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The Concept of Good Governance in the Story of Prophet Solomon: A Maqāṣidī Interpretation Analysis of Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 17-44

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Abstract

This article examines the institutional model of good governance as illustrated in the story of Prophet Solomon, particularly as conveyed in Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 17–44, through a *tafsīr maqāṣidī* (purposive exegesis) approach. Unlike previous studies that have primarily focused on either the individual leadership of Solomon or isolated narrative fragments, this research argues that the Qur'an provides a holistic framework for governance—one that encompasses the government, civil society, and the private sector, even if not in the form of modern formal institutions. By employing analyses of both *maqāṣid zhāhir* (apparent objectives) and *maqāṣid bāṭin* (hidden objectives), along with Abdul Mustaqim's concept of *ḥifẓ al-dawlah* (protection of the state), this study demonstrates that the account of Prophet Solomon exemplifies a governance system that prioritizes the protection of religion, life, and the state, while upholding justice, equality, humanity, moderation, and responsible freedom. These findings emphasize that good governance is not solely the responsibility of the leader; rather, it arises from the synergistic collaboration among various segments of society, all striving to achieve the public good (*maṣlaḥah*). The contribution of this research lies in presenting a more comprehensive Qur'an-based institutional model of good governance, thereby enriching the discourse on tafsīr maqāṣidī within the study of governance.

[*Artikel ini mengkaji model kelembagaan* good governance *yang terkandung dalam kisah Nabi Sulaiman, khususnya dalam Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 17-44, melalui pendekatan* tafsīr maqāṣidī. *Berbeda dengan kajian sebelumnya yang lebih berfokus pada kepemimpinan individu atau fragmen kisah, penelitian ini*

berargumen bahwa Al-Qur'an menawarkan kerangka tata kelola pemerintahan yang holistik, melibatkan pemerintah, masyarakat madani, dan sektor swasta, meskipun tidak dalam bentuk kelembagaan formal modern. Dengan menggunakan analisis maqāṣid zhāhir *dan* maqāṣid bāṭin, *serta konsep ḥifẓ al-dawlah dari Abdul Mustaqim, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa kisah Nabi Sulaiman mengilustrasikan sebuah sistem pemerintahan yang mengutamakan perlindungan agama, jiwa, dan negara; menegakkan keadilan, kesetaraan, kemanusiaan, moderasi, serta kebebasan yang bertanggung jawab. Temuan ini menyoroti bahwa* good governance *bukan hanya tanggung jawab pemimpin, melainkan hasil kolaborasi sinergis antara berbagai komponen masyarakat yang bertujuan mencapai maṣlaḥah. Kontribusi penelitian ini adalah menyajikan model kelembagaan* good governance *berbasis Al-Qur'an yang lebih komprehensif, serta memperkaya diskursus* tafsīr maqāṣidī *dalam studi tata kelola pemerintahan.*]

Keywords: Good Governance, Prophet Sulaiman, *Tafsīr Maqāṣidī*, Institution, *Ḥifẓ al-Dawlah*

Introduction

In the last decade, global trends have highlighted the increasing significance of good governance as a fundamental prerequisite for national development and stability. This discourse remains relevant and continuously evolves within the context of the Muslim world.[1] However, the implementation of good governance in predominantly Muslim countries often faces complex controversies and structural challenges. The emergence of various social and economic crises—such as high unemployment rates, poverty, and malnutrition, particularly in regions rich in natural resources—has sparked intense debates regarding the effectiveness of adopted liberal capitalist economic policies and the centralized management of wealth and power by a small elite.[2] This situation has prompted calls for fundamental changes in governance, especially in areas like the Middle East and North Africa, which continue to struggle with authoritarian regimes and pressures for democratization.[3]

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[1]   Abdul Rashid Moten, "Al-Siyasah al-Shar'iyah: Good Governance in Islam," in *Qur'anic Guidance for Good Governance* (Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2017), 55–81; Ibnu Rusyidi, "Good Governance According to Islamic Perspective," *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 4 (October 12, 2023): 1000–1007.

[2]   A.F. Oran, "A Conception to Activate Zakāh as an Islamic Mechanism for Human Development," *Journal of King Abdulaziz University, Islamic Economics* 29, no. 3 (2016): 1–27; M.-S. Oukil, "Wasta and Development in Arab and Muslim Countries," in *The Political Economy of Wasta: Use and Abuse of Social Capital Networking*, 2015, 131–43.

[3]   G. Joffé, "Democracy and the Muslim World," in *The International Politics of Democratization: Comparative Perspectives*, 2008, 167–78.

Although Islamic principles theoretically provide a framework for good governance based on justice, trust, and integrity—with significant potential for instruments like zakat to promote human development[4]—their practical application still reveals stark inconsistencies across various predominantly Muslim countries. This situation is further complicated by social factors such as rapid population growth and the ambiguous role of religious institutions in shaping norms and policies.[5] Consequently, the issue of good governance in the Muslim world is not merely a technical administrative matter but a multidimensional challenge that encompasses economic, political, social, cultural, and religious dimensions, necessitating a deeper exploration of the root causes and potential solutions.[6]

In this context, the Quran is universally regarded as a comprehensive source of guidance for human life, encompassing principles of ideal governance. Qur'anic narratives frequently feature stories of great rulers that implicitly or explicitly illustrate the dynamics of power, justice, and leadership. Among these narratives, the story of Prophet Solomon holds a unique position, providing rich insights into the aspects of effective governance. This is particularly evident in Surah An-Naml [27]: 17-44, which explicitly highlights Prophet Solomon's interactions with various entities and systems that influenced his governance. Other verses related to Solomon typically focus on his encounters with Prophet David, his miracles, or the challenges he faced in life, but do not address the broader dimensions of governance.[7]

The tale of Solomon in Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 17-44 serves as the primary focus of this study, as the narrative portrays Solomon as a leader with an extraordinary capacity to formulate policies that benefit his people, accommodate their aspirations, and maintain economic stability and security within the kingdom. Notably, this success was not achieved solely by Solomon; it involved the contributions of various elements within his government.[8] The story explicitly highlights the significant contributions of humans, jinn, and even birds in realizing these policies.[9] Such governance, characterized by efficiency, participation, and accountability, shows strong parallels with the principles of good governance. In this context, Solomon represents the government, while humans, jinn, and birds

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[4]   Oran, "A Conception to Activate Zakāh as an Islamic Mechanism for Human Development," 1–27.

[5]   Oukil, "Wasta and Development in Arab and Muslim Countries," 131–43; A.R. Hameed and S.K. Jabir, "The Religious Institution's Role in Spreading the Tolerance Culture," *Res Militaris* 12, no. 2 (2022): 3000–3008.

[6]   H. Alibašić, "Exploring the Influence of Islamic Governance and Religious Regimes on Sustainability and Resilience Planning: A Study of Public Administration in Muslim-Majority Countries," *Public Policy and Administration* 39, no. 4 (2024): 556–87.

[7]   S. Mattawang, *Wawasan Al-Qur'an Tentang Kepemimpinan Nabi Sulaiman (Suatu Kajian Maudhui)* (UIN Alauddin Makassar, 2017), 7.

[8]   I. A. Mufidah, *Diplomasi Nabi Sulaiman Dengan Ratu Bilqis (Studi Kajian Tafsir Q.S. al-Naml [27]:29-44)* (UIN Sunan Ampel, 2020), 49–55.

[9]   N. A. B. Salman, *Interaksi Sosial Dalam Kepemimpinan Nabi Sulaiman Menurut Perspektif Al-Quran* (UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Darussalam, 2018), 50–55.

symbolize society, with certain jinn acting as the private sector actively engaged in the kingdom's economic activities and development. This tripartite representation makes Solomon's story a rich case study for analyzing the institutional dimensions of good governance from a Qur'anic perspective.

