



How Self Accountability in Islam Do Facilitate Good Governance

Md. Harunur Rashid*

Abstract:

The article focuses on how Islamic guidelines of self-accountability facilitate to ensure good governance. The paper addresses on related issues and concepts like the concept of governance and good governance, Islamic guidelines on the self-accountability in reference with Qur'an and Hadith, and the relationship between self-accountability in Islam and good governance. The secondary resource like relevant books, journals, articles, and internet materials was the sources of required data and information. Islam says that every Muslim is responsible for his deeds and will be questioned on the Day of Judgment in front of Allah is being watched by Allah in every moment. Main message of Qur'an on self-accountability that Allah knows well his servant if the servant expresses his mind or conceals his minds; Allah knows everything-what the servant is doing openly or in secret. Taqwa, consciousness of Allah, prevents Muslim from wrongdoings; prevents sins at first which arises on mind. Thus, self-control due to fear of Allah facilitates good governance. This paper will be useful for policy makers, academia, practitioners, and earnest learners to understand the relationship between Islamic guidelines on self-accountability and good governance.

Key words: Governance, Good Governance, Self-Accountability, Taqwa, Islamic Values.

*Lecturer, Department of Public Administration and Governance Studies, Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University, Trishal, Mymensingh, Bangladesh. E-mail: harun_du.rashid92@yahoo.com

Introduction:

The idea of good governance is not new or not attributed to World Bank approached few decades earlier. The idea was also prevalent before the twentieth century in different shape guided by theories, approaches promoted by scholars in ages (Botchway, 2011). Good governance has taken center stage for development and is defined as governance with people's participation in decision making, transparency, accountability, rule of law, equity, and responsiveness to the citizens. In safeguarding people's right and facilitation of services, accountability is vital and considered as inevitable part of good governance (Dauda, & Yusha'u, 2017). Islam sees

accountability as comprehensive ethic guided by Quran, revelation from Allah (SWT) and Hadith, sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and human beings are accountable to Allah (Mordhah, 2012). Three basic principles of Islam-Tawhid (unity of God, the Almighty Allah), Khilafah (vicegerency), and Al'-adil (justice) guide the code of conduct of Muslim formed world view, urges distinct type of accountability system (Mikailu, & Maishanu, 2008).

Good governance in Islam is based on Iman (faith) to Allah and the Muslims are obliged to him for their every deed and they will be asked for it (Taufiq, 2015). The paper focuses on how Islamic guidelines of self accountability do ensure good governance, divides into three parts namely- the concept of good governance, Islamic guidelines of self accountability, and the relationships between good governance and self accountability in Islam.

The Concept of Good Governance:

At first, World Bank introduced the term 'governance' in a report titled 'Sub-Saharan Africa from Crisis to Sustainable Growth' recommended for institutional reform and better, efficient public service. In 1992, the Bank pronounced the term 'good governance' in a report titled 'Governance and Development' (Hossen, 2019). The term 'governance' and 'good governance' lack uniformity in definition as the scholars define in many ways, and approaches. Governance is multi-faceted and complex concept, difficult to define in precise way. World Bank conceptualizes the term 'governance' in two different ways- 'how political power is exercised to manage nation's affairs and use of power in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development'. While United Nations (UN) offered new perspective in Human Development Report 2002 as democratic governance and delivered features of good governance (Ali, 2015). Ali (2015) quoted Etoungue Manguella and Michael Johnston in defining 'good governance'-

“Good governance implies presence of rule of law, safeguard of human rights, and existence of honest and efficient government, accountability, transparency, predictability and openness”

“A competent management of a country's resources and affairs in a manner that is open, transparent, accountable, equitable and responsive to people's needs”

United Nation Development Program (UNDP) sees governance as mechanism and processes where people can express their rights based on legal rights and obligation. UNDP pronounced eight characteristics of good governance-accountability, transparency, participation, efficiency and effectiveness, equity and equality, rule of law, consensus orientation, and strategic vision (Dauda, & Yusha'u, 2017).

Ali (2015) mentioned six indicators of good governance regarded as important weapons for promotion of good governance. These are as follows-

- Accountability and Transparency
- Free from violence and stability in political system
- Effectiveness of governmental policy
- Elimination of corruption
- Quality of governance
- Establish the rule of law.

