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ملخص

## LEADERSHIP VALUES IN THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF CALIPH ALI BIN ABI TALIB: AN OVERVIEW

القيم القيادية في الفكر السياسي للخليفة على بن أبي طالب: دراسة نظرية

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#### Abstract

The research aims at exploring leadership values in the Political Thought of Caliph Ali Bin Abi Talib, with a view to portraying his leadership qualities and styles; which had excellently helped in ensuring that the tasks he assigned were mostly executed successfully as initially planned. The Research, which is qualitative in nature, adopts descriptive method. It discusses the concept and styles of leadership in an effort to establish the fact that the Prophet (SAW) alongside his four rightly guided caliphs had excellently and exceptionally served as Heads of State. Commanders-in-Chief of the Armed Forces as well the Chief Judges of the most power state of the Arab Penisula throughout the periods of their stewardship, where copious outputs were aptly recorded. The Research specifically dwells on the leadership values of Caliph Ali Bin Abi Talib in view of his acute interest in displaying and exhibiting numerous leadership values which contributed immensely to his success. Major amongst these values are the indoctrination of the principle of Tagwa (fear of Allah) in his communications with his appointees, adoption of logical, systematic and insightful approaches, maintaining a visionary standpoint, coaching his appointees towards the exhibition of excellent moral values, observance of the principle of delegation of authority as well as the consideration of specific conditions in respect of registry staff and other tasks related to documentation and confidentiality.

**Keywords**: Leadership, value, thought, caliph, ali.

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يهدف البحث إلى استكشاف القيم القيادية في الفكر السياسي للخليفة على بن أبي طالب. وذلك قصدا لتصوير صفاته القيادية وأساليبها التي ساعدته بشكل ممتاز في ضمان تتفيذ المهام التي كلف بها بنجاح. واعتمد البحث على المنهج الوصفي. وناقش مفهوم القيادة وأساليبها في محاولة؛ لإثبات أن النبي (صلى الله عليه وسلم) مع خلفائه الراشدين، قد خدموا بشكل ممتاز كرؤساء دولة وقضاتها، إضافة بلي قادتها للقوات المسلحة، فسجلوا مخرجات وفيرة على نحو ملائم طوال فترات قيادتهم.

وارتكز هذا البحث بشكل خاص على القيم القيادية للخليفة علي بن أبي طالب، في ضوء اهتمامه الشديد بعرض وإظهار العديد من القيم القيادية التي ساهمت بشكل كبير في نجاحه. ومن أهم هذه القيم تلقين مبدأ التقوى في اتصالاته مع من يعينه، والاعتماد على منهجيات منطقية، وتدريب المعينين على إظهار القيم الأخلاقية الممتازة. ومراعاة مبدأ تقويض السلطات، والنظر في شروط موظفي التسجيل والمهام الأخرى المتعلقة بالتوثيق

الكلمات المفتاحية: القيادة، القيم، الفكر، الخليفة،

علي.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Islam, as a divine religion, establishes effective leadership and good governance; and agitates for it. It repels sentimental dealings in all aspects. Almighty Allah says:

"O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is most close to piety, and mind God as for God is well-acquainted with all that you do" (Qur' an 5:8)

Arising from the above assertion, the Prophet (SAW) excellently and exceptionally served as the Head of State, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces as well the Chief Judge throughout his stay in Madinah, where copious outputs were aptly recorded.

These enormous and gigantic leadership achievements that were realized during the prophetic era and beyond were as a result of excellent leadership qualities as being observed and exhibited by the Prophet (SAW) and his companions, especially the four rightly guided caliphs.

These great personalities had handled public issues with utmost honesty and sincerity. They exhibited excellent leadership principles and qualities; and adopted numerous general and specific leadership styles and values; which gave birth to peaceful coexistence in the society and established a solid foundation for justice and equity. They delegated responsibilities to whom they deserve without any iota of favoritism, discrimination and prejudice.

In this paper, the specific leadership values of Ali Bin Talib, the fourth rightly guided caliph of the Prophet (SAW) will be explored and studied with a view to portraying his leadership qualities; which had excellently helped in ensuring that all the tasks the he assigned were mostly executed successfully as initially planned.

