

Interfaith Muslim Paper

“Good Governance As Quoted in Our Scriptures”

This Muslim paper was presented to the Interfaith Search Fiji Monthly Discussion Gathering, on 13th January 2016, in Fiji. There were several other Faiths’ papers also presented on the same topic. Generally, in many countries’ communities, good governance is a matter left to the State policy makers only. Prescriptions on good governance are also mentioned in most Holy Scriptures in some ways; however this requires intensive research and propagation.

The Muslims’ scripture, the Holy Qur’an, has so many prescriptions and beneficial advisories on good governance. However, because of limitations to space and time (for all faiths) under the Interfaith Search Fiji protocols, only a few Qur’anic quotations have been listed below from the Holy Qur’an for presentation in public discussions. The whole program involving all other faiths’ presentations and discussions in plenary groups is for two hours.

The topic of governance is multi-layered in the Holy Qur’an at four principal levels. They are in descending sequence as:

- (1) The marvellous governance of the entire universe planetary orbits by Almighty God alone, as exemplary of excellences in governance (consistent universe functions).
- (2) Governance at the global level between nations (international political).
- (3) Governance between communities (domestic political democracy).
- (4) Individual or personal self-governance within the communities (behavioural).

“Good Governance as Quoted in Our Scriptures”

1. Supremacy of Perfect Governance of the Universe Systems by Almighty God. HQ7:54 *“Surely your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods¹, and He is established on the Throne of Power². He makes the night cover the day, which it pursues incessantly. And (He created) the sun and the moon and the stars, made subservient by His command. Surely His is the creation and the command. Blessed is Allah, the Lord³ of the worlds!”*

¹ The six periods mentioned in this verse does not mean six days of 24-hours each as stated in some other scriptures; but it means six periods as six stages of evolutionary development. More details in the Appendix.

² The Throne of Power is taken to mean that Almighty God is and will forever be the Single Controller of the entire universe systems’ orbital floatation and His excellences in governance. More details in the Appendix.

³ The Lord of the worlds clearly sets the scene that Almighty God governs Singularly with absolute perfection not only this earth, but every description of global and planetary materials throughout the entire universe system, which also proves excellence of governance by One God only. More details in the Appendix.

The above verse was selected especially to expose and impress upon the reader, the most magnificent example of good governance, which has remained perfectly consistent in principles at least for the last 13.8 billions of years. These 13.8 billions of years were spread over six periods of time⁴. This exemplary excellence in governance is the outcome of centrality of control in all matters of excellence in governance by One God only: Allah.

2. All Prophets of God Were Designated to Conduct Governance to People on Earth. HQ21:73 *“And We made them leaders who guided (people) by Our command, and We revealed to them the doing of good and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of charity, and Us (alone) they served.” HQ28:5-6* *“And We desired to bestow a favour upon those who were considered weak in the land, and to make them the leaders, and to make them the heirs, and to grant them power in the land, and to make Pharaoh and Hāmān and their forces see from them what they feared.”*

God always delivered prophets to different segments of humanity since creation⁵ throughout all continents of the world and not just Middle East. These prophets were both leaders of their communities and demonstrated as exemplars, for their communities to follow. They came with vernacular advantage by preaching to their allocated communities in their own languages. All prophets conducted excellence in governance to their communities.

There were two main communities in Egypt around 3,500 years ago: the Israelites and the Egyptians. The relocated Israelites⁶ which numbered in excess of 3.5 million were forced to live in slavery under the austerity of the aboriginal Egyptians. Egypt was ruled by the Pharaoh (Ramses II) and Haman was his Prime Minister. Pharaoh and Haman feared that the Israelites may one day rise to power and rule Egypt. Hence the Egyptians deliberately forced the Israelites into slavery and oppression. God, as part of His good governance considered necessary to systematically move by mass exodus, all the Israelites out of Egypt⁷ and make those Israelites the

⁴ These six periods were further segregated over different functions of maturity to make the earth habitable firstly for animals and then most importantly for humanity. More details in the Appendix.

⁵ The Holy Qur’an states there is not a community to whom God did not deliver His messengers as His ambassadors on earth (HQ2:213). More details in the Appendix.

⁶ The relocated Israelites were the descendants of Prophet Jacob who was a grandson to Prophet Abraham. More details in the Appendix.

