's objectives to us than in lining their pockets. We may all agree on democracy, but can we not disagree on modalities? Might not a debate on the modalities produce a better design for democracy?