

Roadmap for Ensuring Good Governance in Islamic Perspective

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This article "Roadmap for Ensuring Good Governance in Islamic Perspective" is a reflection of the different duties an Islamic state is bound to discharge in religious, political, social, economic & cultural capacity. Islam being a complete code of life not only regulates the lives of citizens but also shows future direction to a state to reform and improve itself so as to become a true welfare state. According to Islam, individual is the end and state is the means to achieve that end hence this article completely embodies multiple responsibilities of Islamic state i-e proclaiming peace, justice, equity, rule of law, jihad, Islamic democracy, education and system of *Salah* and *Zakat* leading to a reformed welfare state in true sense of the term. These multifarious concepts were given to Muslims 1400 years ago and came in the form of Holy Quran and the Sunnah. No nation can progress unless the principles of good governance are applied and pursued in society at almost all levels of state. For this purpose, Islam is the only religion that guides us towards attaining the goal of good governance. There are several Quranic verses that highlight the significance and roadmap for good governance from Islamic viewpoint. This study is an effort to revitalize the same concepts by delving deeper into the spirit of Islam with respect to caliphate & Islamic state.

Keywords: caliphate, Good Governance, Shura, Welfare State

Islam is a complete way of life and gives clear direction on how to live a life and build a society. It is based on the principles of universal brotherhood, mutual respect, tolerance for others and well-being of people. Allah has honored children of Adam irrespective of color, cast and faith. Islam imposes many responsibilities on Islamic state about their citizens. Through this article some of these responsibilities are discussed in the light of Quran and preaching of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). Allah says in Quran that one should love and help other human beings. A person is not a Muslim if he sleeps with full stomach and his neighbor is left hungry. Islam is a religion of peace and love. It focuses on human rights and their implementation through state. State got a critical role in an Islamic society. Through state, Islamic principles can be applied for the well-being of people. This article is about the same role of the state.

Establishment of Peace

Islam is an Arabic word which means 'peace'. Holy Prophet (PBUH) emphasized the importance of peace for a society. The Prophet (PBUH) said that *peace is Islam and a Muslim is one*

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Contribution of Authors:

First author, used her expertise and knowledge of Islamic Studies in the article and emphasized on the basis of state and governance as propounded in Islam.

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from whose tongue and hands people are safe and God is peace (Al-Bukhari). Islamic society is principally based on the concept of peace and justice. Quran uses the word 'As-Salam', which means peace and security. No society can exist without peace, prosperity and justice. Justice in society is a prerequisite for establishing peace. Allah says in Quran that divine guidance is likened to the paths of peace (Al-Quran, 5:16).

State can establish peace through education, justice, equality and welfare of people. Establishing peace is one of the integral duties of an Islamic state without which peace cannot be achieved in true sense of the term. The Holy Quran has prohibited creating fuss and chaos on earth rather it is declared a bigger crime than murder. Therefore, it is the utmost responsibility of an Islamic state to safeguard the life, property and honour of people because Islam has given an esteemed status to humankind. Islamic state is based on the principle of peace and war is allowed only in specific circumstances of self-defense and against persecution and oppression. Otherwise, the life & property of all people in Islam are considered sacred whether a person is Muslim or non-Muslim. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

"Oh Mankind! I created you from a single soul, male and female, and made you into nations and tribes (races), so that you may come to know one another (not that you may despise one another). Truly, the most honorable of you with God is he who is the most God-conscious and pious. Indeed, God is All-Knowing, All-Aware"(Al-Quran, 49:13).

Occupation of Makkah is the best example of peace and tolerance when Prophet (PBUH) with his companions entered Makkah and announced forgiveness for all. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) said *"This day there is no reproof against you; Go your way, for you are free"(John et al, 1996).*

Justice and equity:

Islam preaches justice and fair play. Al-Quran (4:58) says :

"BEHOLD, God bids you to deliver all that you have been entrusted with unto those who are entitled thereto, and whenever you judge between people, to judge with justice. Verily, most excellent is what God exhorts you to do: verily, God is all-hearing, all-seeing!"