⁷ The Israelites were led out of Egypt by Prophet Moses via a circuitous route around the Sinai Peninsula. More details in the Appendix.

heirs to the promised land of Canaan. This required specific excellence in governance approaches to release the Israelites from Egypt and their mass exodus towards the promised land of Canaan. Pharaoh had to be punished with death over 3,500 years ago and his body exposed to the world as already prophesised in the Holy Qur'an (see HQ10:92); details are in the Appendix.

3. Good Governance Includes the Freedom to Practice any Religion Amongst Peoples in a Secular State. HQ2:256 *“There is no compulsion in religion — the right way is indeed clearly distinct from error. So whoever disbelieves in the devil and believes in Allah, he indeed lays hold on the firmest handle which shall never break. And Allah is Hearing, Knowing.”*

Good governance includes having a secular state. Notwithstanding that certain religions may comprise greater percentage of a country's population, there must never be any compulsion whatsoever, for the rest of the population of that country to be compelled into conversion to that dominant religion. At the same time for that same matter, the population must not be compelled to become religious people. Those who are atheists may continue to do so. An additional feature of good governance is letting the people have liberty to determine the right from the wrong. The verse further warns that whoever disbelieves in the devil – the archenemy of God and all of humanity – and believes only in God, then such a person is assured of full support and dependable care and guidance from God.

4. Good Governance Requires System of Accountability (e.g. King David, who was also an Israelite Prophet). HQ38:26 *“O David, surely We have made you a ruler in the land; so judge between people justly, and do not follow desire that it should lead you astray from the path of Allah. Those who go astray from the path of Allah, for them is surely a severe punishment because they forgot the day of Reckoning.”*

King David⁸, who was also an outstanding Israelite prophet, had some difficulties in managing his subjects, as he had enemies within his own communities. These were his rebellious subjects of pagans and idolaters, who were inspired by the devil. Towards the later part of his life, King David had excellence in governance, which he acquired by his consistent

⁸ Both King David and King Solomon (father and son) were also Israelite prophets in their life. They both had devil-inspired enemies within their kingdoms despite being rulers of their communities.

prostration before God in his dual roles, both as a prophet of God and as an Israelite king and then pleading for His Divine assistance.

5. Good Governance Requires System of Rewards as Incentive for Compliance. HQ24:55 *“Allah has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will surely make them rulers in the earth as He made those before them rulers, and that He will surely establish for them their religion, which He has chosen for them, and that He will surely give them security in exchange after their fear. They will serve Me, not setting up any partner with Me. And whoever is ungrateful after this, they are the transgressors.”*

The above verse lays the foundation that the constant line of prophets, which took their descent from the line of Moses and the Twelve Tribes of Israel have enjoyed their rewards. All Israelite prophets were descendants from Isaac, the second son of Prophet Abraham. The Israelite prophets were all rulers of their communities before the advent of Islam. However, these communities drifted away from the core issues and that line of Israelite prophets came to a closure.

The line of prophets was taken away from the descendants of Isaac and vested into Prophet Muhammad, whose descent was from Prophet Ishmael, the eldest of the sons of Prophet Abraham.

This is where the system of rewards for good governance came into play, with Islam spreading far and widely to every part of the world. The spread of Islam has become the product of full compliances as prescribed in the Holy Qur’an, most importantly the acceptance of One God without any partners to Him of whatsoever descriptions.

6. Good Governance Requires Entrusting Country’s People Running Affairs of the State as a Parliamentary Democracy. HQ4:58-59 *“Surely Allah commands you to make over trusts to those worthy of them, and that when you judge between people, you judge with justice. Surely Allah instructs you with what is excellent. Surely Allah is ever Hearing, Seeing. O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority from among you; then if you quarrel about anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. This is best and more suitable to (achieve) the end.”*

Islam and the Holy Qur’an require Muslims to hand over trusts to those persons who are trustworthy of them. The most effective method is to hold balloted elections and the best persons will be chosen by the people as a democracy. Hence all municipal and parliamentary elections and any other

type of election will require full independence and for the electorate to elect. The same applies, when people are appointed into positions of reaching any kind of judgement, they must always be the best and most trusted persons. Either gender may be qualified to do so. That is good governance in selection of the best suited persons for parliamentary democracy.

The Holy Qur'an further lays down the foundation on resolving of disputes. Islam requires the establishment of a body of people, who are best in their trusts and reaching decisions. The reference of the Messenger is taken to mean persons of high standing and matured in the intellect, to listen to arbitrations and reach fair decisions. That is also good governance, in firstly listening to all sides involved with openness and fairness before any decision.

