

THE TALE OF A LITTLE BIT, A LITTLE MORE

By: Hamdan Yahya

LONG ago, in a country called Antah Berantah, there rule a king that goes by the name of Sang Sapurba. For as long as he had been on the throne, a thought came to mind for him one day to assess his leadership in hopes that the country will be even more prosper, and that peace will always come in the life of his people. Thus, he called upon the leaders of each state, and arrive they did; the ministers, admirals and soldiers, heralds and eunuchs, village chiefs and district officers, all bowed down to his royal highness. As the dignitaries assembled before the king, his majesty made his speech; "O you officials and noblemen, I have called upon you today so that you may hear the Prime Minister as he assessed yourselves as leaders."

Upon hearing his majesty's speech, the dignitaries were astonished as never before in their life has there ever been an assessment to their leadership. As they looked upon each other, some of them were distressed, some were laid unrest, while others fainted.

Thus, his majesty the king called upon his Prime Minister and said, "Oh my honorable Prime Minister, do start the assessment by reviewing who is a leader and none."

And so the Prime Minister of the country below the wind and above the sky, gentleman and wise, came forward and kneeled before the king.

"Your majesty my lord, as it is, more often than not a leader is called 'the head, or the one that precedes', by those of his race and his descent. For a leader is to be close to his people, as recited in the custom's expression;

The one that is a step more significant
A twig more elevated
A hair more superior
A nail more distinguished.”

“Your majesty my lord, I beg your approval to declare that a leader is given but a little special right by his people because he was a person that;

Was bestowed a trust
And was presented with power
Was given a burden
And set with a responsibility
Was attached by his oath and promises
And bound by his trust.”

“My lord, furthermore, the leader has his own specialty, for he is;

Chosen by his people
Honored by his race
To be seated where he should
To be helmed at where he deserved
Strengthened with traditions
To be higher than the many
To precede among the lot
To be exclusive among the commons.”

Fitting it is for the custom’s board. “My lord.”

Moments after hearing the Prime Minister’s explanation, all noblemen and dignitaries alike were in complete silence, and the royal court was as quiet as a dead man’s grave. Even the king himself has a worried look on his face. Therefore he asked, “O Prime Minister, are my dignitaries and I possessed such high estimation of a leader?”

And thus the Prime Minister replied, “Your majesty, for both you and all the leaders at present possessed a lot of those qualities.” Hence, Sang Sapurba the king smiled his widest and the dignitaries themselves were overcome with joy upon hearing the answer.

“Your majesty my lord, however I must stress that to be chosen as one is not a verification of one being an exalted leader.”

At hearing this, Sang Sapurba quickly asked;

“Why would you say such? Am I or my dignitaries here not qualified to be of leadership?”

And with anxious tone, the Prime Minister replied, “Forgive me,

your majesty my lord, to be a qualified leader and to dress like one are two different things.”

As soon as the words were spoken, Sang Sapurba cried, “Dressed like a leader? Oh whatever do you mean, dear nobleman?”

“Your majesty, a leader’s attire is by no means the physical clothing and costumes. It’s neither the top nor the trouser, the sampin nor destar. My lord, a leader’s attire is his spiritual garments. In the custom board, a leader is:

To be clothed in Syara’ spirit and body
 A solid faith and loyalty to traditions
 A firm piety and knowledge aplenty.

Open mindedness entwined with wisdom
 A righteous feature with the best of speech.

His courage withstands test
 His loyalty withstands trial
 His devotion withstands ordeal.

To stand on what is true
 To sit on what is good
 To be armed with what is lawful
 To accede on what of assistance
 To inherit what is of use.

With justice as the judge
 and intelligence in his acts
 observant in his views
 and cautious in each promise
 trustworthy to those in need.”