In an Islamic state, the judiciary should be free and fair. Impartiality should be maintained at all levels (Albert, 1983). Rule of law should be the governing principle and no one should be over and above law. Law demands accountability and everyone must be equally held accountable for their actions(Charles,1998). The Holy Quran commands to settle disputes and clashes with justice and equity:

"Hence, if two groups of believers fall to fighting, make peace between them; but then, if one of the two [groups] goes on acting wrongfully towards the other, fight against the one that acts wrongfully until it reverts to God's commandment; and if they revert, make peace between them with justice, and deal equitably [with them]: for verily, God loves those who act equitably".

In another verse Allah ordains:

"If you do judge, judge between them justly. Allah loves the just" (Al-Quran, 5: 42).

Reformation of society

Another important duty of a caliphate state is to introduce reforms for the cleansing of society from moral evils. The state is duty-bound to eradicate theft, robbery, adultery, crimes, kidnapping, trafficking, drugs, narcotics and drinking etc. Amongst the greatest obligations are “*Amr-bil-Ma’roof (ordering for acknowledged virtues)* and *Nahi anil munkar (forbidding from sin).*” Allah (SWT) says in Quran:

“And there should be a group amongst you who invite towards good, order for acknowledged virtues, forbid from sin and these it is that are the successful ones” (Al-Quran, 03: 104).

“Amr bi'l-ma'ruf means to bid the good or to promote the good; whereas nahi 'ani'l-munkar means to forbid the evil or to prevent the evil.” This golden principle is applicable not only on individuals but also collectively on whole society. It is our religious and moral duty to practice and promote goodness and discourage evil and wrongdoings among individuals and the society we are living in.

Allâh says in Quran:

“There should be among you (O believers), a group (of the learned and sincere persons) who should call (the people) towards goodness, bid (them) to the good and forbid (them) from the evil--they are the successful people” (Al-Quran, 3:104).

While describing the believers, Allâh says:

“...The believing men and the believing women are helpers of each other: they bid the good, forbid the evil, establish the prayer, pay the alms, and they obey Allah and His Messenger--these are the people on whom Allah will be merciful. Indeed Allah is Powerful and Wise”(Al-Quran, 09:71).

In the latter verse, Allah has laid *Amr bi 'l-ma'ruf and nahi 'ani 'l-munkar* prior to *Salât* and the *Zakât*. Because it is through *Amr* and *nahi* that *Salât*, *Zakât* and other virtues will be advanced and thrived among Muslims and the society at large.

Rule of Law

This is one of the major differences between democracy and Islamic system of government called caliphate. In democracy, the sovereignty belongs to people and people are the ultimate source of power. The Western concept declares democracy to be a form of government of the people, by the people and for the people (Charles,1998). But the Islamic concept declares that sovereignty belongs only to Allah Almighty and He alone is the source of all power and only His laws and decisions are to be obeyed. Allah says:

“The decision is only for Allah”(Al-Quran,06:57).

An Islamic state is bound to follow and implement the laws chalked out by Allah Almighty in Quran and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). These laws are applicable at all levels in an Islamic state; be it individual or collective (Al-Naim,1990).

Allah says in the Holy Quran,

“And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, then they are the disbelievers. And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed - then it is those who are the wrongdoers. And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed - then it is those who are the defiantly disobedient” (Al-Quran, 5:44-47).

Moreover, if there are any issues which cannot be resolved in the light of Quran and Sunnah then the Islamic state should resort to Ijtihad and Qayas.

