

# POLITICAL LINEAGE & LEGACY

*—Where Ignorance is not Bliss...*

**The present trend of the political outfits is to resurrect the departed leaders, as though they promote the policies. The erstwhile leaders and freedom fighters had the National Interests alone in their minds, considering every citizen as equal beyond his religion, caste and wealth.**

**Dr. V. Aravind**

**L**eadership requires a special bent of mind, attitude and training to blossom like rose in a garden, first having learnt the art of adjusting with thorns. It is the willingness to risk the unusual, not to settle for the ordinary. Many lessons start even during family breakfasts on the dining table of the pioneer leader. India has inherited a rich legacy of political history, tradition, culture, democratic values in party politics as well as parliamentary democracy. Thanks to the forefathers of our Nation who sacrificed their lives, their families and departed the world as martyrs for the cause of freedom for the people and welfare of the Nation. Cellular jail in Port Blair and so many prisons and gallows in the main land stand testimonials of the sacrifices they made for the cause of freedom and democracy. The lessons they taught on party politics and parliamentary democracy imparting rich political culture, conduct, ethics and civility were burnt in their funeral pyre. In the name of hard earned freedom and democracy we tend to destroy democratic values, side-lining Nationalism and National spirit. It means that we are enjoying our freedom in excess without an eye on our duties. We still wonder at the unwritten constitution and excellent governance by convention and tradition in a parliamentary democracy functioning successfully elsewhere in the world. While mandating freedom to the people in our country, by the same token the code for duty,



responsibility and code of conduct should have been stressed and more so for the elected representatives.

A responsible opposition does not mean nor a duty cast upon it to oppose each and every move on the floors of the house. More frequently we witness unruly scenes on the floors of our Parliament and State Assemblies, leaving behind the legacy and ethics of the floor, making the international community raise their eye brows in bitterness, leaving a stigma. The parliament witnessed the most reprehensible occasion when it was threatened with stalling the proceedings till the demand was conceded. Such utterances rock the rights of the people, undermining

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people's interest, their very faith and the foundation of democracy itself. Who has the right to stall the proceedings of the highest people's forum in the country? Where, one is expected to deliberate on welfare of the Nation and the Society. Quite rightly it is said that "Democracy is for civilised people". It is the prerogative and right of any govt. to table its own bills, stand or fall on its own deeds. There could be votes against, walk outs, address through media or to the people. If the legacy of rich ethics we had inherited had been in place, this kind of a nasty situation could not have occurred. The unruly behaviour of any political party, thought as heroic actions, give a good feed for the sensation mongering media, more than the news value, counting on the vote bank politics in a vulgar sense. The entire house should have taken a strong exception to the happening; the courage to do so in a civilised manner and ethically comes only through fine political lineage and training.

The present trend of the political outfits is to resurrect the departed leaders, as though they promote the policies. The erstwhile leaders and freedom fighters had the National Interests alone in their minds, considering every citizen as equal beyond his religion, caste and wealth. The iron man of India Shri. Sardar Vallabhai Patel is drawn in to the arena now, a freedom fighter who lived as a congressman and died as a congress man with a totally secular ideology, secularism as propounded and interpreted in their times. If he happens to be alive, he would never tolerate the unruly behaviour and utterance in the house and outside the house when his name



is dragged in to the communal squabbles for political gains. A strong disciplinarian like the "Sardar" could have seen the concerned persons, out of the position in the houses easily as it was much easier for him to make kingdoms merge with Union of India. A party of a national stature caught in the complex web of religious orientation, lacking religious tolerance and has no credentials to prove its secular image in the correct perspective cannot ensure equality and equitability to the people. There is no internal democracy in such parties as it is controlled by another communal / religious organisation with no mechanism for transparent decision making or action, which can drown any of its upcoming or senior leaders at any time. Such kind of political parties can never give any good governance and can never question or comment upon the secular image, the decision making authority or the internal democracy of another party which is constitutionally and by performance secular in nature which has a similar constitution with that of our country. The oppressors lack proper political lineage, training and they never follow the legacy or traditions left behind by Veterans. The party politics has gone so mean to use emotional politics for vote banks and the constructive politics is left to the winds.