Governance can be defined as it denotes how political power is exercised in a country or relationship between rulers and ruled; how country's social and economic resources are being utilized for development while Good governance is a process of managing country's resources with accountability, transparency, genuine participation and, ensured rule of law aimed at betterment of standard of living.

Islamic Guidelines on Self-Accountability:

The essence of faith of Muslim is hesab (accountability) to almighty Allah; Iman (faith on Allah, his books, angels, and related matters), fundamental basis of all activities in Islam, guides Muslim in every moment. Shariah, the legal guide of Islam, specifies how every business of a Muslim would be conducted, how every activity of a Muslim would be governed. Shariah is the legal guide of Islam on the basis of Quran (revelation of Allah) and Hadith (speech, direction and activity of Prophet Muhammad) to lead life or Shariah is a way of life according to Islamic guidelines. In broad sense, accounting is central in Muslim's faith; accountability to Allah and to the community is paramount in Islam (Mordhah, 2012). Self accountability refers to one's own review on his or her activities with identifying wrongdoings and promising for correction in future. Islam sees accountability as Amanah (trust) which includes everything which is entrusted

upon to the individual as well as instructed to do take care of. Amaanah incorporates protecting individual capacities from engaging any deed which is not pleasing to Allah and guarding the rights of others which are entrusted to take care of. Islam requires proper manner to maintain Amanah whether it is public or private trust (Dauda, & Yusha'u, 2017).

In Quran, Allah said-

‘O you have believed, do not betray Allah and the Messenger or betray your trusts (things entrusted to you and all the duties ordained by Allah) while you know [the consequence]’. Al-Anfal, 8:27.

Taqwa, consciousness of Allah, prevents a person from any wrongdoing which would cause disgruntle of Allah; Taqwa demands Ta'ah, obedience of Allah, in every moment whether the person is in alone or not. The goal of Iman is to create consciousness of Allah (Taqwa), crucial objective of Iman for pleasing Allah, makes individual accountable to Allah if the person is being watched or not being watched; a Muslim believe that Allah is watching him/her ceaselessly (Dauda, & Yusha'u, 2017).

Though it is perceived that accounting is taken on the basis of facts, emotion and moral statement do facilitate accounting, and practically serves some goals. Activity based on inherent aspiration which leads self-accountability varies activity which is based on explicit performance measurement tools. A number of studies conclude that individual's sense of responsibility and self-motivation able them to do the job. Emotion plays as facilitative effects on the dimensions of self-accountability-regret, guilt, intentions, and practical coping. Thus, self-accountability consists of fear, hope, guilt and regret with continuous self-evaluation. Confession and repentance are two important things for self-accountability re-shaping the individual's behavior (Mordhah, 2012).

Ihtesab-e-Nafs (Self-Accountability) is one of the basic tenets of Quran, has been considered as tool against insinuation of Satan (evil). Eminent Islamic scholars-Al-Mawardi, Ghazali and Ibn Al-Qayyum see as self-accountability is a necessity for self control. Famous Arabic lexicographer Ibn Manzur, author of Lisan al-'Arab, defines Ihtesab (accountability)-'counting

of merits and demerits of a person'. Political thinker Al-Mawardi, author of 'Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyya' and 'Adab al-Din wa al-Dunya' defines-“Self-accountability is to visit one’s own day-and-night activities and then to decide that I will continue my good deeds and leave the bad in future repenting about such actions”.

Imam Ghazali thinks that self-accountability is to review one’s previous deeds like a businessman who reviews his financial statements periodically and assesses which brought benefit and which caused loss (Chaudhuary, 2017). Mordhah (2012) elaborated self-accountability in Islam in this way- “Self accountability is a unique facet of Islamic administration and it is attributed to a great principle which covers not just administrative chores but also individual and social acts. This principle is established from the idea that the existence of human life is a basis for the worship of God, and therefore, all the administrator’s work, actions and even gestures are related to whether he obeys God’s orders and avoids God’s prohibitions or not. This knowledge then holds him accountable for his work to his creator, the creator of this universe. From this point of view, self- accountability is considered as a first line of defense to face administrative corruption. Furthermore, self accountability in this conception helps the administrator to avoid oppression and act fairly.”