# 1.0 AN OVERVIEW ON THE CONCEPT OF LEADERSHIP IN ISLAM

Islam views leadership as a trust and responsibility which are shared by all adults in a Muslim society. For instance, a father is responsible for his

Law.

household. Likewise a mother, she is saddled with the responsibility of taking care of her children and the domestic affairs of the house. Similarly, a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or any other head, with relevant responsibility, is responsible in his organization for the

accomplishment of organizational goals and the provision of goods and services to the citizenry and subordinates as clearly pointed out by SAW) in one of his traditions:(Prophet Muhammad

"Every one of you is a shepherd and everyone is responsible for what he is shepherding ..." (Bukhari and Muslim).

Furthermore, Leadership in Islam is an entrusted test bestowed on a person, ordained by Almighty Allah, to guide the Ummah on the right path. The path which uncontaminated, pure and successful; the path which directly leads to Paradise. The Path which is endowed with righteousness, social, economic, political and religious development. A leader, as put forward by Abdullahi (2011) must be just in his dealings with all his subjects. He must be fair to all and sundry; and the rule of the Shari' ah must be supreme. Whoever tempers with the doctrines of Shari' ah must be punished accordingly after full and sincere investigations. Justice must be carried out in all facets of human endeavor. A leader must not, therefore, claim immunity to the rule of the Shari' ah as everyone, with high or low status, must be equal before the

Manzo (2012) collaborates that Islam has made it mandatory upon leaders and all those in the corridors of power to observe and execute justice in whatever they do; and to also feel that they are on those positions purposely to serve the entire populace without mere discrimination, and to stand by their needs and fulfill their aspirations and demands; as long as the possibility exists, in addition to the fact that such demands, needs and aspirations are within the context of Shari' ah.

Therefore, a leader in Islam is required to perform certain functions on behalf of those he leads, and for those he leads to accept his authority when he fulfills his own part of the contract (Gwandu, 2011). Haddara and Enanny (2009) state that Leadership in Islam is considered a trust. A leader is entrusted with leading a group of people or managing an organization. The leader is held accountable. The trust and accountability go hand in hand. There are two levels of trust and accountability. A leader is entrusted by God and is accountable to God for his/her trust. The leader is also entrusted by the people and is accountable to them. Leadership is also a collective duty. It is the responsibility of the people to collectively fill all vacant leadership positions with capable candidates.

Beekun and Badawi (1999) formulate that Leadership represents a psychological contract between two parties, namely: a leader and his followers, whereby the leader undertakes the guidance, protection and just treatment of the followers.

Similarly, Kasule (1999) posits that Leadership involves the following specific functions: setting and communicating visions, goals and objectives; representing followers; directing, co-coordinating, integrating, influencing, mobilizing, motivating, creating enthusiasm and optimism; providing services and making a difference.

In the same vein, Manzo (2017) defined Leadership as a delegated trust based on the Islamic creed which places ethics at the core of its system and prioritizes values over economic gains, focusing on the conduct of good deeds and provision of effective service delivery to the humanity irrespective of tribal, geographical or religious affiliations, all for the sake of Almighty Allah.

Islam, which is a divinely universal religion, has laid down some moral values which are also universal in nature; for the prosperity and happiness of the humanity as a whole. These moral values shaped and inspired the Muslims' social life for more than 1400 years.

The Prophet (SAW) had set excellent examples of leadership values during his stewardship. His four rightly guided caliphs had also followed

his footstep in ensuring that leadership values were fully institutionalized and applied throughout the periods of their leadership.

#### 2.0 AN OVERVIEW ON THE LEADERSHIP STYLES IN ISLAM

Haddara and Enanny (2009) hold the view that early Islamic literature did not label different types or styles of leadership, arguing that the literature was focused on the characteristics and behavior of a good leader from an Islamic point of view. Nevertheless, contemporary scholars and researchers have taken advantage of certain types and styles of leadership as formulated in Western thought and reshaped and developed those that coincide with the Islamic model of leadership.

