

GUIDANCE VIA NUMBER 40: A UNIQUE STANCE

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ABSTRACT: The number Forty (40) is a mysterious number that has a great significance in Mathematics, Science, astronomy, sports, spiritual traditions and many cultures. Historically, many things took place labelled with number 40. It has also been repeated many times in Islam. There must be some significantly importance associated with this magic number 40. Only Allah knows the complete answer. Since Muslims are enjoined to establish good governance through a just sociomoral order (or a state) wherein they could organise their individual and collective life in accordance with the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW). I have gathered together some information to find some guideline via significant number 40 to reform our community by eradicating corruption, exploitation, injustice and evil etc.

INTRODUCTION

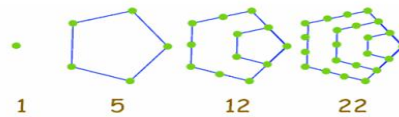
Muslims are enjoined to establish good governance through a just sociomoral order (or a state) wherein they could organise their individual and collective life in accordance with the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ). It is the expectation of the Qur'an that its adherents would either reform the earth (by eradicating corruption, exploitation, injustice and evil) or lay their lives in this process. There are no other (honourable) alternatives for them. This is the foremost obligation of the Muslims in general and the functionaries of an Islamic State in particular. Professional integrity and moral uprightness are pivotal ingredients. Islam insists that where revelation is silent, we are supposed to conduct our affairs through consultation and shura. Shura ensures the guidance of collective wisdom. It also gives a sense of participation to those who are consulted in the decision-making process. It gives the participants a sense of belonging to the organisation, which, in turn, enables them to sacrifice for the organisation. If decisions are made unilaterally, they tend to alienate. The community is advised to settle its affairs through shura or mutual consultation and cooperation (Q: 42:38). To emphasise further I may quote Ibn Arabi with a slight modification: The Qur'an tells us that God has, "breathed His own spirit in man". Now it is up to man to bear witness that God is indeed present in him. So, all that you, me, and the Muslim Ummah have to prove is that God is indeed present in us. If we do that, it would positively revolutionise the Ummah and enable us to fulfil the aforesaid Vision of the Qur'an. After this brief preamble, let us now turn to our main problem of finding some guidelines via mysterious number 40. If our presumption is not faulty, we can identify these principles with relative ease and comfort. Our contention is that the administration/governance of an organisation is analogous to the administration/ governance of the state. In fact, principles regulating the conduct of both are essentially the same.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Reader can find many significantly important facts about magic number 40 through available literature, but I will mention only the most relevant.

MATHEMATICS

1. Just like unique number 2 which added or multiplied with itself always produce unique answer 4, Forty (40) is the only number in whose letters appear in alphabetical order.
2. 40 is a natural composite number, an octagonal number[1], sum of the first four pentagonal numbers[2],



pentagonal pyramidal number[3] and semiperfect[4] number which have fascinated mathematics.

3. 40 is a repdigit in base 3 (1111, i.e. $3^0 + 3^1 + 3^2 + 3^3$), Harshad number in base10 [5] and Stormer number[6].

4. 40 is binary in 1010000

SCIENCE

1. The atomic number of zirconium, M40 and NGC 40.
2. The number of weeks for an average term of pregnancy [7].
3. $-40^\circ\text{F} = -40^\circ\text{C}$

RELIGIONS

The number 40 is frequently used in Jewish, Christian, Islamic, and other traditions.

JUDAISM

- Prophet Moses (عليه السلام) spent three consecutive periods of "forty days and forty nights" on Mount Sinai where he received the 10 commandments. (Deuteronomy 9:11, 9:25, 10:10)).
- In the Hebrew Bible, forty is often used for time periods, forty days or forty years, which separate "two distinct epochs".^[8]
- Rain fell for "forty days and forty nights" during Noah(عليه السلام)Flood (Genesis 7:4).
- Spies were sent by Moses (عليه السلام)to explore the land of Canaan (promised to the children of Israel) for "forty days" (Numbers 13:2, 25).
- The Hebrew people lived in the lands outside of the promised land for "forty years". This period of years represents the time it takes for a new generation to arise (Numbers 32:13).
- Goliath challenged the Israelites twice a day for forty days before David(عليه السلام)defeated him (1 Samuel 17:16).
- The prophet Elijah(عليه السلام) had to walk 40 days and 40 nights before arriving to mount Horeb (1 Kings 19:8).
- One of the prerequisites for a man to study Kabbalah was that he must be forty years old. (3 Maccabees 4:15).
- According to Stephen, Moses'(عليه السلام) life is divided into three 40-year segments, separated by his growing to adulthood, fleeing from Egypt, and his return to lead his people out (Acts 7:23,30,36).
- Ezekiel bore the iniquity of Judah for 40 days: (Eze 4:6).
- Allah(swt) forbade the Fasiqun (the non-believers) from entering the Holy Land for 40 years to separate them from Musa (عليه السلام) and his brother(Q 5:25–26)