Jihad

Literally, it means 'to struggle or to make effort'(Norton, 1996). A person doing Jihad is called a *Mujahid*. Islam ordains Jihad to protect the faith and oppressed Muslims from the oppression and brutality of non-Muslims. Islam sanctions every kind of moral, political and financial support to the downtrodden when required. For this purpose, the acquisition of latest weapons and technology is inevitable. Jihad is not a license to war against other religions neither Islam tolerates unprovoked aggression at its end. The Quran says:

"Persecution is worse than slaughter" and "let there be no hostility except to those who practice oppression" (Al-Qur'an, 2:190-193).

Islam does not subscribe to the idea of waging the holy war to spread faith; that will rather amount to *unholy* war (Schwedler, 1995). Hence the idea of spreading faith on gunpoint or force is totally forbidden in Islam. The Quran says, *"Let there be no compulsion in religion" (Al-Quran, 2:256).*

Jihad is for the purpose of defending faith. In the course of Jihad, Islam sets certain limitations and forbids to damage plants, trees, harm children, women, old people, innocents and weaker ones. This is the way through which Muslims can achieve their lost glory and grandeur (Janet & Abu, 1987).

Islamic Democracy:

Islamic system is based on elections and that too free and fair ones. Caliphate is electoral rather than hereditary. Therefore, be it the Caliph or the members of parliament (*Shura*); elections are mandatory and inevitable (Martienz, 1996).

Islam has given this right to people that they can choose any person as a Caliph whom they deem fit and qualified enough to become a caliph on the basis of his honesty, integrity, dignity, competence, intelligence, piousness, uprightness, equity, knowledge, opinion and wisdom. In case, after his election, the caliph does not perform his duties properly and infringes the rights of people and deviates from his Islamic objectives then people have the full right to overthrow him and same goes for the members of *Shura* if they do not respect the mandate of people.

In Islam, the choice of *Ameer* or caliph is based on mutual consultation and does not entertain any system like that of dictatorship, kingship, monarchy, totalitarian or hereditary politics.

"And those who have responded to their Lord and established prayer and whose affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves, and from what we have provided them, they spend" (Al-Quran, 26:38).

As Michael Hamilton Morgan writes in *Lost History*, *"Shura was the tradition Muhammed [PBUH] valued, according to which decisions that affect the community are to be made in consultation with members of the community. In fact, one chapter of the Quran is named Al-Shura, referring to a verse that states that those close to God should conduct their affairs by due consultation with others."* (Al-Banna, 2001).

In the political system of Islam, Shura holds a significant position. Through Shura, people are allowed to have their say, participate in governmental affairs and take decisions for their state through proper channel. It is through Shura that consultation take place between people and their leaders. Consultation prevents leaders from abusing their authority. Allah Almighty advised the Holy Prophet (PBUH) to take the help of Shura:

“Those who harken to their Lord, and establish regular Prayer; who (conduct) their affairs by mutual Consultation; who spend out of what we bestow on them for Sustenance” (Al-Quran, 42:38).

In numerous instances, the Prophet (PBUH) took consultation of his companions and valued their viewpoints.

The Prophet (PBUH) at one occasion in one of the battles was of the opinion that Muslims should attack the enemy only if they entered Madina but his companions were of the opposite view and suggested that they should not wait for the enemy to enter Madina rather attack them from outside. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) agreed with them although in the end, the Muslims lost that battle. Allah Almighty, however, emphasized the value of Shura by revealing a Quranic verse after some time:

“It is part of the Mercy of Allah that thou dost deal gently with them. Wert thou severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about thee: so pass over (Their faults), and ask for (Allah’s) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when thou hast taken a decision put thy trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him)” (Al-Quran, 3:159).

In another battle, the Prophet (PBUH) again sought the counsel of Muslims. This time they suggested to construct a deep abyss to which the Prophet (PBUH) whole heartedly agreed and they finally won the battle.

Islamic system of government or caliphate is such a unique political system in which sovereignty belongs to Allah Almighty rather than any individual, group or institution. Muslims run a state in which *Shura* is a pivotal part that serves as a means to polish and flourish the latent potentialities of its members(Ahmad, 2002).