Basically, styles of acceptable form of leadership in Islam could be grouped and discussed as follows:

### 3.1 Multi-level Leadership:

In Islam, every member of the society has a leadership role to play being part of the *Ummah*. The concept of *Muslim Ummah* accentuates the unity of the Muslim nations and emphasizes the shared responsibility among their members who work as a united team. This concept of shared leadership had its root in the prophetic tradition which sketches the concept of multi-level leadership. The Prophet (S.A.W) had clearly identified the samples of people who are to lead through shared leadership whom include the man as a husband and a father; and the woman as a wife and a mother. This suggests that actions supplement others and that actors must perform their tasks efficiently for the entire responsibility to be accomplished.

Thus, leadership has to be exercised at the level of the family as a basic unit of the society, at the level of the community, at the level of the organization and at the level of the country (Haddara and Enanny, 2009).

## 3.2 Servant Leadership:

In Islam, the notion of servant leadership is hypothesized by a principle which dictates that leaders should not seek appointment to an office but

they are to be nominated and selected by others based on their track record (Hawwa, 1990) unless in special circumstances, as pointed out by Beekun and Badawi (1999), where one is allowed to seek a leadership role when he sees a situation in which there is a potential crisis or a disaster, and he has the required expertise to help others in this situation. This will ensure collective benefit to the society and will do away with the candidates who want to be "leader-first" and not "servant-first".

One of the major paradigms of servant leadership is the concept that a leader should be a role model for the followers. This has certainly been the case of the Prophet (S.A.W) and the early Muslim leaders. The Quran has identified the Prophet (S.A.W) as the person with the best of manners as the believers were enjoined to consider him as their role model, Almighty Allah says:

"And verily, you (O Muhammad) are on exalted (standard of) character" (68:4).

#### And He added:

"Indeed, in the messenger of Allah, you have a good example to follow..." (33.21).

The principle of servant leadership could only be accomplished when leaders are accountable to God in the first instance and accountable to the people they serve as well. Almighty Allah says:

Say [Prophet], 'Take action! God will see your actions- as will His Messenger and the believers- and then you will be returned to Him who knows what is seen and unseen, and He will tell you what you have been doing'. (9:105)

## 3.3 Transformational Leadership:

According to Burns (1978) Transformational leadership is rooted in a strongly held value system. These values are non-negotiable and thus are considered to be "end values". The dimensions of transformational leadership focus mainly on identifying and articulating a vision;

fostering the acceptance of group goals; high performance expectations; and providing individual support (Leithwood, and Jantzi, 1999).

Islamic history has shown that the Prophet (S.A.W) had articulated a vision of universal society to his followers, tolerance and mercy which were built on the principles of justice. This can be proven in the sayings of Almighty Allah:

- "O believers! Stand firm for justice and bear true witness for the sake of God." (4:135)
  - "We have made you a moderate nation." (2:143)
- "We have not sent you except as a mercy to mankind." (21:107)

The first verse instituted the articulation of a vision of universal society, while the second and third verses articulated tolerance and mercy, respectively. This message, according to Haddara and Enanny (2009), has been reiterated in the Qur' an in order to foster the acceptance of the group goals; arguing that transformational leader is a leader who is able to inspire and motivate the followers in order to enable them achieve the set objectives and goals in a process whereby both the leader and the followers will be transformed.

## 3.4 Ethical Leadership:

The central piece in the framework of ethical leadership is the willingness of the leader to submit voluntarily and fully to His Creator stressing respect for consultation and the observance of freedom of thought and consciousness, in addition to according topmost concern to the rights of all, believing in the fact that Islam does not only recognize a man and neglects a woman or recognizes a human being and ignores animals. Rather, all have been honored and treated in same manner as creatures and according to their natural features (Manzo, 2013).

Therefore, this framework is built on *Imaan* (the belief in the oneness of God), *Islam* (submission to God), *Taqwa* (God consciousness) and

*Ihsan* (doing one's best). An ethical leader strictly follows the footsteps of the Prophet (S.A.W) whose ethical behavior and standards have been endorsed by Almighty Allah. The Holy Quran reads: "And verily, you (O Muhammad) are on exalted (standard of) character" (68:4). Therefore, an ethical leader must exercise justice, fulfill trust, observe righteousness, preserve doing what is right and honor promises (Manzo, 2017).