7. Good Governance Requires Parliamentary Democracy by the Country's People. HQ42:38-39 *"And those who respond to their Lord and keep up prayer, and whose affairs are (decided) by counsel among themselves, and who spend (on good works) out of what We have given them; and those who, when great wrong afflicts them, defend themselves."*

Islam has specifically instructed in the Holy Qur'an that all appointments to positions of governance, whether these may be society positions, or municipal positions, or leading to the formation of the Government, shall be based on principles of parliamentary democracy. This translates into principles of "one person one vote" and leads to good governance.

Recommendations:

1. That since creation of humanity, people must observe at the systematic consistency of the planetary orbital functions within the universe, which becomes exemplary of excellence in governance of all systems by Almighty God, which also reflects centrality of controls and fairness in governance.
2. That people must read in their Holy Scriptures about past prophets, who were also as ambassadors of God and their numerous examples of good governance, by the past prophets as leaders of the communities of their times.
3. That all peoples of all communities in all countries, and all governments and those bodies in authority in the administration of the countries, must take note that the best national governance is a secular State.

4. That a secular State must not impose compulsion into any religious faith or compelling people into becoming religious at all, notwithstanding that a particular religious faith may have population majority.
5. That those involved in good governance must always have a system of responsibility and accountability.
6. That good governance requires involving and entrusting best suitable people in running the affairs of the secular State.
7. That good governance requires parliamentary democracy as the highest forum in the country.

-Please refer to the Appendix for additional details from footnotes-

Appendix Giving Detailed Explanations to Footnotes

Footnote 1

Using the most modern technological assessment methods (radiometric dating), scientists have reached conclusions that the universe was formed 13.8 billions of years ago after the Big Bang event (see HQ21:20-33), in which all the known parts of the universe and all planets were formed surrounding the sun. As all planets were formed, the earth, which is the only known planet that supports all forms of life, was further developed around 4.54 billions of years ago. Hence, the statement in the Holy Qur'an (at HQ7:54) that God created the heavens and the earth in six periods (please read Footnote 4 detailed explanations below) takes a positive understanding that as part of His excellence in governance, God allowed evolution for progressive roll out of events, based on God's laws of nature. The continuous existence of error-free orbital movements of all the planets in the universe demonstrates excellence of governance by One God in central control, for humanity to understand and follow. The sun has always risen from the east and set in the west. All planets float, each in its own orbit and never on collision path with another planet. The sun, moon and each of the stars function perfectly and subservient to the commands of God. Mankind must study and learn consistency in good governance from all the creations by Almighty God.

Footnote 2

The Throne of Power is taken to mean that Almighty God is the Single Controller of the entire universe systems as the All Powerful. This means details of the universe systems already known to mankind and also includes those other unexplored parts of the universe,

not yet known to mankind. Almighty God takes absolute control of and in the best governance of the entire universe, all by Himself.

Footnote 3

The Lord of the worlds clearly sets the scene that Almighty God governs singularly with absolute perfection not only this earth, but every description of global and planetary materials throughout the entire universe system, including our Milky Way galaxy and over 200 billion galaxies in the observable universe, which also proves excellence of governance by One God only.

Footnote 4

Before God created all the material planets in our observable universe, God created the sun to facilitate periods of days or light and periods of nights or darkness. The earth was created over two massive periods (see HQ41:9). The first period comprised the cooling off period from intensely hot mass of energy as the solar nebular. The second period, involved generating lots of steam from the hot nebula mass. The steam formed massive clouds around the earth to cause rain, and after cooling off with massive rain, this aspect was in the main decorative. This decorative period involved spreads of landmasses, mountains for reinforcements of the lands (see HQ79:32) and undersea mountains as reinforcements beneath the oceans; and all the runoff rain water giving salty seas and oceans. The rest of four periods were finishing periods (see HQ41:10), which comprised setting up of all forms of foods and sources for food supplies. These food supplies (including trees, plants and vegetation on land and total of marine life in the seas) were for all types of human communities and all types of animals and creatures. It was only after God had stocked up the earth with all the necessities that God created the human prototypes, first of Adam and later his spouse Eve (see HQ2:19).

