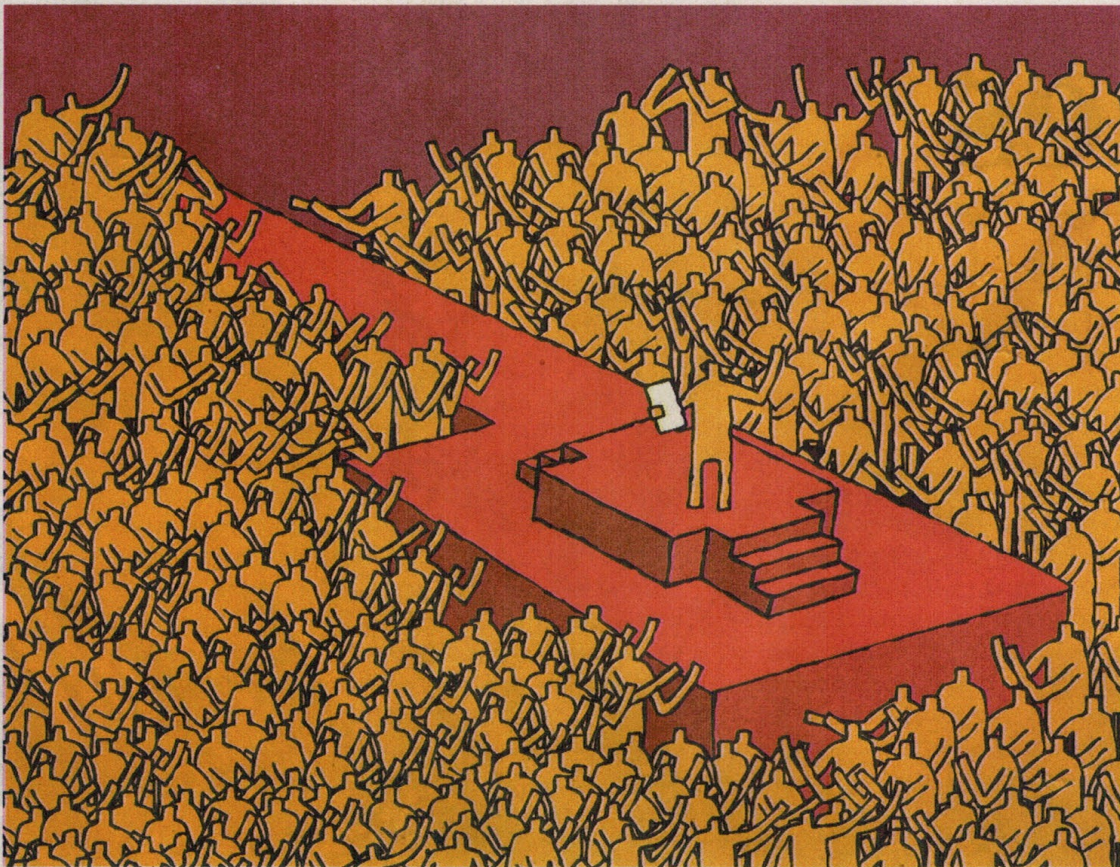


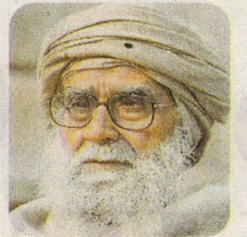


# 'Democracy is for all'

MAULANA WAHIDUDDIN KHAN explains democracy in the context of governance



deeper sense. This means that one should not consider the statements of a particular leader, but should rather look to the world beyond the leader's statements and see whether it offers favourable opportunities. If favourable opportunities do exist, one should never feel any apprehension. Favourable opportunities are produced as a result of the historical process. They do not disappear by the coming of one party or another to power.



Democracy is based on a system of periodical elections. Democracy means temporary replacement of political administration, while maintaining the permanent system of governance.

This kind of political system is inherently good for all and bad for none.

There are some who will make negative remarks about democracy. Such critics are generally those who judge democracy by the ideal yardstick. In doing so, they are in error and their remarks are unjustified. According to the law of nature, the ideal cannot be achieved, and certainly democracy is no exception.

According to the law of nature, only what practical wisdom dictates is achievable; ideal wisdom is quite unachievable in this world. If judged by the criterion of practical wisdom, undoubtedly democracy is good for all. Judging in the light of pragmatism, one can say with certainty that democracy is the only option for any society. Practically, there is no other viable option.

One aspect of democracy is that it has reduced the functioning of the government to mere administration. It is a fact that administration covers only a partial aspect of life and not the totality of life. In other words, whichever party comes to power, it will affect only a part of life, while leaving the greater part of life untouched. ■

**L**osing and winning are not in themselves important. What is of actual importance is how people conduct themselves when facing these experiences. In the age of kingship in previous centuries, kings held some in favour and others in disfavour. They wanted to crush those whom they thought were not their supporters. Those who still have such an outdated mindset think along similar lines today — they believe that the elected government is either friendly or inimical towards them. But this is an anachronistic way of thinking.

In the age of democracy, the mandate of the government that comes into power after the elections is always for a limited period of time. Since in a democracy it is the voters who elect the rulers, no government can afford, once it is elected to power, to follow the policy of favouring one community and disfavouring another.

This is because such a policy would go against its own political interests.

During any pre-election campaign, a party can engage in such rhetoric as go against the sentiments of a community or group, but

such statements or speeches are only temporary. The tone of the party changes after the election campaign.

People must know that this is the age of democracy, and, in principle, democracy is not for some and against others. It is for all. Therefore, in this day and age, people should not form opinions on the basis of media reports.

Consider the saying: 'There is no permanent enemy or permanent friend in politics.'

This applies particularly to a democracy. Democracy is government of the people by the people. Thus, in a democracy, if any party were to make a permanent enemy of any given voter community, that would go against its own interests. Therefore, it is in

the interest of the ruling party itself to adopt a universal policy.

In a democracy, if any leader makes any such statements that go against a certain group, it should not be taken as a part of the policy of the government, but should be taken as a matter of expediency.

The most important thing in politics is that one should never take things at face value. Things should always be taken in their



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### A Very Positive View

■ The article offers a very positive outlook. Democracy should not be determined by the statements of any particular politician, rather it encompasses the opportunities that exist in the society at large.

Maria Khan

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