The Islamic leadership model suggests that a leader is required to believe in and behave according to the Islamic moral and ethical principles (Beekun and Badawi, 1999) for the overall development of all and sundry.

## 3.0 A BRIEF OVERVIEW ON THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ALI BIN ABI TALIB

Addabrany (1976) cited the view of Al Hassan Al Basry that Ali Bin Talib was born in Makkah, either sixteen (16) or fifteen (15) years before the advent of Islam. Specifically when the Prophet Saw was forty (40) years old.

His name is Ali son of Abu Talib, son of Abdul Mutallib son of Hashim son of Abd Manaf son of Qusay son of Kilab son of Murrah son of Ka`ab son of Lu`ay son of Ghalib son of Fahr son of Malik son of An Nadr son of Kinanah son Khuzaimah son of Mudrikah son of Ilyas son of Mudir son of Nazzar son of Ma`ad son of Adnan (Assalabi, 2010). He is known within the Islamic tradition by a number of titles, some reflecting his personal qualities and others derived from particular episodes of his life. They include: Abū Al-Ḥasan ("Father of Ḥasan" [the name of his oldest son]), Abū Turāb ("Father of Dust"), Murtaḍā ("One Who Is Chosen and Contented"), Asad Allah ("Lion of God"), Ḥaydar ("Lion"). He is also known as Amīr Al-Mu'minīn ("Prince of the Faithful") and the fourth of his "rightly guided" (rāshidūn) caliphs (Azzahaby, 1990).

His father <u>Abu</u> Talib Bin Abd Al-Muttalib, the son of the then leader of the Hashim clan (l. c. 535-619 CE), is the uncle of the Prophet (SAW).

His father had raised the Prophet (SAW), who had been orphaned at an early age as if he were his son; and a similar relation developed between the Prophet (SAW) and Ali. Abu Talib had strongly supported the Prophet (SAW) throughout his life, especially at the outset of the emergence of Islam (Ibn Hisham, 1990).

From an early age, Ali formed a strong bond with the Prophet (SAW), who took him in his household. In 610 CE, when Prophet (SAW) declared his prophethood, Ali was among the first people to accept the new faith.

History has not failed to record that the Prophet (SAW) had great confidence and trust in Ali Bin Abi Talib. He gave him his daughter Fatima in marriage (Ibn Katheer, 1988); and also entrusted several important assignments to him, both in Makkah and Madinah. He was among the compilers and scribes of revelation, he was sent to Yamen to spread the teachings of Islam. He was also deeply involved in the military defense of the Islamic community; he participated in all but one of battles during the lifetime of the Prophet (SAW). He was a commander at some of these battles and also had the special role of protecting the Prophet (SAW) during the battles of Uhud in 625 and Hunayn in 630 (Ibn Hisham, 1990).

The strength, bravery, audacity and courage of Ali Bin Abi Talib during these historic battles as well as his yearning for justice made him an epitome of chivalry throughout the history of the Islamic world.

After the demise of the Prophet (SAW), Abu Bakar As Siddeeq succeeded him as his first rightly guided caliph. Subsequently followed by Umar Bin Khattab, Usman Bin Affan and then Ali Bin Abi Talib assumed duty as the fourth rightly guided caliph.

Though encountered so many challenges, sabotage and oppositions during his tenure as the Caliph, he was regarded as an excellent leader and administrator who recorded so many successes in the history of his stewardship. He died after being struck down with a poisoned sword in the year 661 CE, while he was offering prayer in congregation (Ibn Katheer, 1988).