Nevertheless, studies on good governance that reference Qur'anic verses tend to be limited to identifying leadership principles alone. Research examining the story of Solomon also reflects a similar pattern, which can be categorized into several key focuses. First, most studies emphasize the moral and educational values contained within the narrative.[10] Second, some studies only examine specific fragments of Solomon's story, such as his interactions with ants[11] or the Queen of Sheba,[12] without analyzing the story as a whole and its representation of integrated governance. Third, although there are some studies on Solomon's leadership, they generally adopt an individualistic approach, emphasizing personal leadership models while failing to address the broader institutional structure of his governance. Even recent efforts to identify the relevance of this story to contemporary contexts—such as studies correlating the core values of Madani Malaysia (sustainability, welfare, creativity, respect, self-confidence, and courtesy) with lessons from Solomon's story[13]—while pertinent to state governance, still tend to focus on values and character dimensions rather than providing a comprehensive analysis of the institutional structure inherent in the Qur'anic narrative. These limitations collectively indicate a significant gap in the literature: there has yet to be a comprehensive study specifically addressing the institutional dimensions of good governance in the story of Solomon, beyond the realm of individual leadership or focusing on specific fragments of the narrative. This research argues that the story of Solomon in Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 17-44 presents a hidden and inadequately articulated model of institutional good governance that has been overlooked in previous studies. This research aims to fill that gap by conducting a more in-depth analysis of the model of institutional good governance reflected in the interactions and roles of various entities within Solomon's kingdom. By examining these institutional dimensions, this study hopes to make a significant contribution to the discourse.

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[10] B. Siregar, "Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Karakter Dalam Kisah Nabi Sulaiman (Analisis al-Qur'an Surat al-Naml Ayat 15-19)," IAIN *Padang Sidempuan*, 2018; Nurul Lailatul Islamiyah, "Simbolisasi Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Karakter Dalam Kisah Nabi Sulaiman (Kajian Q.S. al-Naml [27]: 17-44)" (undergraduate, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2019); S. N. A. Wijayani, "Pesan Moral Dari Kisah Nabi Sulaiman Dan Semut (Kajian Komparatif Antara Tafsir Kementerian Agama Dan Tafsir al-Mishbah)," *UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta*, 2019.

[11] Wijayani, "Pesan Moral Dari Kisah Nabi Sulaiman Dan Semut (Kajian Komparatif Antara Tafsir Kementerian Agama Dan Tafsir al-Mishbah)."

[12] Mufidah, *Diplomasi Nabi Sulaiman Dengan Ratu Bilqis (Studi Kajian Tafsir Q.S. al-Naml [27]:29-44).*

[13] Khairulnazrin Nasir, Rahim Kamarul Zaman, and Khalilullah Amin Ahmad, "Gagasan Malaysia Madani: Analisis Korelasi Enam Nilai Teras Ketamadunan Daripada Kisah Nabi Sulayman (As) Dalam Surah Al-Naml," *Al-Bayan: Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies* 22, no. 2 (August 7, 2024): 291–317.

This research employs a qualitative approach through library research. The primary data for this study consists of the text from Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 17-44, which was obtained through documentation techniques. Secondary data is gathered from various Islamic literature, Qur'anic exegeses, and relevant scholarly journals and books related to the themes of good governance, leadership in Islam, and the story of Solomon. The collected data will be analyzed using a descriptive-analytical method within the *maqāṣidī* exegesis framework developed by Abdul Mustaqim, with a particular emphasis on the category of *ḥifẓ al-dawlah* (preserving the state) as one of the objectives of Sharia. This approach aims to identify and interpret relevant dimensions of institutional good governance.

The Conceptualization of Good Governance and Its Relevance in the Context of Islam

To comprehensively understand the conceptualization of good governance and its relevance within the Islamic context, it is essential first to establish a foundational understanding of good governance in its universal application, followed by an exploration of the principles and frameworks derived from Islamic teachings and their contemporary manifestations. The concept of good governance has significantly evolved, particularly through the frameworks established by international organizations. The World Bank, notably in its 1992 report, initially defined good governance in relation to public sector management, emphasizing efficiency and accountability in resource utilization to promote sustainable economic development. Subsequently, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in its 1997 policy document, expanded this definition to encompass nine key characteristics: participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity and inclusiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability, and strategic vision. These principles collectively aim to promote sustainable human development and foster an environment conducive to economic prosperity and social justice. The global emphasis on good governance arises from the recognition that effective, legitimate, and accountable government structures are crucial for addressing complex socio-economic challenges, enhancing public trust, and ensuring a fair distribution of resources and opportunities.[14]

Based on this universal understanding, the conceptualization of good governance in Islam is firmly rooted in its comprehensive worldview, transcending mere administrative efficiency to encompass profound moral and ethical imperatives. At its core, Islamic governance is built upon two foundational principles: *al-amānah* (trust) and *al-'adālah* (justice). *al-amānah* signifies the responsibility, honesty, and integrity expected of those entrusted with leadership

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[14]   Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay, and Pablo Zoido, "Governance Matters," August 1, 1999, 1.

and public service, emphasizing that power is a trust from God.[15] Al-'adālah, on the other hand, mandates justice, equality, and the enforcement of rights for all individuals, serving as the foundation for all judicial and administrative processes within the Islamic framework.[16] Furthermore, the concept of *Maqasid al-Shar'ah* (Higher Objectives of Sharia) provides a crucial guiding framework. It prioritizes the protection and promotion of essential human interests—namely religion (*dīn*), life (*nafs*), intellect (*'aql*), lineage (*nasl*), and wealth (*māl*)—ensuring that all policies and decisions serve the greater well-being (*maṣlaḥah*) of society.[17] These objectives offer a dynamic lens through which contemporary challenges can be addressed in accordance with Islamic values.

Integral to these foundational principles is the specific governance model in Islam. Islamic governance is profoundly shaped by the principle of Tawhid (Oneness of God), which asserts the supremacy of divine law and its consequent moral and legal limitations on political power. This principle serves as a vital safeguard against the centralization and abuse of authority.[18] It informs *siyāsah shar'iyyah*, a comprehensive framework for Islamic political policy that focuses on preserving public welfare and preventing harm, indicating a proactive and ethically driven approach to good governance.[19] By integrating these principles and models, several characteristics of good governance emerge prominently within the Islamic framework. These characteristics include a strong emphasis on accountability and transparency, often reflected through the concept of hisbah (accountability) and the general Islamic injunction for honesty, where leaders are accountable not only to the public but ultimately to God.[20] Participation and mutual consultation (*shura*) are also critical, ensuring inclusive decision-making processes that involve broader societal input and consensus-building for effective and legitimate governance.[21] Finally, ethical leadership is paramount, requiring that leaders demonstrate

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[15] Rusyidi, "Good Governance According to Islamic Perspective," 1001–7.

[16] Rusyidi, 1001–7.

[17] M. Malik, *Foundations of Islamic Governance: A Southeast Asian Perspective*, Foundations of Islamic Governance: A Southeast Asian Perspective, 2016, 1; B.A. Collet, *Migration, Religion, and Schooling in Liberal Democratic States*, Migration, Religion, and Schooling in Liberal Democratic States, 2017, 1; S.M. Toha Salim and E. Akhmetova, "Good Governance and Contemporary Islamic Political Thought: Towards an Applied Model," vol. 62, 2018, 61–64.

[18] M.A. Kayapinar, "Limitations of Power in Islamic Political Thought," *Islam Tetkikleri Dergisi* 14, no. 1 (2024): 121–48.

