



LEADERSHIP IN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction :

Leadership is an important aspect of managing. ¹ It has been playing a vital role in managing the affairs of human society since the beginning of civilization. Leadership is one of the essential elements for any organization whether it is formal or informal. Good leadership is necessary in family, business organization, government, political parties etc. Therefore leadership has been studied widely in modern society. Islam has given utmost emphasis on Leadership. Leadership is an organizing principle of considerable social impact. In any group, large or small, some individuals have more power and influence than others. The person with the most influence often assumes a position of prominence in-group and comes to be regarded as a leader. ²Leadership is defined as influence, that is, the art or process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly and enthusiastically towards the achievement of group goals. ³

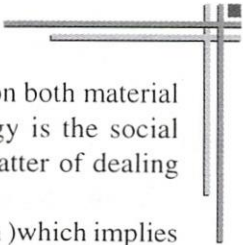
Objectives :

Allah (Swt) has created mankind with a noble objective that people would lead their lives in peace & harmony following the tenets of His revelations sent down through Prophets from time to time since the very beginning of the society. It is the duty of the leader to maintain peace & harmony and lead the society towards progress & prosperity. Leadership is one of the core corners in our social activities. They are greatly responsible for any progress or decline of the society they live in. Therefore in every stage of civilization leadership has been studied widely & this has been approached in different ways in respect of leadership style, qualities, functions etc. Islam as a complete way of life has a clear approach in this respect. In this essay effort has been taken to discuss some aspects of Islamic leadership.

Work organization :

Leadership is an art or process of influencing members towards the declared goals of the group or organization they belong to. Leadership is a force which in some unknown manners flows between leaders & followers to release their energies in concert towards collectively formulated objective.⁽⁴⁾ Leadership involves three components viz (i) a leader who motivates other persons. (ii) a group of followers. and (iii) a situation or objectives to be achieved by motivating the efforts of followers.

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Islam as an all comprehensive ideology gives utmost importance on both material and spiritual aspects of human life . Infact, the Islamic ideology is the social ideology.⁽⁵⁾ The Prophet (Sm) narrates : Religion is rather the matter of dealing with others.⁽⁶⁾

Allah (Swt) addresses the believers as Ummah (community / nation)which implies the necessity of leadership. Prophet Muhammad (Sm) says : Everyone of you is a shepherd & every one of you is responsible for what he is shepherd of (Sahih al Bukhari). In this study I will try to examine the Islamic leadership in respect of its importance , styles operational principles , characteristics , & criteria of Islamic leadership . In this regard the Quran & Sunnah and some writings of Islamic scholars on this issue have been consulted.

Findings :

(i) Styles of leadership:

In practice there are several theories on leadership behavior & style. Researchers have come up with different types of leadership. The commonly used leadership styles are: Autocrat, Democrat, Laissez - fare & Islamic. In authoritarian style leader determines all policies and issues orders to be fulfilled without questions. In democratic style leader shares decision making with group members. In laissez-fare leader minimizes communication and group interaction. Some extent of freedom is allowed for group members.

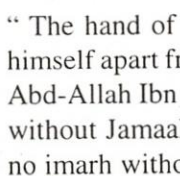
Islamic leadership style consists of mainly three principles i.e. mutual consultation, justice & freedom of thought.

(ii)Importance of leadership in Islam :

Unlike other religions, Islam is not a religion which only address personal matters of the individuals. Rather Islam is comprehensive ideology based on the revelation of Allah (SWT) and experienced by the prophets, the last being the prophet Muhammed (Sm) which addresses all the minor and major problems & complexities of the individual as well as collective life till eternity.⁷

Islam addresses the Muslims as a nation, Ummah or community. Quran says, "You are the best community, brought forth for mankind. You enjoin the right forbid the wrong and believe in Allah (SWT)".⁸ Allah has made obligatory on the part of the believers to be obedient to its leadership. Allah commands through Quran : "O, you faithful! Obey Allah (SWT) and obey the Apostle and those in authority from among you."⁹

The attachment of a Muslim to an organization and the obedience of the believers to the leadership of the organization is an integral part of a Muslims life. To remain with an organization (al Jamaah) is a fundamental & primordial necessity for believers. Prophet Muhammed (Sm) said :



“ The hand of Allah (SWT) is upon the Jamaah (community) and he who sets himself apart from it will be set apart in Hell fire” (Al Tirmidi, On the authority of Abd-Allah Ibn Umar.) In this connection Hadrath Umar (R) said,” There no Islam without Jamaah ((organization) and no Jamaah without imarah (leadership) and no imarh without obedience.”¹⁰

(iii) **Basic Operational principles of Islamic leadership :**

There are three basic operational principles of Islamic leadership that includes shura, Justice & freedom of thought.