## 4.0 AN OVERVIEW ON THE LEADERSHIP VALUES OF CALIPH ALI BIN ABI TALIB

Caliph Ali Bin Abi Talid had, during his stewardship as the fourth rightly guided Calip of the Prophet (SAW), professionally observed numerous values which are worthy of consideration and emulation. These leadership values cold be discussed as follows:

## 1. Indoctrination of the principle of Taqwa (fear of Allah) in communications with appointees:

Caliph Ali believes that Taqwa makes a leader and any officer holding a responsibility of trust to be humble and more sincere in his workplace, and in the course of the discharge of his responsibilities whether in public or in privacy. It means, as cited by Manzo (2017), he should be conscious of Allah's presence and must be fear Him at all times. Almighty Allah says:

"O mankind! Lo! We have created you from male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware". (49: 13)

Caliph Ali further believed that this principle is the only criterion by which not only leaders, but the entire people are judged in Islam. In line with the said assertion, the Prophet (SAW) had set a perfect example of Taqwa by his deeds. After him, the four rightly caliphs had also practiced and observed Taqwa in their official conducts.

Being the fourth caliph and the supreme authority of the then contemporary super power nation, Caliph Ali indoctrinated Taqwa while relating with his appointees in all ramifications, especially while communicating with them.

In his communication with one of his Governors, Malik Bin Harith Al Ashtar, he was quoted saying as cited by Arrabiy'e (2018):

"...This is a directive for you (Governor) Malik Bin Harith Al Ashtar, from the servant of Allah, Ali, the Head of the Islamic State..."

By describing himself as a servant of Allah, Caliph Ali was instilling in him and by extension in all his appointees that as their leader, he was first and foremost nobody other than an ordinary person solely and wholly answerable to his Creator, Allah (SWT). By so doing, he was indoctrinating in them the doctrine of Taqwa in all their official engagements at all times (Arrabiy'e, 2018).

This is in view of his conviction that Taqwa means a lot more than just piousness; it is the combination of their beliefs, self-awareness and attitudes. It is a reminder to stay on the path of uprightness, decency and knowing the difference between right and wrong. It is about having the Lord's consciousness in terms of knowing and obeying all His orders including not only fearing Him but also acting in all His directions. The Holy Quran collaborates: "O ye who believe! Fear God and be with those who are true (in word and deed)." (9:119)

### 2. Adoption of logical, systematic and insightful approaches:

Caliph Ali adopted a number of logical and insightful approaches in the course of the discharge of his responsibilities as the Head of State and Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces of his state. He had systematically observed the principle of delegation of authority and cared much the fulfillment of a defined integrity-based criteria before a person is being assigned with any task. He clearly defined responsibilities and schedule of duties. He accorded topmost priority to monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and their strict enforcement; and adopted the principle of reward and punishment (Al Mausuwy, 1998).

## 3. Visionary Standpoint:

Having realized the fact that a successful leader must attain a first class status of vision (Assalabi, 2010), creative thinking, foresight, forethought, prudence and precaution, Caliph Ali saw-eye-to-eye to the following visionary standpoints (Al Kenany, n.d):

- a) Strict consideration of appointment basically on merit devoid of any self-centered, egotistical and narcissistic considerations.
- b) Mostly, integrity test was conducted prior to the conveyance of approval in respect of appointments into any sensitive office. In addition, appointees must be of a well-trained background, morally and experience wise.
- c) Absolute consideration of the principle of Shura (consultation), where necessary, as at when due.

## 4. Coaching towards the exhibition of excellent moral values:

According to Collins English Dictionary, morality is a system of principles and values concerning people's behavior, which is generally accepted by a society or by a particular group of people. Descriptively, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy posits that it refers to certain codes of conduct put forward by a society or a group (such as a religion), or accepted by an individual for her own behavior.

In Islam, morality encompasses the concept of righteousness, good character and the body of moral qualities and virtues prescribed in the Islamic religious texts.

