PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S STYLE OF GOVERNANCE – AN IMPETUS FOR VIABLE ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA

YUSUF SHERIF; Post Graduate Student, Department of Religions, University of Ilorin Phone contact: +2348116953983, +2347068501986. Email: sherifluv89@gmail.com

Abstract

The best era in history was that of the Prophet Muhammad (\Box) , followed by his orthodox successors as they were the best rulers who ever governed. The leadership personality of the last but leader of all the Prophets of Allah, Prophet Muhammad (\Box) all over the globe is indisputable as he was noted for unprejudiced system of government, irrespective of the heterogeneity and religious differences which existed among mankind at that very time. Historically speaking, the Prophet is said to have preached against discriminative act and taught everyone how to relate with their fellow beings. People either Muslims or non-Muslims learnt a lot of good lessons from the Prophet. Some of these Prophetic attitudes pleased the non-Muslims of his time, so some of them accepted Islam. However, the antagonists of Islam did not accept this fact as they hold that the nature of the governmental system of the Prophet is ambiguous. They claim that it is hard to find any scientific study on the Prophetic style of government. Therefore, it was felt that, the Prophetic style of government should be the subject matter of this present paper in order to unequivocally clarify the acclaimed ambiguity contained therein. Hence, it is believed that such academic exercise will enhance the understanding of all Nigerians irrespective of their religious affinity to endorse the importance of following the Prophet governmental behavior so as to return back the lost alory of Nigeria in the area of governance. This research work adopts analytical method of research.

Introduction

Though the current status of governance in Nigeria is hanging as the country is presently known worldwide for embarking on anti-corruption program(war against corruption). Some advanced countries describe Nigeria as one of the Africa countries that give no room for corruption. This could be due to the focus of the current administration in the country to mitigate -if not eradicate- corruption, most especially in the political arena. Be that as it may, it is not an over-statement to reiterate that Nigeria still maintains its state of political injustice, and that, it has a lot of governance disorders as it has previously grossly natured corruption in all aspects of its politics. The fifty five years of independence and fifty two years of attainment of republican status of the country, Nigeria, makes no positive impact on the nation and its people. Despite the fact that Nigeria as a country is in its quest for nationhood, it can still not be described as a nation any more than a pile of timber could be called a ship. This is so because the absence of good governance and paucity of visionary leadership has brought the country, Nigeria, to its knees¹. The high rate of poverty, crime and insecurity as well as lack of patriotism in Nigeria has been traced to poor governance². One of the factors that are responsible for ungodly politics in Nigeria is 'godfatherism' and deliberate diversion of attention from a man-made Nigerian constitution by selfish political office holders for personal interest. All these brouhahas and shenanigans that characterised Nigerian politics reveal that the governance in Nigeria is sick, and "for every sickness, there is a cure"³, announced the Prophet of Islam. It is this Prophetic assertion that motivates this present academic exercise as it addresses catholicons for pitiable style of administration faced in Nigeria. Islam is no doubt to every Muslim, a Divine way of life, a comprehensive code of conduct as well as Religion which borders all aspects of human life. It provides guidance for man in his earthly life so that he can live successfully to gain salvation in the life to come. This work after given an insight on the administration at the time of the Prophet, recommends that the Prophet Muhammad mode of administration should be at least imitated by Nigerian political managers if not copied.

Definition and Role of Administration

- Administration is defined as the management of any office, business or organisation; direction. It is the function of a political state in exercising its governmental duties⁴. Another definition suggests that, administration is the group of individuals who are in charge of creating and enforcing rules and regulations or those in leadership position who complete important task. It is the act of managing duties, responsibilities or rule⁵. By and large, the meaning of administration proves that, it is a wide concept, contrary to the popular notion that administration is used alone in business. Thus, it can be said that, it is a philosophy on the way society; organisation, state and business are being governed.
- In this regard, administration, based on its meanings, in our own view, can be classified into two, namely, general administration and specific administration. General administration is that which involves how the generality of a particular society is being governed, ruled,

directed or controlled. The specific administration is seeing as a way in which an organisation or business in a particular state is being ruled. General administration therefore will be mostly considered in this present work as it is the act or process of administering, especially the management of a government, the state in the exercise of its powers and duties. Administration plays a very vital role in the society and organisation structure as it helps in managing resources and people in an efficient manner. Planning, budgeting and organisation are three primary functions of efficient administration⁶.