CHRISTIANITY

- Just like Hebrew Bible, Christianity similarly uses forty to designate important time periods.^[8]
- Prophet Jesus (عليه السلام) fasted "forty days and forty nights" in the Judean desert (Matthew 4:2, Mark 1:13, Luke 4:2).
- Forty days was the period from the resurrection of Jesus (عليه السلام) to the ascension of Jesus (عليه السلام) (Acts 1:3).
- In modern Christian practice, Lent consists of the 40 days preceding Easter^[9].
- The Forty Martyrs of Sebaste^[10].
- Many Christian Filipinos mark the end of the initial mourning period on the fortieth day after death ^[11].

ISLAM

- The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was forty years old when he first received the revelation delivered by the archangel Gabriel as instructed by Allah (ﷻ).
- Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was praying and fasting in the cave for 40 days. Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) then had 40 followers to spread the religion of Islam.^[12]
- Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said that the prayers of a person who gossips would not be accepted for forty days and nights. (Al-Kafi, Vol. 6, p. 400)
- Imam Ali (ﷺ) has narrated from Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) that one who memorizes and preserves forty hadith relating to their religious needs shall be raised by Allah (ﷻ) as a learned scholar on the Day of Resurrection ^[12].
- It is believed that one who assists a blind man for forty steps becomes worthy of entering heaven ^[12].
- Imam Baghir (ﷺ) has said: "The prayers of someone who drinks wine are not accepted for forty days."^[12]
- Believers have also been encouraged to devote themselves to Allah (ﷻ) for forty days to see the springs of wisdom break forth from their hearts and flow from their tongues ^[12].
- Anas Bin Malik (رضي الله عنه) "Whoever prays to Allah (ﷻ) for forty-days in congregation, reaching the opening Takbeer, will have immunity from two things: freedom from the Fire and freedom from hypocrisy." (Sunan Tirmizi)^[13]
- Imam Bukhari (ﷺ) has mentioned a hadith that who so ever goes in the path of Allah (ﷻ) (fee-sabeelillah) and dust gathers on their feet, then Allah (ﷻ) will forbid the fire of Hell on them. (Sahih Bukhari p.124 v.1)
- Ibn 'Abbas (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allah's (ﷻ) Messenger (ﷺ) said, "Whenever a Muslim man dies, and forty men stand for his janazah prayer, all of them not joining anything with Allah (ﷻ) in worship, Allah (ﷻ) grants them intercession for him." (Muslim and others) ^[14].
- On the 40th verse (ayat) of the 2nd chapter of the Quran (Al-Baqarah) Allah (ﷻ) changes the topic ^[15].
- In Quran (Q 46:15) Allah (ﷻ) tells us that when a human being reaches maturity and the age of 40 he/she

should say "... I have repented to You; I am a submitter."

OTHER RELIGIONS AND CULTURES

- Mourning period in many cultures and religions lasts for 40 days.
- Forty days after sighting the tops of the mountains, Prophet Noah (عليه السلام) set forth a raven and a dove: Gen 8:6-7.
- Prophet Jonah (عليه السلام) warned Nineveh of judgment in 40 days: Jonah 3:4.
- Prophet Joseph (عليه السلام) mourned the death of his father Jacob for 40 days: Gen 49:33 - Gen 50:3.
- Prophet Ibrahim (عليه السلام) spent 40 days in a fire and lived because Allah (ﷻ) made the fire like flowers. ^[16]
- Prophet Yunus (عليه السلام) was in stomach of a whale for 40 days. ^[16]
- Prophets Doud (عليه السلام) and Suleiman (عليه السلام) each ruled for forty years.^[16]
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- Regarding the flood that Prophet Noah (عليه السلام) encountered, it is said that for forty days water continued to pour from the heavens and to stream out over the earth.^[16]
- In Hinduism, some religious prayers such as Hanuman Chalisa involve forty ^[17].
- During Black Death, ships were isolated for forty day/quaranta giorni which give rise to Quarantine ^[18].
- Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves.
- To understand a people, you must live among them for 40 days. ~Arabic proverb^[19]

RECOMMENDATIONS

So, as you have observed that the number 40 is represented many times in Islamic matters, but also took place in the Bible, Torah, many other religions and cultures, etc. The magic number 40 provides guidance about maturity, forgiveness period, achievement period, devotion, acceptance of dua, punishment and warning period and isolation period, etc. If one start searching the answer of why 40 is in almost all statements, probably there will be more questions than answers. This is an open research area for interested Scholars and researchers. Only Allah (ﷻ) knows better.

