

# Good News

'...And give good news to those who do good (to others)' – Holy Quran 22:37

May 2019

A Publication of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, South Africa Volume 10 No. 05

## In Search of a Just and Corrupt-Free Society

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The outcome of the South African elections has revealed the majority voters' confidence in the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party, despite the latter's dismal performance over the last 25 years in dealing with matters of basic human rights such as proper sanitation and access to clean water, job creation, proper education and health facilities; corruption, nepotism and downright criminality from the highest to the lowest echelons in their leadership ranks.

In his campaign leading up to the elections the president of South Africa and head of the ANC, Cyril Ramaphosa has promised to implement a policy that will ensure the following take place:

- Transformation and renewal (still need to see what this really mean)
- Avoid a repeat of past mistakes
- Bring all the perpetrators of corruption to justice.

As citizens of this beautiful country that Almighty God had entrusted us with or as our *Khoisan* brothers teach us, 'The Great Spirit' has made us the custodians of, we can only pray that the promises made by the head of the nation do

not amount to mere empty ‘political’ rhetoric this nation has become so accustomed to over the years.

Therefore, in the spirit of ‘transformation and renewal’ committed to by the Head of State, we would, in all humility, like to present to the leadership of this land and others; as well as all subjects of this country and elsewhere some guidelines from the Holy Quran that we hope and pray might facilitate the ‘transformation and renewal’ process; help in the execution of good governance and justice and promote the observance of ‘law and order’ in the land. With this end in mind, and, in our mutual search for a ‘just and corrupt-free society’, please allow us to reflect on and share the divine wisdom contained in a verse of the Holy Quran that talks directly to the matter at hand.

Surely Allah enjoins justice (*adl*) and the doing of good (*ihsaan*) (to others) and the giving to the kindred (*itaa ithil qurba*), and He forbids indecency (*fah shaa*) and evil

(*munkar*) and rebellion (or tyrannical rule) (*bahgyi*). He admonishes you that you may be mindful. - (Holy Quran 16:90)

This verse of the Holy Quran is recited in every mosque across the entire world during the Friday congregational service. The message contained therein is straightforward but effective in that it deals with various degrees of ‘good’ that a believer is ordered to undertake in order to neutralize contrasting degrees of evil that plague societies and undermine peace and justice in the world.

We will see as we unpack the underlying wisdom of these commandments and its efficacy as a means of dealing with the overwhelming state of corruption in this country and the world at large, why we say it would be apposite to have these commandments etched into the manifestos of every political party. Then, on the top of our voices, urge every nation to clinically

implement it as a means of opposing injustice and corruption on earth.

### Varying Degrees of ‘Good’ Mentioned

1. The first is, ‘**God commands the doing of *Adl*** – i.e. justice for all.’ *Adl* calls for proportionate good for good and proportionate punishment relative to the evil committed. So for example if a person insults you or disparages your faith you should NOT call for the death penalty for that would be totally disproportionate to the offence committed and, in fact, such punishment would amount to a greater sin than the offence committed. Yet, we find that some Muslim nations do not understand this simple Quranic rule. *Adl* thus stands for a well-balanced justice system geared towards ensuring law and order and justice for all.

However, every society makes their own laws according to what they perceive to be just. For example, the previous inhumane ‘apartheid’ system of this country

was made legal and the proponents thereof would argue with a frigid conscience that it was fair and just.

Many Muslim countries, too, have laws that undermine the rights of minority groups and ‘free thinkers’ even today in the name of ‘so called’ justice.

And so we can go from nation to nation, culture to culture and we will find laws that might be frowned upon by one group yet accepted by others as quite normal. How often, these days, do we not witness human rights trampled on and war crimes brazenly committed and then having to listen to the pathetic excuses of the perpetrators arguing that it is in compliance with international standards of justice – as if such a thing even exists!

Because of this huge disconnect between what is perceived to be just in the eyes of the beholder and *real* justice that is meant for the upliftment and good of humankind, the Holy Quran therefore immediately follows the

command dealing with the execution of basic ‘justice’ with the command:

2. ***Wal ihsan* - And (God commands) the doing of good to others.** This entails doing of good to everyone without discrimination even in the case of one who does not deserve it. **Justice**, according to the Holy Quran, means it must be for the good of man and NOT such that oppresses or causes harm to societies as was the case with the laws of ‘apartheid’. Nay! it should provide absolute safety and protection for all law-abiding citizens. It should be a system that comes down hard on all forms of corruption, criminality, oppression and persecution from all levels of society. It must be a system that invests in affordable, quality education and health facilities; a system that provides freedom of worship and beliefs; freedom of expression (not hate speech), freedom to trade in legitimate business; access to sanitation, clean drinkable water, food, employment etc. Much of these one might quite

rightly argue are provided for in the nation’s constitution, but poorly implemented and thus the high degree of corruption within the ruling party. The Holy Quran thus ‘enjoins’ man to do good to others and not merely pay lip service to it. This is what *ihsaan* means.