Administration before Prophet Muhammad (\Box)

The entire life of the Arabs before the advent of Islam was rough and ungodly. For example, in Arabs political life, there were perpetual conflict and warfare among them. This is because there was absence of political union and organized government in the country. The greatest anarchy prevailed in the social life of the Arabs. There was no ideal, morality or discipline in the society. There were corruption, vices, superstition, unrestrained freedom and unrestricted enjoyment ruled supreme in the Arab society. Their attitude to women was not encouraging. Unlimited polygyny and polyandry was the order of the day. Adultery has turned to a tradition as it was common among the *Jahiliyah* Arabs. The worst of all is that step son could marry his step mother and even the brothers sometimes marry their own sisters⁷.

In the economic aspect, the pre-Islamic Arabian society was in primitive stage. Agriculturally, they were poor because they did not have fertile land. The Jewish moneylenders in the country did treat their debtors very severely. All these together contributed negatively to the entire life of the Arab world as life was miserable for them. It was stated that two Abrahamic religions namely, Judaism and Christianity were in existence at this very crucial time but they could not help the situation as they too were considered to have corrupted due to one reason or the other⁸. The coming of Prophet of Islam marks the end of the ungodly life of the Arabs as the Prophet (\Box) embarked on good administrative system in his administration, hence, the concept of administration in Islam.

The Concept of Administration in Islam

The fact that administration denotes how a society is being controlled signifies the close relationship that exists between politics, leadership and administration, hence, no administration no politics and vice versa. In every administration and politics there is always a leadership. Another synonym of the above words is political system. In government as a subject of study, political system according to Wikipedia is taking to mean a system of politics and government.

By and large, it is neither auxesis nor litotes to amplify here that administrative system is not alien to the religion of Islam as the religion theoretically and practically enjoined a divine politics. Allah in the Qur'an referred to the Muslim community as a single community, He then after having introduced Himself to mankind, commanded that every creature should worship Him without any alteration. The concept of community in Islam as visible in the Qur'anic verses is thus suffices every academic mind to hold that Islam comprehensively addressed administrative system. In the Qur'an, Allah, the Exalted declared that, " "Verily this community of yours is a single community" (Q21:92). Grammatically speaking, the word *Ummah* as contained in the above verse means community, hence, the existence of administrative system in Islam. It must be noted that the community is as old as leadership. The words leadership, administration and political system as used in this work mean the way society, organisation and state are being organised, coordinate or controlled. The glorious Qur'an maintains that mankind occupies vicegerent status in the sight of Allah. Mankind is nothing on earth but servant, representative of Allah, thus, the theory of representation or deputisation. To represent or deputise in this context is to perform the duties one is charged with. This brings about accountability as such is expected to be accountable to his superior who gave the duty to perform.

In the Qur'an, Allah declared that: "Then We made you successors in the land after them so that We may see how you act" (Q10:14). Commenting on this verse, Ibn Kathir noted that, Almighty Allah tells us about what happen to past generations when they belied the Messengers and the clear signs and proofs the latter brought to them. Allah then made this nation successor after them by sending a Messenger to test our obedience to Him and the Messenger⁹. Part of the obedience to Allah is to be a good servant. As a ruler or leader, Allah's servant is expected to be just among his subjects as this is the command of Almighty Allah. In the Qur'an, Allah commanded us to do justice when He

said: "O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even if it be against yourselves, your parents and your relatives, or whether it is against the rich or the poor..." (Q4:135). On the part of the Hadith, the Prophet of Islam said:

All of you are shepherds and shall be called upon to account on his flock. A leader is a shepherd upon his subjects, and shall be called upon to account on his flock; a man is a shepherd upon his family members and shall be called upon to account on his flock; a woman is shepherd in the household of her husband, and shall be called upon to account on her flock; a servant is a shepherd upon the wealth of his master, and shall be called on to account on his flock. Verily! All of you are shepherds and you shall be called upon to account on your flock¹⁰. (Tamim,Kamaldeen).

