

The Leadership of Prophet Muhammad: A Role Model of Politics and Ethics in the Modern Era

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ABSTRACT

The leadership of Prophet Muhammad SAW is a perfect illustration of how to harmoniously blend political, moral, and spiritual strength. In addition to guiding the community in religious matters, the Prophet organized social, economic, and political life in accordance with divine principles. His values as a leader justice, integrity, accountability, and consultation demonstrate that power should be used to serve, not to control. This article discusses the leadership of Prophet Muhammad SAW as a moral and political example that remains relevant today. The Prophet was known as a statesman who successfully created a moral and just society, as well as a spiritual leader. His moral and ethical leadership was based on fundamental leadership values including social responsibility, justice, consideration, and honesty. By applying a historical perspective and examining prophetic values, this article demonstrates how the Prophet's teachings on leadership can address various contemporary issues, including declining integrity, abuse of power, and the rise of individualism. The application of these principles will result in leadership that is humane, honest, and focused on society. The leadership of Prophet Muhammad SAW emphasized the use of authority to advance and protect justice rather than to suppress or control. These principles serve as important guidance for leaders in our century to create moral, open governance that supports truth while upholding human and spiritual values.

1. INTRODUCTION

Ethical leadership models are increasingly needed given the complexity of leadership issues, which include moral crises, corruption, authoritarianism, and demands for accountability and transparency. The Prophet Muhammad SAW stands out as an exceptional example relevant for consideration in the context of modern leadership because he was a historical figure with extensive experience in the political, social, and spiritual fields. His leadership values of honesty, justice, simplicity, consultation (syura), and integrity are not only a religious legacy, according to a literature review study; they also offer a relevant normative framework for contemporary organizations, governance, and international commerce.

The leadership style of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) is often associated with contemporary concepts such as transformational leadership, servant leadership, and ethical leadership. For example, Sulaeman (2020) observes that he inspired his community to implement important social reforms by combining a transformational vision with a servant leadership approach. Furthermore, research on Islamic political ethics emphasizes that moral foundations,

mandates, wise regulations, competence, and consultation are integral components of leadership, and the leadership practices of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) demonstrate these characteristics. More specifically, in a political context, Prophet Muhammad's role as the head of state of Medina, a social mediator, and someone who combined spiritual and governmental aspects has been studied as an illustration of leadership that can unite pluralistic societies, address problems, and foster public trust. Therefore, studying the leadership of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) involves more than simply noting his religious characteristics; it also includes considering the political and ethical implications that are relevant in the contemporary world.

The purpose of this article is to examine the ethico-political aspects of Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) leadership, discussing how his leadership values can be used as a model for modern political and organizational leadership, and evaluating the extent to which these values apply to current issues such as globalization, organizational change, and digitalization. This essay seeks to convey the idea that inclusive and ethical leadership is not merely a theoretical concept but can serve as a practical approach in change management and sustainable governance by employing a literature review methodology based on indexed journals and related books. This study is significant and makes several contributions: first, it establishes Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a tangible reference, thereby strengthening the theoretical framework of Islamic leadership; second, it clarifies how these leadership values can be applied to contemporary political and organizational practices; and third, it provides actionable advice for modern leaders facing increasingly difficult ethical and organizational management dilemmas.

2. METHODS

This research uses library research methodology with a qualitative method. This strategy was chosen because the research objective was to review, evaluate, and synthesize various scientific sources discussing the idea of Prophet Muhammad's leadership from political and ethical perspectives, as well as its application in the context of contemporary leadership, rather than to collect field data. This study employs a qualitative library research approach to examine the leadership of Prophet Muhammad as a model of political and ethical leadership relevant to the modern era. Data are drawn from primary sources such as the Qur'an, authenticated hadiths, and classical works of prophetic biography, as well as secondary sources including scholarly books and peer-reviewed journal articles. Data collection is conducted through systematic documentation and critical reading of relevant literature. The data are analyzed descriptively and contextually to identify key leadership values, ethical principles, and political practices demonstrated by Prophet Muhammad and to relate them to contemporary challenges in political leadership and ethics.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

One of the key factors influencing how well a community functions is leadership. In addition to being the Messenger of God, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is widely regarded as a leader who successfully united diverse tribes, social classes, and economic backgrounds in Medina. His leadership was grounded not merely in authority, but in moral and political values that promoted harmony, justice, and social order within the community.

Prophet Muhammad consistently emphasized consultation (*shūrā*) in making political decisions. He involved his companions and local authorities to ensure that decisions were perceived as fair and broadly accepted. This practice demonstrates that leadership is a participatory process that values diverse perspectives rather than being the exclusive domain of a single individual. His leadership was fundamentally rooted in justice; he treated all individuals equally, without

discrimination based on social status, economic condition, or ethnic background. This principle was reflected in the enforcement of law, the distribution of rights, and the resolution of social issues.