Interestingly, the moral character of a believer is taught by the Holy Qur' an and it is perfectly represented by the Prophet (SAW). Almighty Allah says: "It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards east or west; but it is righteousness to believe in God and the Last Day and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your property, out of love for Him, for your relatives, for orphans, for the needy, for the traveler, for those who ask; and for the freeing of captives; to be steadfast in prayers, and practice regular charity; to fulfill the contracts which you made; and to be firm and patient in pain (or suffering) and adversity and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the pious." (2:177)

Correspondingly, the Prophet (SAW) said: "I have been sent only for the purpose of perfecting good morals." (Bukari and Muslim)

In view of the above position of Islam in respect of moral values, Caliph Ali Bin Abi Talib had coached his appointees towards that great path. The purpose of such coaching was nothing but to strengthen the moral character of the appointees so that they discharge their numerous responsibilities perfectly and diligently; and in a way and manner that please their Creator.

His letter to one of his Governors, Malik Bin Harith Al Ashtar is an evident proof worthy of consideration. In that letter, he instructed the appointee and coached him towards strict observance of some major moral values such as avoidance of all forms of corrupt practices, self-centeredness, partiality etc, as well as according topmost concern to respect for public funds, openness, self control, etc (Arrabiy'e, 2018).

### 5. Observance of the principle of delegation of authority:

Caliph Ali Bin Abi Talib accorded topmost concern to the principle of delegation of authority. This principle, which is viewed as the act of assigning a whole unit of work (a task from start to finish) to an employee who is capable of doing it (Baer, 1999), is a management tool designed to increase the efficiency of an organization (Carpenter, 2020). It also, as put forward by Allen (1978), creates accountability for overall performance.

Having realized the teeming benefits attached to this principle, Calip Ali adopted it with full sense of rationality and dependability; which led to vigorous transformations in various sectors. He delegated tasks to various competent Sahabat and Tabi`oon such as Malik Bin Harith Al Ashtar, Usman Bin Haneef, Qais Bin Sa`d Bin Ubada, Ubaidullah Bin Abbas Bin Abdul Mutallib, An Nu`man Bin Ajlan, etc which allowed for easy completion of tasks effectively and efficiently (Assalabi, 2010).

6. Consideration of specific conditions in respect of secret registry staff and other tasks related to documentation and confidentiality:

Having realized the sensitivity of secret registry in any organization as well as other strategic offices which have relevant responsibilities, the following conditions were highly observed by Caliph Ali on the officers appointed to work in those offices:

- a) Ensuring that the officers are of proven integrity both in principle and practice.
- b) Avoidance of duplication of administrative tasks on a single officer.
- c) Constant conduct of performance assessment test to the officers in a bid to enhance productivity and reduce administrative flaws.

Ensuring that each officer observe confidentiality and had an outstanding and proven image in the eyes of the general public. Therefore, any officer found to be viewed lowly by the public will be considered unfit (Al Kenany, n.d).

#### 6.0 CONCLUSION

This research explored some leadership values in the Political Thought of Caliph Ali Bin Abi Talib, the fourth rightly guided caliph of the Prophet (SAW), with a view to portraying his leadership qualities and styles; which had excellently helped in ensuring that all the tasks he assigned were successfully executed and accomplished as planned.

The Research revealed that History has not failed to record that the Prophet (SAW) had great confidence and trust in Ali Bin Abi Talib. He gave him his daughter Fatima in marriage; and also entrusted several important assignments to him, both in Makkah and Madinah. He was among the compilers and scribes of revelation, he was sent to Yamen to spread the teachings of Islam. He was also deeply involved in the military defense of the Islamic community; he participated in all but one of battles during the lifetime of the Prophet (SAW). He was a commander at some of these battles and also had the special role of protecting the Prophet (SAW) during the battles of Uḥud in 625 and Ḥunayn in 630.

The Research further revealed that though encountered so many challenges, sabotage and oppositions during his tenure, Caliph Ali was regarded as an excellent leader and administrator who recorded so many successes in the history of his stewardship.

The Research concluded that Caliph Ali had displayed and exhibited numerous leadership values which contributed immensely to his success. Major amongst these values are the indoctrination of the principle of Taqwa (fear of Allah) in his communications with his appointees, adoption of logical, systematic and insightful approaches, maintaining a visionary standpoint, coaching his appointees towards the exhibition of excellent moral values, observance of the principle of delegation of authority as well as the consideration of specific conditions in respect of secret registry staff and other tasks related to documentation and confidentiality.

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