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Save the Constitution and Freedom of the Country

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Conditions regarding Muslims are constantly deteriorating and moving towards the worst. Worrying news is reaching us from across the country. While Muslims are being lynched somewhere by the extremists of the majority community on account of their religious identity, at some other places Muslims are being forced to say, 'Jay Shri Ram', and if they don't oblige by saying so, they are beaten to death. Somewhere, during religious processions and festivals, Muslim colonies and mosques are targeted. In recent times, unaccountable incidents have taken place when during religious procession, objectionable slogans were raised against Muslims and the saffron flag was unfurled from atop the mosque's minaret. Leaders of extremist organizations are consistently spitting venom against Muslims, inciting their co-religionists to eliminate Muslims. The tragedy is that the law-enforcing agency, the police, is not acting despite the knowledge of such incidents. Several times the Supreme Court has issued its verdict against hate speeches. However, TV channels are always engaged in violating the atmosphere of the country and damaging social harmony. Some TV channels hold debates on issues that would create distance between Hindus and Muslims. Now, catching up with the media, the film industry is also bent on producing hateful movies. The recent past witnessed several movies based on Islamophobia, such as Kashmir Files, Kerala Story, and 72 Hoorein which top the list of this genre. These films were promoted at every level while these deserved only a ban. Another incident that occurred quite recently relates to the new parliament building when an MP spitted venom by abusing the Member of Parliament Kunwar Danish Ali and called him a terrorist. This is the worst example of a disgraceful and shameful event occurring in independent India. There is a long list of such incidents and its roots are ever-deepening affecting adversely the image of our country; it has impacted Indian history; social relations are getting spoiled; love is turning into hate; minorities are continuously harassed; centuries-old culture and civilization are being erased; country is suffering disgrace across the world; democracy and secularism are clouded with danger; people's trust in the Constitution of India is getting eroded; all these unhappy trends are dangerous for the country. For the development, peace, security, and prosperity of the country, it is necessary to restore democracy, trust in secularism and the Constitution, ensure equality among all citizens, and establishment of justice to accord with the law.

The Constitution of India is extremely comprehensive and grants equal rights to all citizens; followers of different religions are given equal status; there is no discrimination of whatever kind on the grounds of religion, caste, race, area, language, or region. The Constitution takes care of all the rights of minorities and has taken cognizance of the rights of Dalits, Adivasis, peasants, weaker, and all other sections. Therefore, it is the primary duty of all citizens to protect the Constitution, to

prevent attempts to change it, and to ensure its enforcement. Freedom, equality, justice, and fraternity constitute the foundation of our Constitution. If the Constitution is changed, citizens will be forced to live like slaves, even the worst, and shall have to experience difficult times. So, it is necessary to make efforts and strive hard to save the Constitution and freedom of the country.

The election offers the best opportunity to strengthen the democracy and secularism of the country, to save the Constitution, to assure the rule of law, and to promote freedom. The 2024 Lok Sabha election is close by. General elections are scheduled for next year. This election assumes great significance. So, it is necessary that we bring to power that alliance of parties which repose unshakable trust in the Indian Constitution, carries no secret agenda and has only one aim, which is the advancement of the people, the prosperity of the country, promotion of peace and harmony, establishment of justice and equality, and help fraternity grow. This is an important advantage of democracy that after the lapse of every five years, people get an opportunity to correct their mistakes by getting rid of misguided rulers and instead bringing those in power who possess the right temperament.

The 2024 election should be looked upon as a golden opportunity to elect appropriate rulers and reject the misled rulers. Therefore, the responsibility of all citizens, particularly the thinkers, intellectuals, and those in charge of different institutions is to make the best of such an opportunity and strive for the formation of a genuine government. At the present juncture, their responsibility increases utmost to play their role in electing a genuine government and save the country from passing into improper hands.

The 2024 election is very important. This is a significant historical moment. If the elite don't perform their duty in this election and hesitate to guide people, there is a fear that it would cause great damage in the future; people would be deprived of freedom, equality, justice, and fraternity. There are clear indications that the present regime might change the Constitution. So, it is the essential duty of thinkers, eminent persons, and intellectuals to reflect on and understand the present conditions; plans should be afoot right now to save the country and the people, otherwise even a little shortsightedness, indolence and mistake will cost heavily and the country would face a huge storm reaching a no return point.

Yeh jabr bhi dekha hai tarikh ki nazron ne Lamhon ne khata ki thi sadiyon ne saza paai

(History has been a witness to this tragedy)

What mistakes of moments have brought suffering to mankind for millennia)

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(The writer is a Celebrated intellectual, General Secretary of All India Milli Council and Chairman, of the Institute of Objective Studies, Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam is seriously sick these days and under treatment at Delhi's Max Hospital. Though bed-ridden, he has issued the following statement addressing thinkers, intellectuals, heads, and responsible persons of different organizations)