- Muslims are of different opinion whether it was appropriate to name the leader the Caliph of God (Khalifatullah), but most scholars preferred the designation caliph of the Prophet of God. Be that as it may, our opinion as Tahir submits is that, the caliph whether the Prophet's successor or God's deputy did not enjoy the authority of either the Prophet or Allah whose power of legislation, revelation, absolution and punishment cannot be delegated to any other¹¹.
- In the dominant paradigm both ruler and ruled are God's agents (Khalifatullah) in implementing the divine law¹². The Qur'an confirms the firmly contribution of Islam to the concept of leadership vis-a-vis administration and accountability, it says: "(and remember) the Day when We shall call together all human beings with their (respective) Imam" (Q17:71). The principles of Islamic administration or governance are said to be numerous but some of it will be treated in this work. Some of these principles include, *Adalah*(justices), *Mas'uliyah*(accountability) and *Shura* (mutual consultation). More

importantly, the concept of administration in Islam rests on *al-Ihmanu billah*(belief in Allah). Let us consider each of the above mentioned principles of Islamic administration as a tool for viable administration.

1. Al-Ihmanu billah(belief in Allah):

This is the first of the six articles of faith in Islam. The life of a Muslim revolves around it, and adapted according to it. Believing in Allah, the Exalted is considered to be the main basis in the general system of the Muslim's whole life. A Muslim believes in the Lordship, Oneness as well as Names and Attributes of Allah, the praiseworthy. However, it should be noted that, the first reason for this belief is that Allah, the glorified is the only One Who guides Muslim to the correct path¹³. In Islam, Allah alone is the sovereign. and it is He who has right to ordain a path for the guidance of mankind. This is evident in the glorious Qur'an when Allah cautioned the Prophet of Islam from following the fancies of the creatures like him except the revelation revealed to him¹⁴. In the Qur'an, Allah says: "We made for you a law, so follow it and not the fancies of those who have no knowledge" (65:18). This verse pictures what Islamic administrative system is all about when it portrays Allah as the law Giver. The fact that Allah's apostles were sent aforetime with clear sign, and that, the book and the balance(of right and wrong) were sent down for them so that they stand forth in justice, also signifies how the Islamic administrative system should be done and the duties of Allah's Messengers. Doi, in his own comment to the content of Qur'an (57:25) said:

> Three things are mentioned as gifts of Allah. They are the Book, the Balance and Iron which stand as emblems of three things which hold society together, viz, Revelation which commands good and forbids evil; justice which gives

to each person his due and the strong arm of law which maintains sanction for evil-doer"¹⁵.

Thus, with *Ihmanubi-Ilah* (belief in Allah), Muslim is expected to act according to the commandment of Allah on how the administration in Islam should look like. He should know that, failure to comply with what Allah ordains makes him a sinner which if Allah does not forgive him; he becomes part of the dwellers of Hell-fire. Hence, whatever a Muslim will do or engage in, he must put Allah first.

2. Al-'Adalah

The Arabic word 'Adalah, means 'justice'. Literally speaking, 'Adl is to put everything in its rightful place. In its technical sense, justice pictures moral rectitude and fairness. It is an act of placing things to where they belong without any consideration whatsoever. Justice creates a state of equilibrium in the distribution of rights and duties¹⁶. Many people believe that 'Justice' and 'Equality' are the same, whereas they are not. The reason for this is that, to make equal, is to give the same thing or treatment to everyone, whereas, justice can be done by given individuals their right which may not be equal. For example, justice in a classroom does not mean that all the students are to be given equal marks; but marks are given according to ability and effort of each student in the class¹⁷. In Islamic worldview, justice denotes placing things in their rightful place. It is a moral virtue and an attribute of human personality. In the Qur'an, Allah says: 'And your Lord does injustice to no one' (Q18:49). This verse as Ibn Kthir noted means that Allah will judge between His creature for all of their deeds, and He will not treat any of His creatures with injustice. He will overlook, forgive and have mercy, and He will punish

whomever He wills by His power, wisdom and justice. Ibn Kathir went further to say that Allah will fill Hell with the disbelievers and those who have been disobedient, and leave the disbelievers there for eternity. He is Judge Who never wrongs or oppresses¹⁸.

In the Hadith Al-Qudsi, the noble Prophet of Allah narrated that Allah said: "O My slaves, I have forbidden injustice for Myself and forbade it also for you. So avoid being unjust to one another". The place of justice in Islam cannot be overemphasized. Islam considers it as a supreme virtue. It is a basic objective of Islam to the degree that it stand next in order of priority to belief in God's exclusive right to worship (Tawheed) and the truth of Muhammad's Prophethood¹⁹. Qur'an 16:90 is relevant in this regard when Allah said: "God commands justice and fair dealing...". In the Hadith, the Prophet has it that: "There are seven categories of people whom God will shelter under His shade on the Day when there will be no shade except His. [One is] the just leader"²⁰. The Islamic administrative system cannot survive without a sincere implementation of justice. In this system of administration, the leader a respective of the category he belongs should by all means allow justice to prevail in all his earthly dealings.