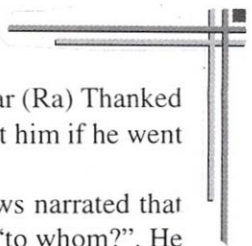
(a) **Shura:** (mutual consultation) is the 1st principle of Islamic leadership. Islamic leader are obliged to consult those who can give good advice. Quran says “And those who answer the call of their lord and establish prayer and who conduct their affairs by consultation and spend out of what we bestow on them for sustenance.”¹¹

Allah (Swt) directs his prophet to consult his companions:

“It is part of the mercy of Allah that you do deal gently with them. Were you severe or harsh hearted, they would have broken away from about you : so pass over (their faults), ask for (Allah’s) forgiveness for them and consult them in affairs. Then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust (on Him).”¹² The practice of shura enables members of the organizations to participate in decision making process which is also the fundamental of democratic system. Obviously the leader in not obligated to engage in shura in routine matters. Administrative and executive matters should be left to the leader.

(b) **Justice :** The leader should behave with group members justly and fairly without any discrimination regardless of their race, color or religion The Quran commands Muslims to be fair and just in any circumstances even if the verdict came against their parents or themselves. “ Allah does command you to render back your trust to those to whom they are due and when you judge between man & man that you judge with justice.”¹³ Allah says, “ O you, who believe ! Stand out firmly for justice, as witness to Allah, even as against yourselves or your parents or your kin and whether it be against rich or poor, for Allah protect both.”¹⁴ Justice is one of the most important instruments to satisfy the fellow members and give incentive to render their dedication for the cause of the organisation.

(c) **Freedom of thought :** The Islamic leader should provide such an environment where members of the group should be able to freely voice their views and have their questions answered. The four Khalifs of Islam considered this to be an essential element of their leadership. Umar (Ra) once asked an audience what they would do if he violated an Islamic principle. When a man



responded that they would correct him with their swords. Umar (Ra) Thanked Allah that there were people in the Ummah who would correct him if he went astray.

Muslims are advised to provide sincere advice. Tamim Ibn Aws narrated that the prophet (Sm) said, "Religion is sincere advice. We said, "to whom?". He said, "To Allah, His book, Messenger, the leader of Muslims and to their folk"

(iv) Characteristics of an Islamic leader:

Some important characteristics of Islamic leadership are as follows :

- A. Allegiance : The leader is bound in allegiance to Allah.
- B. Adherence to shariah & Islamic manners : The leader must conform to Islamic injunctions. He can only continue his office as long as he observes the principles of Shariah. His behavior must adhere to Islamic manners.
- C. Delegated Trust : The leadership in Islam is not a position but divine trust. He must carry this trust with great responsibility. The Quran says " those, who if we establish them in the land, establish salat and pay Zakah and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, with Allah rests the end of affairs. ¹⁵

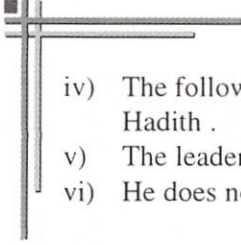
(v) Criteria of Islamic leadership:

We can learn the criteria of Islamic leadership from the speech which Abu Bakr (Ra) delivered on the occasion of his installation as the 1st Khalifah.

" O people ! Even though I am not the best among you. I have been given the responsibility of ruling you. I will consider the weakest among you strong until I claim for them what is their due. And the strongest among you will be considered weak until I have taken from them whatever is due from them. O people! I am a follower (of the prophet), not an innovator. So. if I do well, assist me! And if I deviate. straighten me out! And reckon with yourselves before you are taken to reckoning! No people ever abandoned the jihad in the way of Allah except that Allah afflicted them with disgrace! And never did an obscenity appear among people except that Allah caused disaster to spread among them! then obey me for as long as I obey Allah! But if I disobey Allah or His Prophet you owe me no obedience! I really prefer that another one of you should have been given (and thus spared me) this responsibility! And if you expect me to assume the same role as the prophet in relation to wahy (Revelation). I cannot do that. I am only human, so make allowance for me." [Kanz al Ummal III 130-135]

So, criteria of Islamic leadership may be concised as follows :

- i) To establish a just & fair system of rewards.
- ii) The members must assist if the leader does well.
- iii) If the leader deviates from the right path of Islam, follower should correct him.

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- iv) The followers obey the leader as long as he remains in the path of Quran & Hadith .
 - v) The leader is given responsibility not position.
 - vi) He does not seek leadership rather he is given it.

Conclusion:

Leadership has played a significant role in directing the flow of history . Demand for good leadership whether in family or organisation has always been emphasized. Today's world and society are lacking ideal and efficient leaders. Leadership with Islamic manners can be the only alternative in this connection. If our executives in all sorts of organization both public and private can follow the qualities of Islamic leadership, situation might be changed and peace, harmony, prosperity etc could be achieved. In short Islamic leadership is neither tyrannical nor uncoordinated. The Islamic leader after basing himself on Islamic principles, consulting respectfully and objectively with his associates, makes decision in as just a way as possible. He is accountable not only to his followers but also and much more importantly to Allah (Swt) ¹⁶

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