Footnote 5

God states in the Holy Qur'an that He has sent His messengers as prophets to all communities throughout the world. This is another example of good governance, so that on the great Judgement Day, all those who have erred in this world would not have the escape opportunity, to state defensively that they were not warned by God's messengers and prophets. This has been clarified with statements in the Holy Qur'an with the following verses at HQ2:213, as *"Mankind is a single nation. So Allah raised prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He revealed with them the Book with truth, that it might judge between people concerning that in which they differed. And none but the very people who were given it differed about it after clear arguments had come to them, envying one another. So Allah has guided by His will those who believe to the truth about which they differed. And Allah guides whom He pleases to the right path."*

Footnote 6

Initially, Prophet Abraham had two sons from his first two wives (Sarah and Hagar). The elder of the two was Ishmael and then Isaac. Jacob, who was a son of Isaac had twelve sons. These twelve sons became the Twelve Tribes of Israel, after Jacob was renamed as Israel (Bible Gen 35:10) and accordingly all their descendants are called Israelites. One of the twelve sons (Joseph) was sold off as a slave by his jealous brothers. Joseph was eventually located in Egypt and through Divine guidance, he finally became the head of the food and grains welfare system of the Pharaoh of Egypt. Joseph, because of his high position in the Pharaoh's administration, was able to migrate over his father Jacob, all the brothers and the rest of their Israelite extended families to settle in Egypt. Over several generations, the Israelite population increased very rapidly and exceeded 3.5 million Israelites whilst in bondage in Egypt.

Footnote 7

Prophet Moses and his elder brother Prophet Aron successfully negotiated with the Pharaoh of Egypt (Ramses II) to release all Israelites from bondage under the Egyptians. The Holy Qur'an differs from the Bible in the particular routing taken out of Egypt. According to the Holy Qur'an, God instructed Moses to march the Israelites out of Goshen (Lower Egypt) and then continue walking up the near side of the River Nile, fetching fish as their food from the Nile, until they reached the upper main junction of the Blue Nile and the White Nile at Khartoum, in Sudan. The exact point for turn off was the prophecy that fish caught for food and placed on the rocks would all plunge back into the River Nile (see HQ18:60-64 and Hadith Sahih Bukhari 3:44). Then God instructed Moses to turn towards the Red Sea and travel north. There was no Suez Canal in those days, so the exodus moved further north and then crossed over to the Sinai Peninsula and through the rocky wilderness. Egyptian border guards at the Sinai Peninsula saw the exodus of the Israelites and dispatched riders to the Pharaoh with the news. God knew of Pharaoh's plans to give chase and retrieve the Israelites back to Egypt. Accordingly, God devised a plan to drown the Pharaoh and his army. The actual crossing of the main Red Sea did not happen as it is very long, wide and deep (averages 2,250 km long, 355 km wide x 490 meters deep). However, God directed Moses to a certain location in the right side upper reaches of the Red Sea, into the region of the Gulf of Aqaba. This was at a point called Nuweiba, between Sinai and Saudi Arabia. At this point the Gulf of Aqaba is 18 km wide x 1,825 meters deep; but it has an undersea submerged reef as a land bridge, which is 80 meters below sea level. God miraculously directed the wind and tides facilitating the 3.5 million Israelites to cross over safely on the reef using it as a land bridge. This land bridge as a reef is marked on the British Admiralty Chart No 801. However, by the time the Pharaoh and his army gave chase behind the Israelites, God miraculously redirected the wind and tides and they resumed to normalcy: and the Pharaoh and most of his army were drowned (see HQ26:52-68). Whilst drowning Pharaoh declared he believed in the same God as the God of Moses (see HQ10:90-91). However, some Egyptian soldiers of his army, which had not yet attempted to cross over by then, witnessed their drowning. They retrieved the body of Pharaoh (Ramses II), mummified it and placed it in a pyramid tomb KV7, in the Valley of the Kings. Later in 1881, the mummified body was

retrieved from the pyramid and is currently on display in the museum in Cairo. God had promised in the Holy Qur'an that Pharaoh Ramses II was such a vile man, that God will display his retrieved body to the world (see HQ10:92). The Israelites were permanently freed from Egyptian bondage. This demonstrates excellence of superlative governance by God beyond any reasonable doubt.

Footnote 8

King Solomon was the son of King David. King David was made a prophet and granted a scripture (King David wrote most of the Psalms 73/150). He was also granted wisdom, knowledge and judgement. The mountains and birds were made subservient to him. King David also pioneered the making of coats of mail in defence of his soldiers.

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