Various verses of Quran and Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) give great concern on self-accountability. In this section, few verses from Quran and Hadiths have been mentioned on self-accountability. Allah (SWT) says- “Read your record. Sufficient is yourself against you this Day as accountant” (Al-Quran, 17:14). “From Abu-Hurairah, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: the rights will be rendered back to those whom they are due, and even the sheep that does not have horns will take revenge from the horned sheep” (Muslim, 1334). Every believer is a responsible person like an incumbent employee for his duties, is accountable to his fellows even if an animal commits injustice towards another animal.

Islam prevents sins which arise from heart at first. Allah says- “Allah does not impose blame upon you for what is unintentional in your oaths, but He imposes blame upon you for what your hearts have earned. And Allah is Forgiving and Forbearing” (Al-Quran, 2:225). Allah emphasizes greatly on the intention of a person in the different chapter of Quran whether the individual expresses or conceals his intention of heart. Allah said-“To Allah belongs whatever is

in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. Whether you show what is within yourselves or conceal it, Allah will bring you to account for it. Then He will forgive whom He wills and punish whom He wills, and Allah is over all things competent” (Al-Quran, 2:284). There have ample verses of Quran on this subject as Allah says-“But do they not know that Allah knows what they conceal and what they declare?” (Al Quran, 2:77).

“And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it]” (Al-Baqarah, 2:42). “Or do they think that we hear not their secrets and their private conversations? Yes, [We do], and our messengers are with them recording” (Az-Zukhruf: 43:80). “And you were not covering yourselves, lest your hearing testify against you or your sight or your skins, but you assumed that Allah does not know much of what you do” (Fussilat, 41:22). The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) says- Hannan ibn Kharija reported: I said to Abdullah ibn ‘Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, “What do you say about jihad and military campaigns?” Abdullah said, “Begin with your soul and wage jihad against it. Begin with your soul and wage a military campaign against it” (Muḥāsabat al-Nafs, 62). The prophet commands that controlling Naf’s (soul) from ill thinking which might facilitate towards sins is a hardest war compared to military campaign.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) emphasizes vigorously on self-accountability and justice in his speech and deeds throughout his life and guides his followers accordingly. For establishing justice, Islam guides with due importance on the implantation of Islamic law literally whether the guilty person is a leader of the nation (Ameer). The Prophet (s) admonished: "The nations before you were destroyed because they would punish the lower class criminals according to the law but would let go those from the higher class." Then laying further emphasis, he continued: "I swear by the Authority in whose control is Mohammad's life, if Mohammad's daughter is guilty of stealing, I would cut her hand off" (narrated by Bukhari, Kitab al Hudud, Chapter 11-12}. It was narrated from Ibn Mas’ud (Ra) that the Prophet (pbuh) said, “The son of Adam will not pass away from Allah until he is asked about five things: (i) how he lived his life, (ii) how he utilised his youth, (iii) with what means did he earn his wealth, (iv) how did he spend his wealth, and (v) what did he do with his knowledge” (Sunanut Tirmidh).

Mordhah (2012) mentioned two story of Islam which reflects true meaning of self Accountability in Isla. ‘An example of such constraint is seen in the story of Omar Bin Alkhatib, the second caliph in Islam. Omar Bin Alkhatib could not sleep because he feared if an animal in Iraq even stumbled because he did not settle its way, then his God would ask him about it. Even though Omar Ben Alkhatib was a ruler, he felt he was responsible about everything including animals in his kingdom. His awareness is outstanding and represents his immeasurable accountability despite his being in the top of the iron triangle.

What made Omar Ben Alkhatib self – accountable is exactly what is needed in public administration. Another historical example of self accountability is the story of Omar Ibn Abdulaziz, one of Amoy.s caliph. When he, became a caliph, his wife found him crying. “What happened that made you crying?” she asked him. He answered” I have been a ruler of Mohammad’s Ummah so I remember poor, hungry, sick, and pressed people in addition to elders and strangers and I believe my God will ask me about them ... then I cried”(Saiadalahel,1994). It is clear that Omar Ibn Abdulaziz had deep faith and strong fear from Allah that made him accountable.’