Prophet Muhammad also emphasized the importance of peaceful conflict resolution and diplomacy. Negotiation and effective communication were generally prioritized over coercive measures, allowing social harmony and unity to be maintained. In addition, he established distinctive social norms that balanced individual rights with the collective good, enabling society to coexist peacefully and in an orderly manner. Equally significant was the moral dimension of Prophet Muhammad's leadership. He earned the respect of the community not through the exercise of authority, but through his honesty, integrity, and exemplary personal character. Moreover, he demonstrated compassion and understanding toward all members of society, including marginalized groups and those facing economic or social challenges. This benevolent attitude fostered a sense of security and dignity among the people. Furthermore, the Prophet served as a role model in everyday life, consistently displaying strong moral values and character in his words, actions, and decisions, thereby encouraging the entire community to uphold these values.

3.1 The Concept of Leadership of the Prophet Muhammad SAW

According to Islam, leadership is more than simply having power or influence; it also means being honest (religiously) and must be exercised with great responsibility, in accordance with justice, honesty, and service to the community. Here are some key points: Honest Leadership According to Islam. A leader is someone who has been given the authority to lead a group of people or a society. Therefore, a leader is not simply above others; they are servant leaders. This shows that power is not solely focused on exclusive interests or a particular group, but rather on the common good.

Social Services and Welfare. A leader serves his people, according to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Based on this principle, managing and fulfilling the needs of the community, upholding social justice, maintaining welfare, and creating good order are the primary responsibilities of leadership in Islam. Power is therefore intended to ensure that people can live in security, justice, and dignity, not to oppress or impose personal will. Justice, Honesty, and Integrity. The Prophet's (peace be upon him) leadership also emphasized the importance of integrity and honesty. He was known as "Al-Amin" (the trustworthy) even before he became a ruler or head of a large community. The people's trust in him was influenced by this virtue of honesty. Furthermore, the Prophet's main principle of justice was not to discriminate based on position, social status, or ethnicity. A leader must be fair in establishing policies, distributing rights, and enforcing laws. (1) Community Empowerment and Consultation (shura). The fact that the Prophet (peace be upon him) often involved his companions in discussions and decision-making indicates that leadership was participatory, not authoritarian.

This shows that a true Islamic leader is someone who listens, respects different views, and encourages group involvement in common issues. (2) Closeness to the Community, Humility, and Empathy The Prophet's leadership demonstrated a strong commitment to service: he walked with his people, understood their struggles, and felt their plight. Encouraging loyalty, faith, and concern for one another will be more successfully carried out by a leader who is compassionate and truly present. (3) Orientation to the World and the Hereafter. In addition to being worldly, this leadership considers obligations both horizontally (to humans) and vertically (to Allah). Based on research on "prophetic leadership," Islamic leadership has a moral-vertical component, which means that leaders will be held accountable in the hereafter.

3.2 The Relationship Between the Concept of the Prophet Muhammad's Leadership and Modern Political Ethics

The leadership of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) exemplifies universal principles that are highly relevant to contemporary notions of political ethics, particularly in terms of public duty, social responsibility, justice, and integrity. Islam views leadership as a trust that must be exercised with an emphasis on the welfare of the people (maslahah al-ammah), not merely as a symbol of power. This philosophy aligns with the modern notion of servant leadership, where leaders are seen as servants of the community, not rulers who are distant from their people. A number of problems, including abuse of power, moral crises, and systemic corruption, arise within the contemporary political framework. The Prophet Muhammad's leadership teachings offer an alternative paradigm, according to which authority must be accompanied by social and moral responsibility. "The leaders of a people are their servants," the Prophet (peace be upon him) emphasized, meaning that power should not be used for personal or group gain, but for the welfare of the people.

The Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) practice of consultation, or shura, is another example of how participatory democracy is reflected in contemporary political ethics. The Prophet consistently involved his companions in important decisions, such as the Treaty of Hudaybiyah and the Battle of Uhud. This approach emphasizes the importance of engagement, openness to criticism, and transparency in effective leadership. This aligns with contemporary political ideas that emphasize responsibility, openness, and public participation in the decision-making process. Furthermore, the principle of the rule of law in contemporary political systems equates to the virtue of justice (al-'adl) in the Prophet's leadership. When enforcing the law, the Prophet did not differentiate between commoners and nobles. Justice in this sense encompasses both formal legality and moral justice, which upholds human dignity without prejudice.