40 years of age is a very important milestone in the life of a man (woman). At the magic age 40, a man becomes strong (both mentally and physically), he reaches to a stage of maturity, responsibility & righteous behaviour and is enable to understand and handle the highs and lows of all aspects of life in a reasonable and wise manner. The reader may refer to (Aayah No. 15, Surah Al-Ahqaf, Chapter No. 46, Holy Qur'an) for further guidance.

INDIVIDUAL

وَحَمَلُهُ كُرْهًا وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا أُمُّهُ حَمَلَتْهُ إِحْسَانًا بِوَالِدِيهِ الْإِنْسَانَ وَوَصَّيْنَا أَنْ أَوْزَعْنِي رَبِّ قَالَ سَنَةً أَرْبَعِينَ وَيَبْلُغُ أَشَدَّهُ بَلْغًا إِذَا حَتَّى ثَلَاثُونَ وَفَصَالَهُ وَالِدِي وَعَلَى عَلِيٍّ أَنْعَمْتَ الَّتِي نِعْمَتِكَ أَشْكُرُ أَنْ أَوْزَعْنِي رَبِّ قَالَ نِعْمَتِكَ أَشْكُرُ مِنْ وَإِي إِلَيْكَ نُبْتُ إِنِّي ذُرِّيَّتِي فِي لِي وَأَصْلِحْ تَرْضَاهُ صَالِحًا أَعْمَلُ وَأَنْ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

The most important thing to be done when one reaches the age of forty is that he/she should make a re-assessment of his own personality, thank Allah (ﷻ) for His favours and pray for parents & off-springs. The repentance to Allah (ﷻ) should be renewed. One should recite the supplication

mentioned in the verse above and abandon all his (her) wrong acts (if any) from that point onwards. He should say, "My Allah (ﷻ), direct me to appreciate the blessings You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and to do the righteous works that please You. Let my children be righteous as well. I have repented to You; I am a submitter."

Thus, one should ask Allah (ﷻ) to forgive all his/her previous sins and a renewed effort should be made by every individual to ensure that he/she leads his/her remaining life as per Qur'an and Sunnah.

• COMMUNITY MEMBER

After this brief preamble, let us now turn to our main problem of finding some guidelines for good governance in Islam. If our presumption is not faulty, we can identify these principles with relative ease and comfort. Our contention is that the administration/governance of an organisation is analogous to the administration/ governance of the state. In fact, principles regulating the conduct of both are essentially the same. As per Quran, the community is advised to settle its affairs through shura or mutual consultation and cooperation (Q: 42:38). Shura or mutual consultation, as a decision-making process. It may be underlined, Shura was not introduced by the Qur'an; it was already prevalent in the Arab culture. The Quran simply confirmed it and transformed it from a tribal institution to a community institution. For instance, we are familiar with the existence of Dar-al-Nadwa or the City-Council in Mecca before the advent of Islam (Ibn Hisham, 1980). It was the common practice that who-so-ever was to cross forty years of his age would become automatically the member of this City-Council. It may be noticed that even the Meccan non-believers were of the opinion that a person attained maturity of thinking at the age of forty. This is the age where his knowledge and experience could help him to reflect in a dispassionate manner and offer constructive plans/critiques for the betterment of the community. In this regard, the following is my opinion nevertheless?

- One may suggest that if we could somehow push the age limit (of our voters and those who are contesting; for public offices) a little upward rather than pulling it downward, maybe we would stand a better chance to overcome some of the lingering difficulties of the modern democracy.
- Establishment of Shura: It may be emphasized that shura or mutual consultation offers us the guidance of collective wisdom of the community and saves us from a narrow or partisan outlook. Shura remained in

practice in some form during the period of the rightly-guided caliphs. However, it was pushed out of court when the Umayyads took control of the political affairs of the Muslim State (Ghadban, 1989).

- To establish the just socio-moral order for community, each and every department related to legislation, administration and execution etc., must establish their rules & regulation through a committee of mature, responsible and well qualified relevant experts.
- It is the foremost obligation for the following two pivotal professions: medical (their job is next to Allah (ﷻ)) and education (their job is next to parents).

May Allah (ﷻ) forgive me if I am wrong and guide me to the right path...Ameen!

بِئِنَّهُ وَالْحَمْدُ ; الْمُرْسَلِينَ عَلَى وَسَلَّمَ ; ۞ يَصِفُونَ عَمَّا الْعِزَّةَ رَبِّ رَبِّكَ سُبْحَانَ الْعَالَمِينَ رَبِّ

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