[19] Moten, "Al-Siyasah al-Shar'iyah," 55–81; S.U. Din, S.H. Syed Ismail, and R.H. Raja Sulong, "Combating Corruption Based on Al-Siyasah al-Syar'iyyah Perspective: A Literature Review," *International Journal of Ethics and Systems* 40, no. 4 (2024): 776–807.

[20] N.A. Aziza and S. Ülev, "The Implementation of Governance Principles in Islamic Microfinance: A Comparative Analysis between Turkiye and Indonesia," *Hamdard Islamicus* 46, no. 4 (2023): 53–75; Toha Salim and Akhmetova, "Good Governance and Contemporary Islamic Political Thought: Towards an Applied Model," 61–84.

[21] D. Bourne and M. Alanazi, "Islamic Leadership," in *Elgar Encyclopedia of Leadership*, 2025, 125–26.

exemplary moral behavior characterized by empathy, integrity, competence, and a deep commitment to serving the public interest.[22]

The enduring relevance of Islamic governance principles is evident in both historical precedents and contemporary applications. Historically, the governance practices during the caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khattab (634-644 CE) serve as compelling evidence of the practical application of Islamic principles in achieving efficient, honest, and just administration.[23] These historical models continue to function as important benchmarks for Muslim societies. In the modern era, various Muslim-majority countries, including Malaysia and Turkey, have made efforts to integrate Islamic principles with contemporary governance models, striving to balance religious values with democratic principles and modern administrative structures.[24] However, these contemporary applications are not without significant challenges. The "crisis in Islamist thought," particularly evident during events such as the Arab Spring, underscores the critical need for a deeper and more nuanced understanding and practical application of Islamic governance principles within the complex modern political landscape.[25] Effective governance in the Islamic context, therefore, necessitates a careful integration of Sharia principles with modern governance practices to address contemporary socio-economic and political challenges, thereby enhancing credibility and trust in public institutions.[26]

The Governance of Prophet Solomon in the Qur'an: A Thematic Study

The story of Prophet Solomon in the Quran is spread across several surahs, with Surah An-Naml providing the most extensive and detailed narrative regarding his leadership. The name 17 times in the Quran, distributed across seven surahs and 16 verses, with the highest frequency occurring in Surah An-Naml (seven times). It is important to note that not all verses mentioning Prophet Solomon directly address aspects of his governance; some recount narratives of prophecy or refute allegations (e.g., Al-Baqarah [2]: 102). Consequently, this study specifically focuses on the verses that explicitly depict Solomon's interactions and leadership practices, namely Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 17-44.

Surah An-Naml, a Makki surah consisting of 93 verses, is believed to have been revealed in the third year of the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him). This surah aligns with the central theme of other Makki surahs, which focus on faith.

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[22] Bourne and Alanazi, 125–125.

[23] S.H.S. Ismail al-Qudsy and A.A. Rahman, "Effective Governance in the Era of Caliphate Umar Ibn Al-Khattab (634-644)," *European Journal of Social Sciences* 18, no. 4 (2011): 612–24.

[24] Moten, "Al-Siyasah al-Shar'iyah," 55–81; Aziza and Ülev, "The Implementation of Governance Principles in Islamic Microfinance: A Comparative Analysis between Türkiye and Indonesia," 53–75.

[25] Toha Salim and Akhmetova, "Good Governance and Contemporary Islamic Political Thought: Towards an Applied Model," 61–84.

[26] N.A.R.N.A. Ghani et al., "Implementation of Shariah Governance in the Charitable Sector: Challenges and Importance from an Islamic Perspective," *Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences* 22, no. 1 (2024): 6890–6904.

It narrates the consequences of faith and disbelief among past nations, with the story of Solomon and his invitation to the Queen of Sheba to believe in Allah serving as the central narrative related to governance and da'wah. The account of Solomon in Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 17-44 can be divided into nine episodes, as illustrated in the following table:

Table 1
Thematic Breakdown of Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 17–44

Episode	Event	Surah/Verse
1	Prophet Solomon assembled a multitude consisting of jinn, humans, and birds	Al-Naml [27]: 17
2	Prophet Solomon and his army traversed the Valley of Ants	Al-Naml [27]: 18-19
3	Hudhud's Absence and the News Regarding the Kingdom of Sheba	Al-Naml [27]: 20-26
4	Prophet Solomon sent Hudhud to deliver a letter to Queen Bilqis	Al-Naml [27]: 27-28
5	The letter reached Queen Bilqis	Al-Naml [27]: 29-31
6	Queen Bilqis consulted with her chief counselors to determine their course of action	Al-Naml [27]: 32-34
7	The Gift Sent to Prophet Solomon and His Refusal	Al-Naml [27]: 35-37
8	The Transfer of Queen Bilqis's Throne	Al-Naml [27]: 38-41
9	The arrival of Queen Bilqis and her declaration of submission to God, marked her conversion to Islam	Al-Naml [27]: 42-44

Source: Author's own compilation

The first episode begins with a depiction of the structure of Solomon's army. Verse 17 states: "For Solomon were gathered the armies of jinn, men, and birds, and they were arranged in order." The term "ḥushira" translates to "gathered" (jumi'a),[27] while "yūza'ūn", derived from the root word "waza'a", refers to an orderly arrangement.[28] This order highlights Solomon's management skills in overseeing a diverse army, which serves as a fundamental indicator of effective governance.

The second episode, which takes place in the Valley of the Ants (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 18-19), emphasizes the importance of empathetic and grateful leadership. The precise location of this valley is a subject of debate, but it is often associated with

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[27] Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān Al-'Arab* (Dār al-Ma'ārif), 882.
[28] Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Ẓilāl Al-Qur'ān*, vol. 5 (Kairo: Dar al-Syurūq, 2003), 2636.

Palestine,[29] where Solomon's kingdom is believed to be situated. The words of the ant leader, who warns its kin not to be crushed by Solomon's army, along with the assumption that "they do not perceive it," exemplify goodwill and justice. The phrasing of the verse encompasses ten dimensions of advice and warning.[30] Upon hearing this, Solomon smiled and prayed, "O my Lord, grant me the ability to be grateful for Your blessings..." (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 19). This prayer, particularly the term "*awzi'nī*", meaning "gather me in a state of gratitude",[31] reflects humility and an awareness of divine gifts, which are foundational qualities of righteous leadership.

The third episode addresses the delay of the hoopoe (Hudhud) and the news regarding Sheba (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 20-26). Solomon demonstrates meticulous attention to detail concerning his subordinates, even in the case of the absent hoopoe. The term "*tafaqqada*" (to inspect)[32] and Solomon's inquiry about the hoopoe's absence[33] reflect the leader's concern for his followers. The potential for severe punishment for the hoopoe, which could be averted if it presents "clear evidence" (*sulṭānin mubīn*),[34] underscores the significance of accountability. The hoopoe eventually arrives and reports on the Kingdom of Sheba, ruled by Queen Sheba (Q.S. An-Naml [27]:22). This report, characterized as "important and convincing news" (*binaba'in yaqīn*),[35] incorporates principles of political geography, highlighting the kingdom's power and wealth.[36] Additionally, the hoopoe reveals that Queen Sheba, and her people engage in sun worship, having been misled by Satan,[37] emphasizing the importance of intelligence in both spiritual and political contexts.