“My Lord, the leader’s attire is significant on his knowledge. For a wise leader is:

A one who knows his self and his manner
 Who knows where he stands in his nature
 Who knows his way and where it should
 Who knows how to give and how to award
 Who knows how to judge and how to justify
 Who knows how to feel and how to utter
 Who knows how to read himself in the darkness
 Who knows how to confirm in a mumble
 Who knows how to see into the future
 Who knows how to look in the morrow.

How to defend all his subjects
How to take care his own hometown
How to measure to a balance
How to give in all fairness.

To defend the people he braves a scythe
To defend the race he braves a destruction
To defend the state he braves a death.

“Your majesty and that is what I may give to you.”

Hence, after hearing the Prime Minister’s explanation, all noblemen and dignitaries alike were in complete silence, and the royal court was as quiet as a dead man’s grave. Even the king himself has a worried look on his face. Therefore he asked, “O Prime Minister, have my dignitaries and I possessed this leadership attire?”

Thus, the Prime Minister answered, anxious and deliberate, “Your majesty, both you and your dignitaries may have a little of that.”

This angered the illustrious Sang Sapurba and hence he raised a question, “Why would you say such a thing? Am I and my men are ill-qualified to be leaders?”

“Your majesty, to be a leader is to understand lots of prohibitions and forbidden things.” Hearing this, the king bellowed, “Prohibitions? Tell me what you mean.”

And hence, the bold Prime Minister answered, “My lord, an exalted leader must maintain abstinence. He is to refrain himself of:

The love of wealth, drunken with the world
The love of positions, overlook the Afterlife
The love of praise, lost in oneself.

Depending on the untrue
Standing on the harm
Leaning towards the rebel
Staying with the wrong.”

“Your majesty, it is forbidden for a leader to take for granted the word ‘given’ as:

A given luck is a work wrongly done
A given authority is subjects ignored
A given power is a race disregarded
A given rule is a dignity forgotten
A given reminder is defamatory talk
A given guidance is gossips at large

A given burden is a search for a lighter one
 A given duty is a sloth one has done
 A given responsibility is a possessed act
 A given work is a spoil at that
 A given impression is a remorse of all regrets.”

“Your majesty, it is forbidden for a leader the weakening word of ‘heart’ as:

A heart that stirs, begets an untrustworthy tongue
 A heart that is in rusts, begets a shortness of mind
 A heart that envies, begets one that knows no shame
 A heart that covets, begets one that does the waste
 A heart that reeks, begets a terrible trait
 A heart that narrows, begets a complicated mind
 A heart that is uncouth, begets the shallowest of thoughts
 A heart that itches, begets stubbornness
 A heart that freezes, begets an obstruction of thoughts
 A heart so small, begets the smallest of mind
 A heart so arrogant, begets a perverseness of mind
 A heart with greed, begets a mumbling one
 A heart that resents, begets a harsh tongue
 A heart that spites, begets a sharp tongue
 A heart that panics, begets a briefness of mind.”

“My lord, and that is the prohibitions laid for a leader. And finally, the elders used to say that ‘the wrong choice you made, and your country is at stake, the people you break’ or ‘when the corrupted leader are idolized, the world and hereafter will be jeopardized.’”

Hence, after hearing the Prime Minister’s explanation, all noblemen and dignitaries alike were in complete silence, and the royal court was as quiet as a dead man’s grave. Even the king himself has a worried look on his face. Therefore he asked, “O Prime Minister, have my dignitaries and I went against these prohibitions?”

Thus, the Prime Minister answered, anxious and deliberate, “Your majesty, both you and your dignitaries have went against the forbidden quite a lot.” This angered the illustrious Sang Sapurba and hence he raised his kris and stabbed his Prime Minister’s chest, thus killed him, the gentleman and wise. Chaos ruled the royal court, and pandemonium arose. Among the scared and terrified, only the admiral was brave enough to kneel before the king and asked, “Your majesty my lord, why did you stabbed the royal advisor?”

Hence Sang Sapurba, the illustrious king answered, "My dear admiral, as long as there is not a wise man in this country, you, the other dignitaries nor I will ever be a leader."

(Translated by Nurul Syamida)