

“Guidelines for Governance in Our Scriptures”

Governance is a central control feature, which was not developed in recent times by politicians. Scripture records are proofs that governance was in practice before creation of mankind. God, in His infinite wisdom knew that all people do not think identically and His prophets were necessary elements as beneficial guides to mankind. Whilst democracy is a much tossed-about word, democracy has been in practice all along as evidenced in scriptures, beginning with the governance of the universe: **“7:54 Surely your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods, and He is established on the Throne of Power. 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 Lord of the worlds!”** Governance continued with Adam: **“2:35 And We said: O Adam, dwell thou and thy wife in the garden, and eat from it a plenteous (food) wherever you wish, and approach not this tree, lest you be of the unjust. 20:121 So they both ate of it, then their evil inclinations became manifest to them, and they began to cover themselves with the leaves of the garden. And Adam disobeyed his Lord, and was disappointed. 7:172 And when thy Lord brought forth from the children of Adam, from their loins, their descendants, and made them bear witness about themselves: Am I not your Lord? They said: Yes; we bear witness. Lest you should say on the day of Resurrection: We were unaware of this,”** Maintaining a system of public welfare is essential in governance: **“21:73 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 alms, and Us (alone) they served.”**

Smart governance was the essential aspect, which got Moses to take the Israelites out of the Egyptians’ oppressions: **“28:5-6 And We desired to bestow a favour upon those who were deemed 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 Haman and their hosts see from them what they feared. 32:23 And We indeed gave Moses the Book — so doubt not the meeting with Him — and We made it a guide for the Children of Israel.”** That governance then became the structure of laws – the Ten Commandments. Governance continued with descendants of Moses: **“32:24 And We made from among them leaders to guide by Our command when they were patient. And they were certain of Our messages. 33:67 And they say: Our Lord, we only obeyed our leaders and our great men, so they led us astray from the path.”**

Maintenance and development of community also requires governance, such as respect for private homes and family transitions from children to teenagers and finally to adults: **“24:27 O you who believe, enter not houses other than your own houses, until you have asked permission and saluted their inmates. This is better for you that you may be mindful. 24:28 But if you find no one therein, enter them not, until permission is given to you; and if it is said to you, Go back, then go back; this is purer for you. And Allah is Knower of what you do. 24:59 And when the children among you attain to puberty, let them seek permission as those before them sought permission. Thus does Allah make clear to you His messages. And Allah is Knowing, Wise.”**

Governance also has protectiveness and Allah helps and protects those obedient to Him: **“2:256** *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. 2:257* *Allah is the Friend of those who believe — He brings them out of darkness into light. And those who disbelieve, their friends are the devils who take them out of light into darkness. They are the companions of the Fire; therein they abide.”*

Governance also requires a regime of fair warning to be given to communities. This was seen in the case of Prophet Noah when he warned people but they failed to heed his warnings: **“10:73** *But they rejected him, so We delivered him and those with him in the ark, and We made them rulers and drowned those who rejected Our messages. See, then, what was the end of those who were warned.”* In the same token, governance requires a system of rewards in guiding people in the correct direction. **“24:55** *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 associating aught with Me. And whoever is ungrateful after this, they are the transgressors.”*

Political governance requires accountability and this is clearly seen with Orders given to King David (who was also a prophet). The righteous will follow the righteous leaders and the wicked will follow the wicked leaders: **“38:26** *O David, surely We have made thee a ruler in the land; so judge between men justly and follow not desire, lest it lead thee astray from the path of Allah. Those who go astray from the path of Allah, for them is surely a severe chastisement because they forgot the day of Reckoning. 17:71* *On the day when We shall call every people with their leader: then whoever is given his book in his right hand, these will read their book; and they will not be dealt with a whit unjustly.”*

Quite often, disputes between persons, between relatives and between communities, get caused by mismanagement of deals and agreements, with lack of proper verification and evidence. The Holy Qur’an makes certain that correct steps and procedures, when followed, is part of good governance, as stated: **“2:282** *O you who believe, when you contract a debt for a fixed time, write it down. And let a scribe write it down between you with fairness; nor should the scribe refuse to write as Allah has taught him, so let him write. And let him who owes the debt dictate and he should observe his duty to Allah, his Lord, and not diminish anything from it. But if he who owes the debt is unsound in understanding or weak, or (if) he is not able to dictate himself, let his guardian dictate with fairness. And call to witness from among your men two witnesses; but if there are not two men, then one man and two women from among those whom you choose to be witnesses, so that if one of the two errs, the one may remind the other. And the witnesses must not refuse when they are summoned. And be not averse to writing it whether it is small or large along with the time of its falling due. This is more equitable in the sight of Allah and makes testimony surer and the best way to keep away from doubts. But when it is ready merchandise which you give and take among yourselves from hand to hand, there is no blame on you in not writing it down.*

And have witnesses when you sell one to another. And let no harm be done to the scribe or to the witnesses. And if you do (it), then surely it is a transgression on your part. And keep your duty to Allah. And Allah teaches you. And Allah is Knower of all things.”

The next very important aspect is governance on matters of the State and this shall be to people worthy of this responsibility. Those responsible for decision making must be just. The just formula for governance constitutes obedience, honesty and holding Allah as witness. It requires Muslims to entrust the affairs of the State to people who are worthy of this responsibility, which implies democracy, good governance and a Secular State administration over all communities, regardless of their ethnicities and religious alignment.: **“4:58** *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 admonishes you with what is excellent. Surely Allah is ever Hearing, Seeing.* **4:59** *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.”* Fundamentals in democracy and deciding by counsel are compulsory governance matters dictated by the Holy Qur’an throughout in Islam.

The next series of quotations prescribe that counsel should always be taken in deciding the affairs of the State and all other matters of national interest, which lead to good nation building through democratic rules and good governance. Thus Islam lays down the fundamental governance by practicing of parliamentary democracy: **“42:38** *And those who respond to their Lord and keep up prayer, and whose affairs are (decided) by counsel among themselves, and who spend out of what We have given them;* **42:41** *And whoever defends himself after his being oppressed, these it is against whom there is no way (of blame).* **42:42** *The way (of blame) is only against those who oppress men and revolt in the earth unjustly. For such there is a painful chastisement.”* In conclusion, the Holy Qur’an incorporates provisions that governance was in existence before creation so that in the entire universe, for governance each planet took certain orbit positions, in governance aspects regarding community management and in governance aspects regarding matters of State.

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