On justice, Islam gives due importance in managing every duty of a Muslim. Allah says- “O David! We did indeed make Thee a vicegerent on earth: so judge Thou between men in truth (and justice): nor follow Thou the lusts (of Thy heart), for they will mislead Thee from the path of Allah. For that who wander astray from the path of Allah, is a penalty grievous, for that they forget the Day of account” (Saad 38:26).

Self-Accountability in Islam and Good Governance:

Accountability and transparency regards as the cornerstone of good governance where incumbent person is accountable to the multiple stakeholders like-government authorities, immediate superior executive, constituents, and to the citizens of the country. Islam covers in every phase of human life, introduced as ‘Islam is the complete code of life’, where immense importance with due guidelines was given by Ouran and Hadith on self-accountability. Aforementioned guidelines of Islam guides explicitly to a believer that he or she is solely accountable to the almighty Allah even the individual passes the time alone, will be judged in the

Day of Judgment, is oriented to receive rewards or punishment. Thus, taqwa-consciousness of Allah prevents the individual from any ill thinking which caused motivation for wrongdoing. Islam prevents any wrongdoing at first which arises at first from soul by ill thinking-which is strongly forbidden in Islam, and duty of a person sees as Amanah-trust. In this way, every Muslim is accountable to his creator in every while. This outstanding self-accountability system of Islam forbids the incumbent in breaching the rights of the people; facilitate to ensure good governance and justice in the society.

Conclusion:

A Muslim is being watched in every while; a true believer believes that he will be accountable to the Day of Judgment in front of Almighty Allah for his every deed which occurs by his mind or by body. Whatever a believer expresses himself or not, if he harnesses wrong things or sins in his mind, of course he will have to be accountable. Taqwa, consciousness of Allah, prevents every Muslim from doing forbidden things in Islam. Justice has been regarded as the fundamental essence of Islam. Every incumbent, according to Islamic guidelines, is liable to his own responsibilities. As Islam says-everyone is responsible and everyone will be questioned for his or her responsibilities. Thus, a true believer fosters Taqwa and Taqwa prevents him from wrongdoings, from infringing justice because of fear of Allah. In this way, transparency, accountability and responsiveness are ensured, and Islamic guidelines of self accountability facilitate to obtain good governance.

References:

- Ali, M. (2015). Governance and Good Governance: A Conceptual Perspective. *The Dialogue*, March 2015, Vol. X. No. 1. Retrieved from: http://www.qurtuba.edu.pk/thedialogue/The%20Dialogue/10_1/Dialogue_January_March2015_65-77.pdf
- Botchway, F. (2001). Good governance: The old, the new, the principle, and the elements. *Florida journal of international law*, January-2001, 13 FLJIU 59, 13 Fla. J. Int'l L. 159.
- Chaudhary, A. (2017). The Holy Qur'an on Self Accountability. Retrieved from: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/93-holy-quran-self-accountability-series-inviting-chaudhary/>
- Dauda, A. G. & Yusha'u, S. A. (2017). Influence of Accountability and Transparency on Governance in Islam. *International Journal of Academia Research in Business and Social Science*, 2017, Vol. 7, No. 6.
- Hossen, M. (2019). Motivation and Governance. *Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance*. Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2019. Retrieved from: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-31816-5_1964-1
- Mikailu, S. A. & Maishanu, M. M. Islamic Value System, Accountability and Transparency in the Public Service.
- Mordhah, N. (2012). Self-Accountability: The Link between Self-Accountability in Islam. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, March 2012, Vol. 2, No. 5. Retrieved from: http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_2_No_5_March_2012/29.pdf
- Taufiq, I. (2015). Transparency and Accountability in the Qur'an and its Role in Building Good Governance. *International Journal of Business, Economics and Law*, Vol. 6. Issue 4 (Apr.). Retrieved from: https://www.ijbel.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Law33_Imam-Taufieq_Ijbel_D33.pdf
- Website: Islam Online. <https://islamonline.net/>
- Website: Islam Question and Answer. <https://islamqa.info/en/answers/65649/expiation-for-transgression-against-rights-of-others>