The fourth episode centers on the verification of information and Solomon's diplomatic mission (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 27-28). Upon receiving the hoopoe's report, Solomon exhibits his wisdom by neither fully accepting nor outright rejecting it.[38] To ascertain the truth of this information, Solomon instructs the hoopoe to deliver a diplomatic letter to Queen Sheba. The choice of the phrase "drop it to them" (*fa alqih ilayhim*) instead of "to her" (*ilayhā*)[39] underscores Solomon's consideration for the entire population of Sheba and their beliefs. The directive to observe "what they

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[29] Syihābuddīn Al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'jam Al-Buldān* (Beirut: Dar Ṣādir, 1977), 346.
[30] Ibn Qayyim Al-Jauziyyah, *Miftāḥu Dār Al-Sa'ādah Wa Mansyūru Wilāyah Al-'Ilmi Wa Al-Irādah* (Jeddah: Dar 'Ālim al-Fawā'idi, 2011), 692.
[31] Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Ẓilāl Al-Qur'ān*, 5:2637.
[32] Sayyid Quṭb, 5:129.
[33] Muḥammad Ṭāhir ibn 'Āsyūr, *Tafsīr Al-Taḥrīr Wa Al-Tanwīr*, vol. 19 (Tunisia: Dar al-Tunisiyyah li al-Nasyr, 1984), 245-46.
[34] Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Ẓilāl Al-Qur'ān*, 5:2638.
[35] Humām Ḥasan Yūsuf Salūm, *Sulaimān 'Alaihi Al-Salām Fī Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm* (Nablus: Jāmi'ah al-Najāḥ al-Waṭaniyyah Nablus, 2006), 153.
[36] Muḥammad Ṭāhir ibn 'Āsyūr, *Tafsīr Al-Taḥrīr Wa Al-Tanwīr*, 19:254.
[37] Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Ẓilāl Al-Qur'ān*, 5:2638–39.
[38] Al-Khālidī, *Al-Qaṣaṣ Al-Qur'ānī 'Arḍ Waqa'i Wa Taḥlīl Aḥdāth*, vol. 3 (Damaskus: Dar al-Qalam, 1998), 535.
[39] Muḥammad bin Aḥmad Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi' Li Aḥkām Al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Risālah, 2006), 148.

respond" (*mādhā yarji'ūn*)[40] illustrates a strategy of surveillance and assessment of diplomatic responses.

The fifth episode shifts its focus to the palace of Queen Sheba, who receives a letter from Solomon (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 29-31). Queen Sheba informs her elite advisers (*al-mala'u*), indicating her upper-class advisors,[41] that she has received noble letter (*kitābun karīm*). She considers the letter noble for several reasons, including its opening with *bismillah* (the Name of God) and its friendly advice devoid of insults. The content of Solomon's letter, though brief, emphasizes the prohibition of arrogance and the command to submit to Allah.[42] This illustrates the persuasive power of communication in diplomacy.

The sixth episode focuses on the consultation and policies of Queen Sheba (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 32-34). Her request, "Give me your opinion regarding this matter" (*aftūnī fī amrī*), along with her assertion that she will not decide without their presence,[43] underscores the importance of consultation as a cornerstone of her leadership. The elite advisors express their readiness for war, emphasizing their strength and courage (*ulū quwwatin wa ulū ba'sin shadīd*),[44] yet ultimately defer the final decision to Queen Sheba.[45] Queen Sheba articulates her perspective that conquering kings often destroy nations and humiliate their people,[46] indicating her reluctance to engage in war and her preference for a peaceful resolution to ensure her people's safety. [47]

The seventh episode centers on Queen Sheba's rejection of gifts and Solomon's ultimatum (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 35-37). Queen Sheba decides to send gifts to Solomon as a diplomatic effort to avert conflict (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 35). These gifts also serve as a test for Solomon, aimed at discerning whether he is a true prophet or merely an ordinary, greedy king.[48] However, Solomon rejects the gifts (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 36) with a tone of dismissal, asserting that Allah's favor upon him is far superior.[49] This refusal highlights Solomon's integrity as a leader who cannot be bribed. He then threatens to launch an attack on Sheba with an invincible army (*lā qibala lahum*)[50] and to humiliate them (*ṣāgīr*).[51]

The eighth episode illustrates the miraculous transfer of Queen Sheba's throne (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 38-41). Solomon inquires who can bring him the throne of Queen

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[40] Muḥammad bin Aḥmad Al-Qurṭubī, 150.
[41] Humām Ḥasan Yūsuf Salūm, *Sulaimān 'Alaihi Al-Salām Fī Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm*, 162.
[42] Naṣīr al-Dīn Al-Baydāwī, *Anwār Al-Tanzīl Wa Asrār al-Ta'wīl*, vol. 4 (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1998), 159.
[43] Muḥammad bin Aḥmad Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi' Li Aḥkām Al-Qur'ān*, 154.
[44] Muḥammad Ṭāhir ibn 'Āsyūr, *Tafsīr Al-Taḥrīr Wa Al-Tanwīr*, 19:264–65.
[45] Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Ẓilāl Al-Qur'ān*, 5:2640.
[46] Al-Khālidī, *Al-Qaṣaṣ Al-Qur'ānī 'Arḍ Waqa'i Wa Taḥlīl Aḥdāth*, 3:542.
[47] Muḥammad bin Aḥmad Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi' Li Aḥkām Al-Qur'ān*, 155.
[48] Muḥammad bin Aḥmad Al-Qurṭubī, 156.
[49] Muḥammad Ṭāhir ibn 'Āsyūr, *Tafsīr Al-Taḥrīr Wa Al-Tanwīr*, 19:268.
[50] Muḥammad bin Aḥmad Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi' Li Aḥkām Al-Qur'ān*, 164.
[51] Muḥammad Ṭāhir ibn 'Āsyūr, *Tafsīr Al-Taḥrīr Wa Al-Tanwīr*, 19:269.

Sheba before his arrival. The Ifrit jinn offer to retrieve it before Solomon rises from his seat, while an individual possessing knowledge from the Book claims he can transfer it "before your eye can blink" (*qabla an yartadda ilayka ṭarfuk*).[52] The discussion regarding the identity of the "one with knowledge"[53] highlights the complexity of this narrative. Solomon expresses gratitude for this gift and orders modifications to the throne to test Queen Sheba's intelligence and to demonstrate the miracle of his prophethood.[54]

The ninth episode represents the climax of the story, as Queen Sheba finally arrives and expresses her submission to Allah (Q.S. An-Naml [27]:42-44). She is asked, "Is this your throne?" (*ahākadhā 'arshuki*), a clever question that does not necessitate a direct answer.[55] She responds wisely, "As if it is my throne" (*ka'annahu huwa*),[56] showcasing her intelligence. Interpretations regarding the phrase "we were given knowledge beforehand" (*wa ūtīnal 'ilma min qablihā*) vary, with some attributing it to Sheba and others to Solomon.[57] Verse 43 elucidates that the practice of worshipping entities other than Allah serves as the primary obstacle to Sheba's faith.[58] The final surprise occurs when Sheba enters Solomon's palace, which is constructed of polished glass (*al-ṣarḥ*),[59] leading her to mistakenly believe it is a pool of water. The miracles and wisdom that Sheba witnesses ultimately awaken her, prompting her to submit to Allah: "My Lord, indeed I have wronged myself. I submit with Solomon to Allah, Lord of the worlds" (Q.S. An-Naml [27]:44). This declaration signifies her spiritual transformation, transitioning from *takhallī* (purification from sins) to *taḥallī* (adorning oneself with faith).[60]

Overall, the narrative of Solomon in Surah An-Naml exemplifies an ideal model of leadership, incorporating various dimensions such as management (organization of the army), ethics (concern for living beings, integrity), strategy (intelligence, diplomacy, verification of information), and spirituality (gratitude, utilizing miracles as evidence of prophecy). These principles establish a framework for effective governance grounded in justice, wisdom, accountability, and obedience to God.

The Wisdom of the Governance of Prophet Solomon in the Qur'an

Based on the analysis of Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 17-44, as well as the wisdom demonstrated by the leadership of Queen Sheba and the ant, several forms of governance that exemplify the principles of good governance can be articulated.