Education

The very first ayah revealed in the Quran Chapter No 96 is:

*“READ in the name of thy Sustainer, who has- created man out of a germ-cell
Read - for thy Sustainer is the Most Bountiful One who has taught [man] the use of the pen – taught man what he did not know!” (Al-Quran, 96:1-05).*

Provision of education is another important duty of an Islamic state. An Islamic state not only imparts education to its citizens but also formulates its education system in a way that education is received by all and sundry without any discrimination of colour, caste, race, religion, language, gender etc. Moreover, the education system should also guarantee to produce such educated and able citizens that will be the real asset of the Islamic state and they will try their best to make the state self-sufficient.

In addition to it, the education system should be such that it produces experts of high religious intellect and knowledge who have sublime insight about Islamic ideology, Quran and Sunnah.

One of the important objectives of education being provided in Islamic state is also that it should not only educate people but also train and nurture them. Education and training go hand in hand. While education teaches the difference between right and wrong, fair and foul, evil and good; training enlightens the mind and purifies the soul and opens new mental horizons. These attributes ultimately produce such gems which play important role in betterment and progress of an Islamic state in the long run.

"It is the men of knowledge who can truly realise God" (Al-Quran, 35:28).

System of Salah and Zakat:

If all the human beings give *zakat* there will be no hunger in the world and no one will die because of being hungry.

"My mercy encompasses all things, but I will specify it for the righteous who give Zakat" (Al-Quran, 7:156).

Hazrat Abu Darda (R.A) narrates that Rasulullah (SAW) said:

Zakaat is the Bridge of Islam..." (Tibrani)

Hazrat Jubair (R.A) narrates that Rasulullah (SAW) said:

"The one who pays Zakaat on his wealth, has purified his wealth." (Tibrani)

"Guard strictly the Salah, especially the middle Salah. And stand before Allah with obedience." (Al-Quran, 2:238)

"Recite that which has been revealed to you of the Book, and perform Salah. Verily, Salah prevents from lewdness and evils. And indeed, the remembrance of Allah (by you) is greatest. And Allah knows what you do" (Al-Quran, 29:45).

Leaving Prayers Destroys A Nation!

"Then, there came after them a generation who gave up Salah and followed lusts; so they will be thrown in Hell" (Al-Quran, 19:59).

"They ask you about giving: say, "The charity you give shall go to the parents, the relatives, the orphans, the poor, and the traveling alien." Any good you do, God is fully aware thereof" (Al-Quran, 2:215).

"Those who spend their money in the cause of GOD, then do not follow their charity with insult or harm, will receive their recompense from their Lord; they have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve (Al-Quran, 2:262)."

Salah is a source of *Taqwah* (piety) and love of God in a Muslim. By establishing a system of *Salah*, the traits of unity, brotherhood, homogeneity, solidarity, discipline, patience, tolerance, forbearance, perseverance, empathy, repulsion towards evils and attraction towards good deeds will be instilled among Muslim nation (Al-Sheha, 2008).

Islam attaches great importance to *Zakat* too. It is a religious tax to be paid by all Muslims who possess financial means (*nisab*). It is meant to give some share to the poor and needy so that wealth does not accumulate in few rich hands rather gets circulated justly through the whole society.

In this way, poor ones have a right on the wealth of the rich ones so a part of their wealth should be spent in the path of God.

Sahih Bukhari: Volume 2, Book 24, Number 486 : Narrated by Abu Huraira Allah's Apostle said, *"Whoever is made wealthy by Allah and does not pay the Zakat of his wealth, then on the Day of Resurrection his wealth will be made like a bald-headed poisonous male snake with two black spots over the eyes. The snake will encircle his neck and bite his cheeks and say, 'I am your wealth, I am your treasure.' "Then the Prophet recited the holy verses:-- 'Let not those who withhold . . . ' (to the end of the verse). (3.180).*

Zakat is a kind of social security obligated upon every well-off Muslim by God. It lays the foundation of an Islamic society and absolves it from the bane of usury, corruption, embezzlement and black money (Al-Sheha, 2008).

