



Ramadan Daily Quran Studies, by Dr Zahid Aziz, 2024

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## Study 22:

# Qualities for leadership – 2





- An example of **the same law of the land applying to leaders** as to ordinary people is provided in the story of Joseph in the Quran.
- Joseph was wrongly put in prison in Egypt. The King (Pharaoh) of Egypt had him brought out of this unjust imprisonment and told him that he was now a dignified person. The Quran says that Joseph said to the king:

قَالَ اجْعَلْنِي عَلَى خَزَائِنِ الْأَرْضِ إِنِّي حَفِيظٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٥﴾

“Place me (in authority) over the treasures of the land;  
surely I am a good keeper and have knowledge.” (12:55)





- Joseph told the truth on his *CV (Curriculum Vitae)* mentioned in the above verse, and the King appointed him minister of finance. The Quran says of his position:

وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَتَّبِعُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَاءُ ...

“And thus did We give to Joseph power in the land — he had mastery in it wherever he liked. ...” (12:56)



- Later, when his brothers came to Egypt from the neighbouring country to get corn during a famine, they did not know that it was Joseph holding such a high position.



- Joseph did not want his scheming brothers to take the youngest, innocent brother Benjamin back with them. He wanted to keep him with him in Egypt.
- But the law of Egypt did not allow Joseph to do this. The Quran says:

... مَا كَانَ لِيَأْخُذَ أَخَاهُ فِي دِينِ الْمَلِكِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ ط ...

“... He could not take his brother under the king’s law, unless Allah pleased. ...” (12:76)





- Joseph, as the Quran said above, “had mastery in the land wherever he liked”. But he did not try to use his powerful position to subvert or circumvent the law of the land.
- He could have done this, especially as the King held him in high regard, and he had served the country very ably and loyally.
- This kind of abuse of power is commonplace today by people in high positions in all countries of the world. But Joseph abided by the law.





- It then so happened that a missing property of the government was found in that brother's bag and he was arrested and thus detained in Egypt.
- This at least made him safe from any possible scheming by the other brothers. This is what is referred to in the words “unless Allah pleased”.



- A ruler's duty is to do justice between the strong and the weak.
- In the time of the prophet-king David, two men in a dispute took their case to him. The account runs as follows in the Quran:

“(They said: We are) two litigants, one of whom has wronged the other, so decide between us with justice, and do not act unjustly, and guide us to the right way.

This is my brother. He has ninety-nine ewes (female sheep) and I have a single ewe. Then he said, Make it over to me, and he has prevailed against me in dispute.



He (David) said: Surely he has wronged you in demanding your ewe (to add) to his own ewes. And surely many partners wrong one another except those who believe and do good, and very few are they! ..." (38:22–24)



قَالَ لَقَدْ ظَلَمَكَ بِسُؤَالِ نَعْجَتِكَ إِلَى نِعَاجِهِ<sup>ط</sup>  
وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْخُلَطَاءِ لَيَبْغِي بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ  
إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَقَلِيلٌ مَّا هُمْ<sup>ط</sup> ...



- Many baseless, and indeed shameful, stories have been made up about the prophet David to elaborate upon this incident.





- What it really shows is that those who possess plenty are not content to see others having even a little, but want to grab that as well.



- Since this refers to “partners”, we may say that in the field of business large corporations want to use their power to take over and absorb small businesses to eliminate all competition.
- The duty of the rulers of the land, according to this example in the Quran, is to do justice between the big and the small, the strong and the weak, and enable the small and the weak to survive.



- The above example also shows that rulers must be accessible to the people. The Holy Prophet Muhammad and his early successors were always accessible to the people, without any guards to keep people out. The following incident shows this:

The Prophet passed by a woman who was sitting by a grave crying. He said (to her): “Fear Allah and be patient.” She said to him: “Go away, for you have not been struck by a calamity like mine.” And she did not recognise him. When she was informed that it was the Prophet, she went to his house and **there she did not find any guard at his door**. She then said (to him): “I did not recognise you.” He said: “Truly, patience is shown when the calamity first strikes.”

(Bukhari, hadith 1283)



- One point to be noticed here is that the Holy Prophet quietly accepted the woman's rude reply at the graveside and walked away. **He did not reply:** Don't you know who I am? Who do you think you are talking to?
- Later, people told her that it was the Prophet. When she went to his house to apologise, **she had access to him because there was no guard at his door.**



- Maulana Muhammad Ali comments on this as follows:

“This hadith also establishes that there was no doorman at the Holy Prophet’s house. That did not mean that people could enter his house without permission, since the Holy Quran itself requires people to seek permission before entering any house. ... It means that there was no such doorman at the door of the Holy Prophet’s house as government officials and important people keep at their doors, preventing needy persons from access to those in authority.”

*END OF STUDY 22*