However, if we look at these social requirements, then we see nothing extraordinary in its provisions for these are the normal basic requirements that all the citizens of a nation have a right to enjoy and expect from those placed in authority to serve them. One does not have to be a ‘Mother Theresa’ to do these things; this is a duty man owes his fellow man.

However, the Holy Quran takes *ihsaan* to a higher level of goodness that involves thankless, self-sacrifice like a mother’s love for her child. In the Holy Quran this level of goodness is referred to as:

3. ***Wa ita ithil qurba* - ‘(God commands you to) Give to the kindred’** – This command when viewed in a broader metaphorical

sense, indicates love for humanity like that of a **mother for her child**.

This means doing good spontaneously and affectionately even though the concerned party in need might not be of your kind. At this stage there must be no expectation of any form of reward or remuneration or even a word of thanks or the return of a favour.

This is the kind of justice and good that the Holy Quran demands of us and this is what our civil servants and everyone in authority including, clerics and religious leaders should be trained to do and implement and held accountable for.

### **Corruption has appeared on land and sea**

The question we often ask is: ‘Why have we allowed corruption to overwhelm our societies to the extent it has?’ Centuries ago, the Holy Quran warned:

‘Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea on account of that which men’s

hands have wrought...’ – 30:41

The answer we will find in the varying degrees of evil that are at the root of the injustices and corruption we come across in society.

### **Degrees of evil**

1. ***Fah shaa*** – **All indecent acts and, behaviours.** This refers to immoral acts that negatively affect the perpetrator’s personality more than that of others. For example, bad thoughts, evil intentions, gambling, drunkenness, nudity, greed, boastfulness, loudness, wastefulness, stinginess etc. These are common traits and behaviours we come across in modern society, which, if not timely checked, eventually grow into greater evils which the Holy Quran refers to as:

2. **‘*Munkar*’ Evil** – This refers to more serious acts of evil that encroaches upon the rights of others. For example, lewd, indecent dress that falls in the category of ***fah shaa*** might arouse the weak and vulgar to commit perverse sexual acts such as

adultery and rape that falls in the category of *munkar*.

Other examples of *fah shah* leading to *munkar* are acts of incitement leading to violence; neglected social conditions that breed gangsterism; that in turn breeds criminal acts such as robbery and murder etc.

Similarly, when *munkar* (evil) – is left uncontrolled as a result of an ineffectual criminal justice system run by corrupt officials, it will, inevitably, lead to evils of greater proportion that will have a bigger impact on society as a whole. This is referred to as:

**3. *Bahgyi* – I.e. all large-scale violence, death and destruction caused by unruly ‘rebellion’, acts of terror, persecution at the hands of tyrants, etc.**

We have seen many examples of the evil associated with *bahgyi* in recent times. The ‘Arab Spring’ uprisings that led to full-scale rebellion; the invasion of Iraq by the United States; the rebellions in Syria and Libya; 9/11 and other untold

acts of terror unleashed across the world, all of which caused widespread death and destruction – and are still simmering. These are all parts of a broader evil that seeks to destabilize a country, make it ungovernable, and sow division and hostilities through acts of mass destruction. The idea of committing such nefarious acts (*bahgyi*) often has its origin in the mind of a single despot or tyrant who influences certain groups of people or the nation or group of nations with similar malevolent intent (*fah shaa*). These groups and/or nations then start a well-planned process of spreading false propaganda through social networking whereby specially selected groups in targeted countries are incited (*munkar*) to rebel (*bahgyi*). This is a common strategy powerful nations use to destabilize weaker nations that refuse to toe the line. Much of the mass destruction and deaths we encounter in this age are as a result of this ‘evil’.

**We should avoid becoming complacent by accepting evil as the norm**

The Holy Quran, finally, calls on every citizen to be *mindful* of the dangers and negative effects of these social evils at all time. We need to speak out more and take firm action against injustice and corruption. However, in doing so we need to avoid extremism and need to strike a mean balance between right and wrong. To illustrate the point, let us look at an example in nature. Water is good for us but excess water caused by flooding or untimely rain can cause large scale damage to crops. Thus if we persist in pardoning a hardened villain or murderer or corrupt officials thinking it is a good deed, we might just be causing more harm to the perpetrator and to society at large.

We therefore welcome the long overdue ‘transformation and renewal’ strategy of the president of this nation and pray that it will lead to justice and good for all citizens

and rid our society of corruption, crime and poverty.



**We strongly condemn all acts of aggression and terror including all violations of basic human rights specifically those carried out in the name of Religion or State!**

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