

## The Ideal President

On August 4, 2020, my life completely changed. The Beirut explosion made me realize how life can change in a matter of seconds and how careless leadership can destroy a country. I wonder if our politicians felt any guilt upon seeing children covered with blood, crying, parents swarming the hospitals, and people losing their homes. A few days later, I was in the car with my mother, and a child on the street caught my attention. He seemed to be only five years old, yet sat under a destroyed house by himself. The child scanned an empty pizza box to find bits and pieces to eat, but he couldn't find any. My heart sank, and I couldn't bear seeing that innocent soul live in such misery and humiliation. I was even more shocked with what he did next. He closed his eyes and hugged the empty box with all his might. My eyes were full of tears, my heart started to ache and my mind couldn't comprehend why we had ended up in this situation. I looked at the kid wondering what he had done to deserve such a terrible life.

Our life in Lebanon is the result of failed presidents who worked out of self-interest and not for the people. Any person who becomes president for fame and fortune is completely destructive to his or her nation, lacking the right mindset to serve the country. A higher goal or purpose is necessary in everything we do to push us to succeed and accomplish the best. However, the love of power deviates our mind to self-centered goals, as we forget our altruistic motivations and we start following the wrong and dangerous roads that prevent us from reaching the goals that the people deserve. A president should view his people as his top priority, understanding their struggles, needs and wants up-close. A president shouldn't sit on a throne and watch the people worship him from below, but should step down and engage with them to create the trust needed between him and his people, so that the people can view him as a worthy leader.

Moreover, a president needs to have extensive knowledge in political science, international relations and history. Without this information, he would not be able to prevent and overcome the enormous problems that harm the people. True intelligence is the use of wisdom for a good purpose, so a president's role is to apply his knowledge in such a way that would benefit the people.

Furthermore, the role of a president is to treat all people equally without prejudice or discrimination, for when evil enters the community, it poisons the loving, caring and nurturing environment. He should ensure the people's rights and prevent a hard dichotomy in the nation by approaching people of all backgrounds, religions, and genders impartially. For once he segregates the people, the nation will follow

his attitude and divide into parts, leading to further problems. In extreme cases, a civil war may erupt which is a huge threat for a country. In the same way a person should be at peace with himself to overcome challenges, improve in life and be sociable with others, a country should have inner peace in order to thrive and have good relations with other countries.

The role of the president is to influence the people in a positive way and give them hope for the future. People see him as a role model, so when the president gives up, they give up as well, losing their drive to persevere. The president should never say, 'We are living in hell,' but instead should motivate, 'Although the situation is horrible, we as a nation should unite to be able to improve the country. Each and every one of us has the capability of making this country a better place.' Imagine how the nation would be empowered if the president knows how to speak with the people and encourages them not to give up. He could converse with people every month on television, addressing their concerns, discussing solutions, and giving them advice. He could also stand up for his mistakes and tell the truth about the situation, building the trust needed between him and the nation and showing his growth mindset needed to solve the situation. This makes them feel that he is always working and improving the situation.

Finally, a president should not only have devotion and a great sense of belonging to the country, but also strengthen the nation's bond with the country by encouraging the people to keep their culture alive. When people come together to celebrate their art, history, and identity, they grow a stronger connection to their heritage and cannot imagine calling another country 'home.' They would start treating each other as equal siblings and their country as their responsibility.

As the situation in Lebanon becomes worse day by day, I dream even more about the ideal president. I wish that one day we will have a selfless, judicious, empowering and dedicated president that I and many Lebanese dream of. "The child" I saw and whose image I keep seeing would finally leave the streets and go to school. He would have a roof above his head and his empty pizza box would be filled with food. It seems inconceivable that anyone can accomplish this in light of today's terrible economic crisis, but that lovely yet miserable child dreams of it every minute and we don't have the right to disappoint him.