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[52] Al-Rāghib Al-ʿAsfahānī, *Mufradāt Alfāẓ Al-Qur'ān* (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2009), 517.
[53] Muḥammad bin Aḥmad Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi' Li Aḥkām Al-Qur'ān*, 172–73.
[54] Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Ẓilāl Al-Qur'ān*, 5:2641.
[55] Al-Khālidī, *Al-Qaṣaṣ Al-Qur'ānī 'Arḍ Waqa'i Wa Taḥlīl Aḥdāth*, 3:559.
[56] Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Ẓilāl Al-Qur'ān*, 5:2642.
[57] Muḥammad Ṭāhir ibn ʿĀsyūr, *Tafsīr Al-Taḥrīr Wa Al-Tanwīr*, 19:273.
[58] Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Ẓilāl Al-Qur'ān*, 5:2642.
[59] Al-ʿAsfahānī, *Mufradāt Alfāẓ Al-Qur'ān*, 482; Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Ẓilāl Al-Qur'ān*, 5:2643.
[60] Muḥammad Ṭāhir ibn ʿĀsyūr, *Tafsīr Al-Taḥrīr Wa Al-Tanwīr*, 19:276.

First, effective organization serves as a crucial foundation. Solomon's army, composed of jinn, humans, and birds, was structured in a systematic and orderly manner.[61] This organizational capability is evidenced in the verse, "Then they were arranged in order" (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 17). Al-Ṭabarī explains that "*yūzaʿūn*" refers to a systematic arrangement of ranks,[62] while Al-Alūsī adds that this ensures all troops gather without anyone being left behind. Solomon appointed division commanders and implemented a system that ensured coordination among all forces.[63] Al-Qurṭubī emphasizes that a leader must consistently exercise control, delegate tasks, and remain accountable for their governance,[64] which is a fundamental principle of good governance.

Second, high social sensitivity characterizes Solomon's leadership. He did not merely remain in the palace; instead, he actively monitored the conditions of his people, even in the valleys (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 18). His attentiveness to every individual in his army, including a hoopoe (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 20), demonstrates remarkable sensitivity. Al-Qurṭubī interprets this verse as evidence that leaders should examine and care for their constituents.[65] This attitude is also exemplified by Umar ibn al-Khattab, who felt responsible for even the smallest matters.[66] Such social sensitivity is essential for preventing injustice and promoting the public good.[67]

Third, Solomon exhibited democratic firmness. When the hoopoe was absent without permission, Solomon threatened punishment (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 21) to uphold discipline.[68] However, this firmness was coupled with the opportunity for the hoopoe to defend itself ("unless it comes to me with a clear excuse"), illustrating the significance of justice and caution in the imposition of sanctions.[69]

Fourth, a strong capacity for verification and investigation is another hallmark of Solomon's leadership. Verification involves confirming the accuracy of a report, while investigation entails a comprehensive examination to substantiate facts (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI) Online, n.d., "Verification"; Klitgaard, n.d., p. 1). After receiving information from the hoopoe, Solomon undertook both verification and an in-depth investigation[70] before making decisions (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 27-28), underscoring the importance of basing appropriate policies must be based on accurate data.

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[61] Humām Ḥasan Yūsuf Salūm, *Sulaimān ʾAlaihi Al-Salām Fī Al-Qurʾān Al-Karīm*, 158.

[62] Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ Al-Bayān ʿan Taʾwīl Ayy al-Qurʾān*, vol. 18 (Cairo: Dār Hijr, 2001), 26.

[63] Al-Khālidī, *Al-Qaṣaṣ Al-Qurʾānī ʿArḍ Waqaʾi Wa Taḥlīl Aḥdāth*, 3:517.

[64] Muḥammad bin Aḥmad Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmiʾ Li Aḥkām Al-Qurʾān*, 118.

[65] Muḥammad bin Aḥmad Al-Qurṭubī, 131.

[66] Muḥammad bin Aḥmad Al-Qurṭubī, 129.

[67] Ibnu Masʾud, *The Leadership of Sulaiman* (Yogyakarta: Noktah, 2018), 92–98.

[68] Humām Ḥasan Yūsuf Salūm, *Sulaimān ʾAlaihi Al-Salām Fī Al-Qurʾān Al-Karīm*, 175–76.

[69] Al-Khālidī, *Al-Qaṣaṣ Al-Qurʾānī ʿArḍ Waqaʾi Wa Taḥlīl Aḥdāth*, 3:527.

[70] Masʾud, *The Leadership of Sulaiman*, 136–39.

Fifth, Solomon demonstrated the ability to effectively utilize both natural resources (SDA) and human resources (SDM). The welfare of the state significantly depends on the strategic leveraging of these resources.[71] Solomon successfully managed humans, jinn, animals, and even the wind. He was supported by reliable human resources, including his staff, who could move Queen Sheba's throne in an instant (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 38-40), as well as jinn capable of diving to retrieve marine resources. The optimal utilization of these capabilities brought prosperity to his kingdom.

Sixth, Solomon showed wisdom in appointing expert staff. His troops, composed of jinn, humans, and birds, each had specific roles. The jinn managed covert operations, humans provided security, and birds were responsible for delivering reports.[72] The decision to assign the hoopoe to deliver the letter to Sheba (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 27) serves as compelling evidence of Solomon's strategy to appoint experts based on the hoopoe's knowledge of the routes and conditions of that region.[73]

Seventh, Solomon was a diplomatic leader. In his encounter with Queen Sheba, he employed a diplomatic strategy that involved three key methods: sending a warning letter that included a call to da'wah (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 28-31), rejecting gifts while delivering an ultimatum (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 36-37), and demonstrating the miraculous transportation of the throne and the glass palace (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 38-44). This diplomatic approach aimed to prevent war and achieve a peaceful resolution,[74] highlighting Solomon's astuteness in maintaining stability.[75]

Eighth, Queen Sheba exemplified the importance of prioritizing consultation and democratic principles. In response to Solomon's letter, she convened the elite of her kingdom for a consultation (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 29-32), seeking their advice and input.[76] This consultation aimed to assess the determination and loyalty of her forces[77] and served to arrive at the most effective decision, ultimately contributing to the stability and prosperity of the state.[78] Ninth, trustworthiness and integrity are essential traits for a leader. These qualities help prevent the abuse of power[79] and actions that could harm the state.[80] Solomon exemplified these traits when he was tested with gifts from Queen Sheba. He firmly rejected the gifts (Q.S. An-Naml [27]:

[71] Ari Anggarani Winadi Prasetyoning Tyas, "Sumber Daya Alam Dan Sumber Daya Manusia Untuk Pembangunan Ekonomi Indonesia," *Forum Ilmiah* 12 (2015): 2.
[72] Muḥammad Ṭāhir ibn ʿĀsyūr, *Tafsīr Al-Taḥrīr Wa Al-Tanwīr*, 19:240.
[73] Humām Ḥasan Yūsuf Salūm, *Sulaimān 'Alaihi Al-Salām Fī Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm*, 189–90.
[74] Tulus Warsito, "Diplomasi Bersih Dalam Perspektif Islam," *Thaqafiyyat* 16 (2015): 149.
[75] Mas'ud, *The Leadership of Sulaiman*, 188.
[76] Ibn Al-ʿArabī, *Aḥkām Al-Qur'ān*, vol. 3 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 2003), 486.
[77] Muḥammad bin Aḥmad Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi' Li Aḥkām Al-Qur'ān*, 153–54.
[78] Humām Ḥasan Yūsuf Salūm, *Sulaimān 'Alaihi Al-Salām Fī Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm*, 197.
[79] Antonius Antosokhi Gea, "Integritas Personal Dan Kepemimpinan Etis," *Humaniora* 5 (2014): 950.
[80] Ade Herlan Wahyudin, "Integritas Moral Pemimpin: Antara Cita Dan Fakta," *An-Nidhom (Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam)* 1 (2016): 20–23.