Welfare State

Allah says in Quran *"It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and practise regular charity, to fulfil the contracts which we have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, God fearing"* (Al-Qur'an, 2:177).

"Do not promote disorder in the earth after peace has been established" (Al-Quran,7:57).

"Do not go about committing iniquity in the earth and causing disorder" (Al-Quran,29:37).

"They seek to create disorder, and Allah loves not those who create disorder" (Al-Quran,5:65).

"Seek not to create disorder in the earth. Verily, God loves not those who seek to create disorder" (Al-Quran,28:78).

An Islamic state should be a welfare state in true sense of the term where the poor and the rich are treated on even-footing and there is no harassment and exploitation. It should be an epitome of protection of life, liberty, honour, religious, social, cultural, lingual, political freedom, freedom of thought and expression, civil and political rights. It should be a place where there is no discredit of merit, the criminals are brought to justice and justice is dispensed fairly, equally and speedily for justice delayed is justice denied. It should have opportunities of employment and promotion and everyone sustains their family through fair means of livelihood.

Conclusion

Islam affirmed that unity is strength and negated discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, colour, race and gender except piousness. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: *"For, man is from Adam, and that there is no supremacy of an Arab over a non-Arab and no supremacy of a black man over a red man except in piety."*

The core foundation of the teachings of Islam lies in having strong belief, adherence to moral principles, fraternity, work and solidarity. Islam also rejuvenates the belief that all the Prophets from

Allah Almighty were sent on earth to spread the message of Allah. Some of those Prophets brought divine revelations with them in the form of books and those who believe in the message of Allah are the virtuous servants of God who are blessed and forgiven people.

The scope of Islam is not limited to theoretical spectrum but it also stresses on practical base and shows principles, values, methods ,ways and means to practically implement the Islamic rules on our lives individually and collectively.

Reaffirming the qualities of mercy, love, altruism, and piety is important principle of Islam. Islam not only believes in these principles but also promotes them by teaching the believers to practice them in full letter and spirit. Only in this way, a true Islamic society will thrive and the cause of Islam will be strengthened worldwide.

In the wake of World War II, some great leaders of different countries joined hands together to work for peaceful, just, fraternal, and prosperous and a happy world. Have they successfully fulfilled their goals? Or have they even tried to make sincere efforts in that direction? Or has the United Nations liberated South Africa from apartheid and America from colour racism? The fact of the matter is, the goal has not been accomplished due to lack of sincere and dedicated work in this regard and it will remain the same until a spiritual transformation takes place and all individuals take benefit from the ideals of Islam and strengthen their faith in the light of Quran and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Unfortunately, we do not find satisfactory count of instances in Muslim history that could be regarded as epitome of good governance in true sense of the Islamic term. Most of the Muslim rule is replete with autocracy, injustice, mismanagement of resources, corruption, abuse of power, exploitation of poor, suppression of weaker and despotism.

However, our Holy Prophet (PBUH) being the head of Madina state is a perfect embodiment of good governance. He was fair in his dealings with not only Muslims but also with non-Muslims. He upheld Islamic teachings of good governance at all state levels and ensured a perfect welfare state for the people living in it.

In contrast to the Islamic perspective of good governance, in most of the Muslim societies at present there pervades bribery, manipulation and other illegal and un-Islamic practices which not only greatly sabotage the spirit of Islam but also ruin the future of nations. Islam ordains that such people will not escape the Divine wrath and will face accountability and consequences for their un-Islamic deeds:

“And We have fastened every man’s deeds to his neck and on the Day of Resurrection We shall bring out for him a book which he will find wide open” (Al-Quran, 17:13).

This research study aims at attaining the principles of Islamic good governance in its true spirit and frames a roadmap that can be followed by governments of all times and all ages.

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