A political party though with a rich political heritage and a legacy of governance will be disadvantaged on account of its alliances with regional parties. If a party in the national level is non secular with religious orientation, the most of the regional parties become non secular on the ground of communal and linguistic orientations. Unfortunately in India the multi party democracy and the federal system has thrown the country out of gear in socio, politico economic development. Mushroom growth of regional parties, practically nonex-

istent in most states but in own states, with clannish and sectarian policies trying to dominate the national politics and the govt... Even if such alliances are welcomed to provide a stable govt., it results only in political compulsions to put up with the misdeeds of the alliance partners, often facing their threats of withdrawal of support to the govt., if their selfish political ends are not met, even by unlawful and unethical means. When such parties are accommodated in the cabinet the governance becomes more complicated and corrupt, spoiling the image of the govt. Most regional outfits do not have the national focus and the demanded national

spirit, essential for the national governance. Acceptance of people with criminal back ground will leave a stigma on the probity and honesty of the country as a whole. There cannot be a degree in dishonesty to accept people with less than two years of conviction.

There cannot be a greater bluff, than some of the political parties, most of them regional, organised a convention of political parties claiming to be secular, minus the Congress. They kept out secularism and the avowed constitutional values by leaving out the only secular political party- Congress, its inception in pre independent days. The unmistakable writing on the wall is their strong thirst for power and like any other opposition party now, they want power

at any cost, through media hype as well, sacrificing the national interests. India has seen the conglomerate of short sighted political outfits leaving no hope for the nation for they will have no common agenda for the nation but will only have own personal agenda.

The proper political lineage inculcating national interest and the welfare of the people is absent in the party politics today. At one time the power meant muscles, but in mod-

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ern democracy it is the support of the ruled namely the people support. If we have to accept the theory of "People Get The Government They Deserve", first we have to make the people deserve a good government, which can be brought forth only by a strong leader. Democracy can never be successful without a charismatic leader who has a political lineage and an inherited political legacy with proper training more than the academics and a will to serve the cause of the nation. A leader does not search for consensus; he brings about the consensus for a sound decision.

The leaders of the past especially who headed the govts. besides leaving a rich legacy of their political acumen, expertise and dicta for good governance, set themselves as examples for simplicity, accessibility, honesty, integrity, the spirit of nationalism and love for the country. They are to be emulated. Shri Lal Bhadur Shastri set an example for his simplicity, integrity and honesty. The political morality he followed left behind the governance dictum on moral responsibility for the elected office. Chinese aggression got in to his strategy for Border and National Security while he realised the importance of agriculture in Indian economy which left behind an agro based economic code for Food Security and Agro Economic Security, all in a stroke. There was an occasion when he surrendered a portion of his monthly salary, stating that it was an excess of his need, having seen some surplus money unspent for his household with Mrs. Lalitha Shastri. The persona left behind the car loan to be cleared by his wards after his demise. The Fiat car was purchased out of a bank loan marking a lien on his salary as Prime Minister of India. The same old Fiat car is kept in the Lal Bhadur Shastri Memorial at Delhi. Finally he died a martyr for the National cause, when he was on a National Mission abroad.

The magnificent political tradition, culture, political civility, eminence, efficacy, efficiency, honesty, simplicity and integrity are the rich legacies we have inherited from our great leaders. They were trained and acquired the political lineage from their predecessors purely because of their attitude and bent of mind towards the Nation. Right from Gand-

hiji, Panditji, Shastriji, Indiraji, Rajivji, all have left behind an astounding record of excellence in more aspects to be followed. They never failed to identify persons with good lineage for better utilisation of their qualification, training and talent for the betterment of the nation at various levels of the party and the government, throughout the country. They never recognised the strength of various groups or the caucus around them. They proved to be extremely successful. Now such values exist on paper.

Our own short comings and weaknesses in the pattern of party politics and styles of governance out of political compulsions affect the economic development of the nation in the global context. We miss much of foreign investments in to India, as foreign investments adorn the shores where there is congenial political atmosphere with disciplined party politics and governance with suitable environment.

In the National interest and a good polity in the country the political parties should retrieve the recognition for lineage and legacy by giving more impetus and find right people to right positions at appropriate levels in the party as well as in several tiers of the government. The congress even with a great tradition is no exception now. There are great number of people with such material to dedicate their services for the party and the nation.

Democracy is not a synonym for mediocrity. It is for blossoming of talent and merit from around. From the half a century of experiments with Democracy, we now understand that the law of equality is truly between persons endowed with talent and persons born, bred and trained out of the nest.

It is imperative that leadership cannot be picked from the copy book; leadership qualities – Indeed YES; it runs in the blood, as well. ■

*(This article is written and published as a sincere attempt towards restoring the recognition for political lineage, there by the value based party politics and excellence in governance pattern for the country but not to provoke any controversy or comments on the subjects discussed)*