36-37) because he understood that Allah's blessings were far greater.[81] Solomon's integrity ultimately led Queen Sheba to submit and embrace Islam.[82] Finally, Solomon epitomized a rabbinic leader—one who dedicates himself to God and implements divine values in every action.[83] He made the teachings of Allah the foundation of his governance. Evidence of this is his immunity to worldly wealth (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 36) and his increased gratitude upon witnessing miracles (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 40). His strategy of dawah to Queen Sheba also reflects his rabbinic leadership, which is consistently oriented towards divinity.

The Manifestation of Apparent Maqāṣid in the Story of Prophet Solomon and Its Implications for Good Governance

In the field of Qur'anic scholarship, the study of *maqāṣid* serves as a fundamental analytical tool for addressing contemporary issues.[84] *Maqāṣid*, which refers to the objectives, wisdom, intentions, significance, and deeper meanings behind the texts, provides fresh interpretations, particularly in the analysis of narrative verses. The *maqāṣidī* exegesis approach is a methodology of interpretation that transcends mere linguistic or historical analysis to explore the universal goals and wisdom underlying divine revelation. This approach differs from *tafsīr bi al-ma'thur*, which focuses on narrations, and *tafsīr bi al-ra'y*, which emphasizes rational reasoning without necessarily connecting to the overarching objectives of Sharia.

In narrative contexts, *maqāṣid* may manifest explicitly or require in-depth analysis to uncover their hidden meanings. For instance, Allah's command to Prophet Moses to approach Pharaoh with a gentle word (*qaulan layyinan*) (Q.S. Taha [20]: 44) explicitly indicates the *maqṣad* of da'wah through wisdom. However, the deeper implications regarding justice and divine authority in establishing truth may necessitate a broader *maqāṣidī* analysis. Therefore, *maqāṣid* is classified into two categories: *maqāṣid zhāhir*, whose meanings are clear within the text (*min dākhil al-nuṣūṣ*), and *maqāṣid bāṭin*, whose meanings are derived from a holistic observation outside the Qur'an text (*min khārij al-nuṣūṣ*). This classification allows for flexibility in interpretation, accommodating both explicit normative dimensions and universal values that transcend the temporal context of the revelation. In the context of the story of Solomon, this approach enables us not only to understand the narrative flow but also to extract relevant governance principles applicable to contemporary times.

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[81] Humām Ḥasan Yūsuf Salūm, *Sulaimān 'Alaihi Al-Salām Fī Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm*, 202–3.

[82] Ismāʿīl ibn Al-Katsīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān al-ʿAẓīm* (Cairo: Mu'assasah Qurṭubah, 2000), 406.

[83] Mujammʿa al-Lughah Al-ʿArabiyyah, *Muʾjam al-Wāsiṭ* (Egypt: Maktabah al-Shurūq al-Dawliyyah, 2004), 321; Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2012), 133–34.

[84] S. Sidiq, "Maqasid Syariah & Tantangan Modernitas: Sebuah Telaah Pemikiran Jasser Auda," *In Right: Jurnal Agama Dan Hak Azazi Manusia* 7, no. 1 (2017): 143.

At the level of *ḍarūriyyāt*, the *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* is divided into two aspects: protective (*min ḥaythu al-ʿadam*) and productive (*min ḥaythu al-wujūd*). The protective aspect encompasses efforts to prevent harm and disruption, while the productive aspect focuses on fortifying and developing what is safeguarded.[85] Analyzing Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 17-44 through the lens of *ḍarūriyyāt al-khamsah*, from both protective and productive perspectives, reveals significant implications for good governance.

The story of Solomon explicitly illustrates the importance of safeguarding religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*). This is clear in Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 27-28, which discusses the sending of a letter to Queen Sheba. Solomon discovered that Queen Sheba and her people worshipped the sun, a practice of polytheism that stands in contrast to monotheism. Rather than resorting to a direct military invasion, Solomon chose to dispatch a letter that called for monotheism: "Indeed, this letter has come from Solomon, and indeed, it reads: 'In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, do not be haughty with me, but come to me as submissive (Muslims)'" (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 30-31). Solomon's invitation to embrace Islam was conveyed through a noble method of da'wah, characterized by a lack of reproach or provocation, which reflects the persuasive nature of Islam. This exemplifies *ḥifẓ al-dīn* from a constructive perspective, as he promotes and upholds the values of Allah's Oneness not through coercion, but through wisdom and diplomacy. The protective aspect is evident in Solomon's desire to eliminate the polytheistic practices that undermine the community's faith. In the context of good governance, this aspect emphasizes the significance of leadership that possesses spiritual integrity and is committed to religious values as the foundation for equitable and ethical governance. From an Islamic perspective, a good government must facilitate and protect the freedom of religion while being grounded in ethical values derived from religion.

Furthermore, the preservation of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*) is a crucial aspect of this narrative. It encompasses all essential elements for maintaining existence, including the right to life, health, and personal security. The story of Solomon illustrates Islam's profound respect for every soul. The incident of the ant warning its kind not to be trampled by the army (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 18) exemplifies a fundamental instinct for community protection. It is important to highlight how the ant leader, despite being a small creature, demonstrates responsible leadership for the safety of its community. The ant not only recognizes the impending danger but also takes prudent preventive action by instructing its fellow ants to enter their nests. This behavior exemplifies *ḥifẓ al-nafs* from a protective perspective. Solomon, who understands the language of ants, smiles and prays, "O my Lord, grant me the ability to be grateful for Your blessings which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and to perform good deeds of which You will approve; and admit me by

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85   Abū Ishāq Al-Shāṭībī, *Al-Muwāfaqāt Fī Uṣūl al-Sharīʿah* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 2004), 221.

Your mercy among Your righteous servants" (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 19). Solomon's response reflects empathy and an awareness of the importance of every life, even the smallest beings. This underscores his understanding of the significance of preserving life, not only for humans but also for all creatures.

Beyond that, the negotiations and diplomacy between Solomon and Queen Sheba (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 27-31 and continuing until Queen Sheba's arrival) exemplify tangible efforts to avert war and bloodshed. Despite possessing immense military power, Solomon opted for dialogue and the conveyance of divine messages as his initial approach. This exemplifies *ḥifẓ al-nafs* from a constructive perspective, which emphasizes the importance of fostering peace and creating a safe environment for life. This prioritization of diplomacy is essential for effective governance, as it ensures the security of citizens and promotes social stability, enabling individuals to realize their potential and contribute to civilization. A good government consistently prioritizes conflict prevention and problem-solving through peaceful means to protect the lives and welfare of its people.

Finally, the concept of the preservation of the state (*ḥifẓ al-dawlah*), which Abdul Mustaqim identifies as part of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, is explicitly illustrated in Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 32-34. These verses recount the dialogue between Queen Sheba and her royal advisors following the receipt of Solomon's letter. Queen Sheba inquires, "O elite, give me your opinion regarding this matter. I have never decided without your presence in my assembly" (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 32). Her advisors reply, "We are people of strength and great courage, and the decision is yours; so, consider what you will command" (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 33). This moment is critical as it tests a leader's wisdom in safeguarding the sovereignty and continuity of the state. Queen Sheba's choice to pursue a peaceful approach, even when her advisors favor war, exemplifies the protective aspect of *ḥifẓ al-dawlah*. With her wisdom, she looks beyond mere military might. She strategically and realistically evaluates the consequences of war: "Indeed, when kings enter a city, they ruin it and make the noblest of its people its lowest. And thus, will they do" (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 34). This is a keen assessment of the destruction that invasion and oppression would bring if war were chosen. Her decision to send gifts as an initial form of negotiation is not merely an act of diplomacy but also a tangible effort to protect her people from devastation. This reflects a strategic vision, which is one of the principles of good governance. The principle of *ḥifẓ al-dawlah* serves as a central pillar of effective governance, as political stability and security are prerequisites for the proper functioning of government. Without the security of the state, achieving *ḥifẓ al-dīn*, *ḥifẓ al-nafs*, *ḥifẓ al-'aql*, *ḥifẓ al-nasl*, and *ḥifẓ al-māl* becomes challenging. With the preservation of the state, other *maqāṣid* such *as ḥifẓ al-dīn*, *ḥifẓ al-'aql*, *ḥifẓ al-māl*, and *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah* can also be upheld, facilitating the realization of optimal maṣlaḥah. Wise foreign policy, effective diplomacy, and the ability to maintain national

sovereignty without compromising the welfare of the people are key indicators of good governance based on these *maqāṣid*.