3. As- *Shūra* (Mutual consultation):

The Arabic word '*Shūra*' is from the verb, 'Shawara' which means, 'to consult' or 'he consult', hence, the noun '*Shūra*' means 'consultation'. *Shūra* constitutes one of the four cardinal principles in the Islamic perspective on socio-political organization. The other three are justice, equity and human dignity. The glorious Qur'an presents *Shūra* as

a principle and not as a system of governance²¹. In the Qur'an, two modes of political consultation are mentioned. The first of the two is consultation and ultimate self-decision which was done by the Prophet of Allah alone. The second mode is the consultation done by a whole community of the faithful to administer its affairs²². Qur'an 42:38 is relevant in this regards when Allah declares that:

"Those who answered the call of their Lord and establish regular prayer, and whose affairs are a matter of counsel (i.e., they are conducted by mutual consultation) and who spend out of what We bestow on them for sustenance".

Commenting on the above verse, Ibn Kathir noted that, it means Muslims should not make decision without consulting one another on the matter so they can help one another by sharing their ideas concerning issues such as wars and other matters²³. In his own opinion, Ibn Taymiyyah posited that, it means that the leader has no other opinion but to resort to *Shūra* since Allah had commanded his Prophet to do so²⁴. *Shūra* is mentioned three times in the *Qur'ân* as a praiseworthy activity, and it is a word often used in organizing the affairs of a Masjid and Islamic organization. The exercise and implementation of mutual consultation is noticeable in both governmental style of the Prophet of Islam and his rightly guided Caliphs. In the Hadith for example, the Prophet of Allah said: "If I was to make any one a caliph without consultation, I would have name Abdullah ibn Mas'ud". Stating the place of mutual consultation in caliphate, 'Umar the son of Khattab said: "Caliphate can never function without mutual consultation"²⁵.

4. Al- Mas'uliyyah (accountability):

Belief in the Day of accountability is the fifth article of faith in Islam. The Islamic concept of accountability become reality with the realization of this promised Day. In the Qur'an, Allah, the Exalted draws our attention to the coming of this great Day. He provides us with difference signs both the great and small ones that will make us to recognize it. Thus, the place of this great Day in Islam cannot be overemphasized. It is compulsory on every Muslim to believe that this Day will take place no matter how long it takes. In the Qur'an Allah confirmed it that this great Day will take place, and that the unbelievers think it is not fast approaching. But, in the sight of Allah it is fast approaching. Allah, the Almighty however, promised that the good doers will have good rewards for their deeds on this Day, and likewise, the unbelievers will be punished on the same Day. He said they (unbelievers), will find no helper on that Day as Allah own all power to forgive. Allah gives a comprehensive analysis of this great Day, He said:

> A supplicant asked for a punishment bound to happen. To the unbelievers; of it there is no preventer. It is from Allah, owner of the ways of ascent. The angles and the spirit will ascend to Him during a Day the extent of which is fifty thousand years. So be patient with gracious patience. Indeed they see it as distant. But We see it as near. On the Day the sky will be like murky oil. And the mountains will be like wool. And no friend will ask another friend (seeking protection against Allah's torment)". (Q70:1-10).

It is clear from the above Qur'anic passage that, the present life- though it not *Harâm* for a Muslim to have it- is not the goal of the Muslim, rather, the life after death is his focus. Thus, Muslim must be conscious of God in all his engagements, knowing fully that what he does in the earthly life attracts the attention of Allah in the life to come, so he will be called to account for it²⁶. In Islamic administrative system both the ruler and the ruled are accountable to Allah. The ruler for example will be questioned on how he governed his subjects and their affairs, likewise, the subjects are going to be called forward by Allah to account for their actions towards their leaders as they have been commanded by Allah to follow the latter after having followed Him and His Prophets. In the Qur'an, Allah ordains that: "O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the apostle and those in authority from among you…" (Q4:59). In this verse, the necessity of obeying the rulers in obedience to Allah is stated. Ibn Kathir explained this verse and said: "Al- Bukhari recorded that Ibn Abass said: "the verse was revealed about Abdullah bin Hudhafah bin Qays bin Adi, who Allah's Messenger sent on a military expedition". Ibn Kathir however quoted another Hadith to examine the necessity of following a good and godly ruler. He said Imam Ahmad recorded that Ali said:

> The Messenger of Allah sent a troop under the command of a man from Al-Ansar. When they left, he became angry with them for some reason and said to them, 'Has not the Messenger of Allah commanded you to obey me?' They said: 'Yes', He said, 'Collect some wood, 'and then he started a fire with the wood, saying, 'I command you to enter the fire'. The people almost entered the fire, but a young man among them said, 'You only ran away from the fire to Allah's Messenger. Therefore, do not rush until you go back to Allah's Messenger, and if he commands you to enter it, then enter it'. When they went back to Allah's Messenger, they told him what had happened, and the Messenger said: "Had you entered it, you would never departed from it. Obedience is only in righteousness"²⁷.

In Qur'an chapter three verse thirty, Allah made it clear that accountability will take place, and every soul will be confronted with all the good it has done, and all the evil it has done, and the soul will wish there were a great distance between it and its evil.

Governance under the leadership of Prophet Muhammad (\Box)

"Never in the history of the world was the need so great, the time so ripe for the appearance of a Deliverer", said Ameer Ali²⁸.

Allah, the exalted sent His Prophets for the purpose of disseminating His message to mankind so that the latter will be guided in his worldly life to gain the pleasure of Allah in the life to come. Many Prophets of Allah have come and gone to discharge this same duty. One important point to note here is that not all of the Prophets of Allah governed their people by organizing a State as Prophet Muhammad (\Box) did. The appearance of the Islamic Prophet marks the advent of Islam hence, whatever Islam as a religion enjoins is from Allah and His Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (\Box). History has it that, Prophet Muhammad (\Box) is a great revolutionary, a universal Prophet, world affecting changes, an inventor of spiritual democracy and founder of a social order. He was an advocate of respectable position for woman, a comforter who brought a miraculous change in religio-social life of Arabs, an ideal leader who founded a nation and state etc. it is on record that there being no political unity and organized government in Arabia, the might is right was the law in the country before the appearance of Prophet Muhammad²⁹. But when the Prophet came everything changed to better, and even the best. The Prophet is noted in Madinah for initiating the Madinites to Islam and taught them submission to Allah and peace and tolerance to others. He regulated their moral and social life. In order to establish a workable administration he founded a commonwealth of Islam at Madinah which became a model of the religio-political order

of the Muslims. The commonwealth was based on the absolute equality of all the Muslims and toleration to other communities living in or near Madinah. Justice, fairness, law and order formed the basis of this great democratic organization organized by the Prophet at Madinah. The presence of Allah's Messenger in Madinah brought about the existence of Madinah charter which was put in place to see to the affairs of his people. The charter forms the basis of the law of the Madinites till date. This charter recognized the Prophet as the socio-political head of the commonwealth of Madinah³⁰. The religious teacher thus became a politician and statesman. The prophet gave just law to the land that did not know any law other than 'the might is right'. He brought peace and order to the place that presented a picture of perpetual confusion. A typical example of the justices, fairness and equality that existed in Prophet Muhammad's governance is visualised in his judgment on the case of Taimah ibn Ubairaq who was a nominal Muslim, and known with all sorts of wicked deeds. He was suspected of having stolen a set of armour, and when the trail was hot, he planted the stolen property into the house of a Jew, where it was found. The Jew denied the charge and accused Taimah, but some Muslims supported Taimah as against the innocent Jew on religious basis. When the case was brought to the Prophet, with Allah's guidance, he investigated it thoroughly and awarded each of them their due right as the innocence of the Jew was proven³¹. The fundamental citizen's rights and enlightened toleration which the Prophet gave the Christians and other non-Muslims in an age of bitter religious discrimination and persecution cannot be over emphasized

Conclusions

In the cause of our explanation on the nature of administration in Islam, we divulged the fact that Islam accepts an administration to be an excellent one only if it has four different principles. Such principles include, *Al-Ihmanu bil-Ilâh*(belief in Allah), *Al-'Adalah*(Justice), *Ash-Shūra*(Mutual consultation) as well as *Al-Mas 'uliyyah*(Accountability).

Since administration before the advent of Islam is not encouraging as it was full of abnormalities, irregularities and injustice, the need to copy the system of administration adopted by Allah's Messenger, Prophet Muhammad arises once history has recorded that the latter's administration is one in town and no administration can match it. With these stated principles of administration designed by Islam, the functions of administration in modern worldview become reality as each of these functions can be found in the latter's style of administration whether directly or indirectly.

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