



The Muslim Manifesto



All praise is due to Allah and may His choicest salutations continue to descend upon our Master and Leader Muhammad Sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam.

"Behold Allah enjoins justice, the doing of good, and generosity towards relatives and He forbids all that is shameful and all that which is vile as well as rebellion He exhorts you so that so that you may take heed" (16:90)



As we draw closer to the general elections we are increasingly bombarded with political manifestos of various parties. These manifestos set out the strategic direction and the foremost principles which political parties hope to legislate should they win sufficient support in an election to serve in government. Political manifestos are public declarations of values, ideals and priorities of parties.

As Muslims, what are our core values, ideals and priorities? What are the overarching principles and values of our faith? What is the manifesto of Muslims both at an individual and collective level? The following verse of the Quran best encapsulates the Islamic manifesto:

"Behold Allah enjoins justice, the doing of good, and generosity towards relatives and He forbids all that is shameful and all that which is vile as well as rebellion He exhorts you so that so that you may take heed" (16:90)

This verse mirrors the political, social and economic principles of Islam. This verse is read by millions of Imams every Friday in the second khutbah ever since the time of Umar bin Abdul Aziz *Radhi-Allahu anhu*.

It contains three commands and three prohibitions which in amazing brevity sums up the most important Islamic values and principles regarding human co-existence and interaction. Every command or prohibition of the Quran falls under one of these six categories. They are:

Justice: Justice essentially refers to the relationship of man with fellowman, either at an individual or collective level. A relationship that is premised on the fair discharge of social, economic, legal and political rights. Justice is the first requirement for peace. "Peace is not the absence of war but the presence of justice." Therefore if you want peace work for justice! When Ali *Radhi-Allahu anhu* became the fourth Caliph advised his administrators thus:

1. Always display love and kindness. Do not think your success lies in scolding and treating them harshly.
2. Treat everyone fairly.
3. Do not take sides or favor certain people. Such behavior will lead to oppression and despotism.
4. In choosing your officials, be careful not to include those who have committed crimes against the state or who are responsible for the oppression of the innocent.
5. Choose honest, true, and kind individuals, and prefer those who do not seek their own interests.
6. Pay your officials enough so they do not turn to unjust earnings and immorality.
7. Supervise your officials and be open to consultation with sincere individuals you trust.
8. Earn the trust of the people and seek their well-being, and do not let your actions leave a person feeling obligated.
9. Never break your word. Do not promise things you will not be able to perform.
10. Control your anger. Do not issue punishments when angry.

Ihsan: Ihsan has a dual meaning. It entails a commitment to do something perfectly, to excel, to be proficient and to give off your best. Nabi *Sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam* has said: **"Verily, Allah loves that when anyone of you does a job, he should perfect it"**. No people, no community or civilization can prosper if people are not motivated to excel in what they do. Ihsan also means benevolence, generosity, and compassion. It means doing not only

the required and obligatory, but going the extra mile. A very striking example in the Quran is the need display *ihsan* at the time of divorce which is usually a period characterized by spite, hatred and argument. **"A divorce is only permissible twice: after that, the parties should either hold together on equitable terms, or separate with kindness (Ihsan)." (2:229)**. Individuals are encouraged to display compassion even at the time of the most personal circumstances of strife and conflict! Justice protects society from the violation of rights, while *ihsan* infuses respect, warmth and harmony.

Generosity Towards Relatives:

The third command after justice and *Ihsan* is the good treatment towards one's relatives. Good treatment includes sharing in their sorrows, and happiness, helping them and supporting them. The first duty of the well-to-do members of the family is to fulfill the needs of their own near relatives. A strong and stable family bond leads to a strong and stable community. A strong family bond develops a sense of belonging, which in turns nurther self esteem and self respect.

Justice, *Ihsan* and the family unit are the three pillars that contribute to the stability, unity and harmony of society. However, there are three competing vices that can potentially destabilize society, they lead to disunity, suspicion and immorality. They are:

Obscenity: The challenge of society is to create such a social environment where its members are protected from all forms of sexual promiscuity. This includes any act that is immoral, obscene or vulgar...anything that has the potential to arouse lust. Obscenity is promiscuous conduct that erodes the natural protective shield of *hayaa* (modesty). Obscenity in the name of freedom is the devils way of enslaving his disciples. Obscenity destroys the moral fabric of society, it destroy families and opens the doors to drugs, rape, crime and disease.

Vice: Obscenity deals with sexual indecency while vice relates to conduct that is naturally repugnant to human nature and which stands against the recognized standards of propriety and good taste. If people permit vice to flourish it will eventually course the ruin of the whole of society. "Those who keep within Allah's limits and those who transgress them or allow them to be compromised may be compared to people on a ship, some of whom must stay below deck in the hardest and worst place, while others get passage above. When those below need water, they pass through those on the upper deck, injuring and annoying them until those below reflect, 'If we were to stave a hole in the hull we could get water without troubling those above. 'Were those above deck to leave those below to themselves, all would be destroyed, while if they were to help them, all would be saved."

Rebellion: This includes aggression, oppression and the violation of the rights of others. It includes any act that lends itself to corruption, fear, violence and murder. Rebellion also includes revolting against an authority that rules with justice. It calls for the respect of law and authority Rebellion breeds social, economic and political instability.

The Muslim manifesto is underpinned by Justice, *Ihsan* and a harmonious relationship with members of the famiy. It calls for the total eradication of promiscuity, vice and incitement of fear and hostility.

May Allah grant us the good fortune of becoming the torch bearers of justice and compassion. May He shield and protect our communities from vulgarity, indecency and hostility.

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