Mainstreaming Universal Values (Maqāṣid Bāṭin) for Good Governance

Maqāṣid bāṭin, or universal values derived from the essence of Sharia, play a significant role in shaping the framework of good governance. These values—such as *al-'adālah* (justice), *al-insāniyyah* (humanity), *al-musāwah* (equality), *al-ḥurriyyah* (freedom), and *al-wasaṭiyyah* (moderation)—are deeply embedded in the narrative of Prophet Solomon and serve as indicators of authentic good governance. Justice (*al-'adālah*) is exemplified by Solomon when he grants the hoopoe an opportunity to defend itself after facing the threat of punishment (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 20-21). When Solomon does not find the hoopoe among his ranks and threatens severe punishment or even death, he refrains from acting hastily. Instead, he states, "Indeed, I will surely punish him with a severe punishment, or I will slaughter him, unless he brings me clear proof" (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 21). This suspension of judgment creates space for self-defense. When the hoopoe presents crucial information about Queen Sheba, Solomon validates the information before taking further action: "Then we will see whether you were telling the truth or are among the liars" (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 27). This illustrates a leader who applies justice firmly yet fairly, allowing for the right to be heard and prioritizing the verification of information. This practice serves as a crucial foundation for good governance, ensuring that legal processes are transparent, accountable, and uphold the principle of the presumption of innocence. Justice in governance not only involves enforcing the law but also ensuring that every individual has equal rights and fair opportunities under the law.

The value of equality (*al-musāwah*) is exemplified in Queen Sheba's approach, as she actively involves her advisors in significant decision-making processes (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 32). Queen Sheba explicitly states, "O my chiefs, advise me in my affair. I do not decide an affair until you are present" (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 32). This demonstrates an inclusive leadership model that values the perspectives of her advisors rather than adopting an autocratic stance. Such a principle is essential for effective governance, where decision-making must incorporate diverse voices and viewpoints.

Additionally, Solomon's attitude of not belittling the ant, despite being a great king, demonstrates his appreciation for the equality of all creatures, regardless of their status (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 18-19). Although he is a prophet and king with extraordinary power over humans, jinn, and animals, he does not dismiss the concerns of a small ant. This interaction illustrates humility and acknowledges the significance of every life, even the smallest. It reflects Solomon's understanding of the necessity of preserving life, not only for humans but also for other creatures. In the context of good governance, equality extends beyond mere legal equality; it encompasses the recognition of the dignity of every individual and group,

irrespective of social or economic status, or species within this narrative context. Participation and inclusiveness in decision-making are essential indicators of good governance.

The teachings of Islam are rich in humanitarian values (*al-insāniyyah*). The concept of humanity in Islam transcends racial and doctrinal boundaries, emphasizing the inherent dignity of every human being as a creation of Allah. This value is exemplified in the story of Solomon, who prioritized peace and diplomacy even when he possessed the power to conquer. Although Solomon had the capability to deploy formidable forces to subjugate Sheba, he chose instead to send a letter and offer a peaceful alternative. This decision illustrates the principle of moderation (*al-wasaṭiyyah*) in the exercise of power—avoiding excessive force, refraining from hasty judgments, and consistently prioritizing wisdom. Such an approach reflects respect for human rights and demonstrates moderation in the dissemination of teachings. Solomon's method serves as a model for effective governance that eschews extremism, fosters dialogue, and consistently seeks the most constructive and least harmful solutions. A good government does not resort to violence as the first option but reserves it as a last resort, always placing humanitarian values at the forefront of every policy. The prioritization of diplomacy and peace is a vital characteristic of good governance that emphasizes public benefit and seeks to avoid violence.

Although Islam upholds freedom, this freedom is a responsible one (*al-ḥurriyyah ma'a al-mas'ūliyyah*), constrained by the rights of others. This concept acknowledges that individual freedom is not absolute but is bound by obligations to God, oneself, and society. Freedom should be exercised for the greater good and public benefit, rather than for harm or the violation of others' rights. In the story of Solomon, the hoopoe is granted the freedom to express its opinion without coercion, despite the risk of punishment (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 20-27). When the hoopoe conveys information and explanations, Solomon allows it to speak and even challenges it to substantiate the veracity of its claims, rather than punishing it outright. This indicates that under Solomon's leadership, there is room for individuals to present information, even potentially controversial viewpoints, if they are grounded in truth and responsibility. Freedom of speech and expression is a fundamental pillar of good governance, as it encourages transparency, accountability, and facilitates the flow of vital information for informed decision-making. This principle underscores the guarantee of freedom of expression under Solomon's government, which is essential for fostering transparency and accountability in governance.

The Institutional Model of Good Governance in the Story of Prophet Solomon: Pillars and Their Interactions

The Quran, while it does not explicitly or technically define the concept of statehood, establishes fundamental principles that serve as references for all political activities and governance. These principles include *musyāwarah* (consultation), obedience to just leaders, the enforcement of justice, and equality before the law, all of which are essential for effective governance. Although the Quran does not rigidly mandate the establishment of formal governmental institutions, one can implicitly derive such an understanding from the story of Solomon and the *maqāṣid* contained within it. Institutional frameworks become essential as a *wasīlah* (means) to implement these state principles and achieve the *maqāṣid.*

As articulated in the legal maxims, "*li al-wasā'il ḥukmu al-maqāṣid*" (the means carry the ruling of the ends) and "*mā lā yatimmu al-wājib illā bihi fa huwa wājib*" (that which causes a duty to be incomplete unless fulfilled is thus obligatory), the existence of institutions is crucial. These legal principles emphasize that any obligatory goal (*maqṣad wājib*) established by Sharia—such as justice, security, and welfare—must be achieved through appropriate means (*wasīlah*). If these means manifest as institutions, then the establishment of such institutions becomes a communal obligation (*fard kifāyah*). This provides a theoretical foundation for the formation of governmental structures and mechanisms that support good governance. In the context of governance, good governance necessitates a balanced distribution of roles among the government, society, and the private sector, enabling checks and balances and fostering synergy for the common good.

The story of Solomon, although set in the past, presents a surprisingly coherent implicit model that aligns well with the modern framework of good governance. First, the government, represented by Prophet Solomon and Queen Sheba, exemplifies integrity and responsiveness. Prophet Solomon, both a king and a prophet, embodies his role in fostering political, economic, and social stability while providing public services and upholding rights. He effectively coordinated a large army—comprising humans, jinn, and animals—delegating tasks efficiently and utilizing his power for the benefit of the people rather than for personal gain. As the supreme leader, he demonstrated efficiency in resource management and oversight, as evidenced by his inspections of his troops (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 20) and his ability to identify the missing Hoopoe. This indicates an effective internal oversight and control system, which is a crucial element of governmental accountability. Furthermore, Solomon's prompt response to information from the hoopoe regarding Queen Sheba illustrates a high degree of responsiveness to critical issues affecting the security and religious dimensions of his kingdom. This role aligns with the principles of good governance, which require leaders to serve as coordinators rather than dominators. Sadhana (2010) emphasizes that in good governance,

leaders should act as catalysts and facilitators rather than as singular authorities mobilizing resources. Despite being an absolute ruler, Solomon embodies these leadership qualities by listening—exemplified in the case of the Hoopoe—and verifying information.

Second, civil society (the ant leader and its colony): representation of public participation and community protection. The role of civil society in good governance is to safeguard the rights of citizens, maintain checks and balances, oversee abuses of power, and influence policy. In the modern context, civil society is understood as non-governmental organizations that operate in public spaces to promote common interests and demand government accountability. Although no formal civil society organizations existed during Solomon's time, this role is symbolized by the ant leader. The ant leader's approach—characterized by goodwill and tolerance towards Solomon's forces—along with its initiative to protect its colony, illustrates how grassroots participation can contribute to *ḥifẓ al-nafs* and social stability (Q.S. An-Naml [27]: 18). The ant leader, with wisdom, does not immediately perceive Solomon's army as a deliberate threat. Instead, it recognizes that the army may be unaware of the ants' presence, necessitating preventive actions. This behavior reflects the prudent and proactive leadership of a community in ensuring the survival of its members.

Such actions demonstrate that community participation does not always need to take formal or governmental forms; it can also encompass protective measures that reflect a genuine concern for the welfare of the community. This illustrates a critical, independent, and dignified society (*khairu ummah*), which embodies the values of consultation and tolerance. Although the ants do not "demonstrate" or "petition," their collective actions under the guidance of their leader to ensure their safety can be interpreted as a form of the community's "voice" demanding protection and attention from the ruler. By divine grace, Solomon hears this voice and responds with a prayer, establishing a channel of communication and responsiveness between the ruler and the ruled, even in its most rudimentary forms. This underscores the importance of listening to the "voice" of the community, regardless of its origin, in achieving effective governance. The story of the ant teaches us that the strength of a community often lies in its internal solidarity and the ability of its leader to identify threats and respond effectively without waiting for directives from a higher authority. In the context of good governance, civil society serves as the eyes and ears, providing feedback and functioning as an early warning system for the government.

Third, the private sector (the jinn as experts in technology and development): representation of innovation and economic development in the modern era. The private sector serves as a catalyst for development, economic growth, and job creation. It is anticipated to be the engine of the economy, generating added value and enhancing welfare through innovation and investment. Although modern

enterprises did not exist during Solomon's time, the functional roles were fulfilled by the jinn. Q.S. Al-Anbiya' [21]: 82 explains that the jinn were harnessed to perform arduous tasks such as diving, mining, constructing palaces, and crafting sculptures. The verse states: "And We subjected to him a group of jinn who dived for him and did other work besides that; and We were protecting them" (Q.S. Al-Anbiya' [21]: 82). This assertion is further supported by Q.S. Saba' [34]: 12-13, which states: "And We subdued the devils (of the jinn) to him, making them work among tall buildings and diving (into the sea), and others bound in chains…" The jinn created for Solomon whatever he desired, including magnificent palaces, sculptures, large platters, and cauldrons that were permanently placed above the fire. This illustrates their extraordinary technical and construction capabilities.

The role of the jinn is essential in advancing the kingdom, improving living standards, and developing infrastructure, akin to the role of the contemporary private sector. They serve as with specialized skills and substantial production capacity, enabling the realization of large-scale development that humans alone might not achieve. The involvement of the jinn in palace constructions, sculptures, and various other facilities indicates the presence of specialized labor and the application of expertise to attain ambitious development goals. This reflects principles of effectiveness and efficiency in good governance, where appropriate resources are utilized to fulfill developmental objectives. Furthermore, the collaboration between the government (represented by Solomon) and the private sector (the jinn) illustrates the significance of public-private partnerships in achieving progress and welfare. This collaboration, which emphasizes *ḥifẓ al-māl* and the creation of prosperity, is an integral component of a balanced model of good governance. A well-functioning government does not solely rely on its internal resources but also leverages the potential of third parties (the private sector) to achieve developmental objectives and enhance the welfare of the populace.

Thus, the story of Solomon is not merely a narrative of singular leadership; it serves as an illustration of a model of good governance that integrates various elements beyond the government. The interaction between Solomon (representing the government), the ant (symbolizing civil society), and the jinn (representing the private sector)—all aimed at achieving universal *maqāṣid* and *maqāṣid zhāhir*, such as *ḥifẓ al-dawlah*—demonstrates a framework of governance that is holistic, participatory, and oriented towards the common good. This model, although implicit, provides a rich Qur'anic foundation for understanding and applying good governance in contemporary contexts. This in-depth analysis emphasizes that the values and practices of good governance have been inherently present in Islamic teachings from the beginning, offering strong religious legitimacy for efforts to enhance governance in the modern Muslim world.

Conclusion

This research successfully uncovers a crucial and original finding: the implicit articulation of a comprehensive institutional model of governance within the narrative of Prophet Solomon in the Qur'an, Surah An-Naml [27]: 17-44. Unlike previous studies that emphasized individual leadership attributes or analyzed narrative fragments in isolation, this in-depth analysis, employing a *tafsīr maqāṣidī* approach, demonstrates that governance is depicted as a synergistic collaboration among various societal components. The primary innovation lies in the inclusion of non-human entities—represented by the jinn as the private sector, and birds and ants as civil society—as active and integral participants. This expands the conventional understanding of "institutions" within the Qur'anic context, affirming that effective state administration and societal well-being result from organized multi-stakeholder engagement rather than from power concentrated in a single figure. All of this is directed towards achieving the public good (*maṣlaḥah*) and the preservation of the state (*ḥifẓ al-dawlah*).

The contribution of this research to the broader academic landscape is highly significant, both methodologically and substantively. Methodologically, this study enhances the application of *tafsīr maqāṣidī* by demonstrating its potential to extract contemporary institutional insights from classical Qur'anic narratives. This is achieved particularly through the nuanced use of *maqāṣid zhāhir* and *maqāṣid bāṭin*, as well as by integrating the concept of *ḥifẓ al-dawlah*. Substantively, this research offers an institutional model of good governance rooted in the Qur'an, offering a valuable alternative or complementary framework to the often Western-centric dominant paradigms. By illustrating how ancient texts can serve as blueprints for modern challenges such as state-building, resource management, and diplomatic conflict resolution, this research effectively bridges classical Islamic heritage with contemporary governance demands. Furthermore, the emphasis on the legal maxim *li al-wasā'il ḥukmu al-maqāṣid* (means are judged by their ends/objectives) provides strong theoretical legitimacy for the establishment and strengthening of institutions aimed at achieving *Sharīʿah* objectives.

While this research presents innovative contributions, it also acknowledges inherent limitations. Its primary focus on a specific set of verses (Qur'an, Surah An-Naml [27]: 17-44) and a particular *tafsīr maqāṣidī* framework means that the resulting model, although robust within its scope, may not be fully generalizable to all Qur'anic narratives or broader Islamic sources regarding governance. Furthermore, the symbolic interpretation of non-human entities as societal sectors, while essential for the proposed institutional model, inherently involves a level of abstraction that necessitates careful consideration when applied to practical modern state structures. Therefore, future research could build upon this foundation by conducting a comparative analysis of other Qur'anic governance narratives (e.g., the stories of Prophet Joseph or Dhul-Qarnayn) to identify

commonalities and variations in institutional models. Additionally, exploring the practical application and implementation challenges of these elements of the Qur'anic institutional model in contemporary Muslim-majority countries would provide vital empirical insights, shifting the focus from conceptual analysis to real-world policy implications.

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