According to several scholars in the Journal of Syntactic Transformation, the Prophet Muhammad's leadership style can be seen as a synthesis of transformational leadership and servant leadership, in which a leader serves his community and acts as a moral motivator and inspiration. Meanwhile, the Al-Qalam Journal highlights that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has used almost every contemporary leadership theory over the past 14 centuries, be it participatory, ethical, or spiritual. Therefore, a contemporary political ethic focused on humanity and justice can be built around the Prophet's fundamental leadership principles, including justice, reliability, deliberation, empathy, and social responsibility. This prophetic model provides a new perspective amid the current leadership crisis: a true leader is someone who has the ability to serve, not be served.

The leadership of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) provides a moral and political model that is highly relevant today. He led with strong moral standards, establishing justice, deliberation, and reliability as the basis of all social interactions and policies. Basic Principles of the Leadership of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH): (1) Sincerity and Reliability (Shiddiq and Amanah). From an early age, the Prophet Muhammad was called al-Amin, which means trustworthy. His honesty and sincerity made him a respected leader, even by his opponents. These qualities were also the reason why Khadijah, a successful businesswoman, entrusted her merchandise to him before they were married. 2) Democracy and Deliberation (Shura) The Prophet Muhammad always placed a high value on deliberation when leading. After discussions with his companions and community, important decisions were made. The values of inclusion and participation in decision-making are reflected in this strategy. (3) Humanity and Social Justice. The Prophet Muhammad set an example by focusing on social justice without making distinctions based on background, religion, or social status. He was a benevolent leader who supported the people because of his reputation for showing empathy and sympathy to his followers. (4) Exemplary Moral and Ethical Behavior The Prophet

Muhammad's leadership was evident in his daily behavior and policies. He led with integrity, placing morals and ethics above all else in his every action.

Despite being widely recognized, the leadership principles of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) present a number of difficult obstacles when applied to contemporary leadership. Many modern leaders fail to live up to the Prophet's moral standards for several basic reasons, such as: (1) The Dominance of Materialism and the Desire for Power. Power and financial gain are often used as indicators of success in contemporary political and economic systems. Moral principles such as justice, honesty, and reliability are often neglected. Yusuf al-Qaradawi argues that "the loss of the spiritual dimension in modern power systems" is the root of today's leadership problems, which has transformed politics from a platform for advancing the common good into a mere arena of conflicting interests. Leaders often prioritize their own interests and image over the general welfare, which contradicts the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) regarding reliability. (2) The Impact of Globalization and Individualistic Culture. Individualistic attitudes that emphasize freedom without social responsibility have emerged as a result of globalization. The spirit of social cohesion and collectivity has been eroded. Muhammad Asad stated that the absence of divine principles in the political and social structures of modern society has left a spiritual vacuum. Restoring this balance requires a strong emphasis on the Prophet's leadership values of social justice and brotherhood (ukhuwwah). (3) Lack of Learning About Islamic Character. Character development and spirituality are given less weight in today's education, which tends to emphasize technical skills and cognitive intelligence. This has led to the emergence of a generation of leaders who are morally weak but intellectually strong. According to Azyumardi Azra, Islamic education should be used to create human beings (2) Dampak Globalisasi dan Budaya Individualistik.

3.3. The Political Ethics of the Prophet Muhammad SAW

The political ethics of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are a clear example of how power can be used for the benefit of society, not for oppression or personal enrichment. The Prophet viewed leadership as a trust, not a privilege. He consistently sought to uphold peace, prosperity, and social justice in all his political decisions. The Charter of Medina (Mitsaq al-Madinah), which governs the relationship between religious sects, tribes, and organizations, was written by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) while he was ruling Medina. This charter provides verifiable evidence that politics, according to the Prophet, is a tool for creating a just and peaceful plural society, not for domination. Equal rights to legal protection and religious freedom are granted to all citizens, both Muslims and non-Muslims.

Furthermore, the Prophet rejected all forms of authoritarianism. He often prioritized input from his companions (shura) before making important decisions, such as those in the Battle of Uhud or the diplomatic plan at Hudaybiyah. This demonstrates that authority in Islam is collaborative rather than one-way. This concept of consultation also demonstrates how transparency and consideration of others' opinions are essential components of effective leadership. The political principles of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) are highly relevant given current issues of political ethics. Today, many leaders are caught up in unethical transactional politics, abuse of power, and corruption. In this regard, the Prophet's political ethics serve as an example of moral and spiritual progress for modern leaders, demonstrating that true leadership is about serving others, not focusing on power. Power is merely a tool to uphold justice and truth, according to the prophetic politics of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Leadership based on prophetic values not only produces efficient governance but also moral governance, upholding human rights and fostering public trust.

3.4 Relevance for Modern Leadership

In the context of contemporary leadership, the leadership principles of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) are highly relevant. Prophetic values such as integrity (shiddiq), accountability (amanah), intelligence (fathanah), and openness (tabligh) provide an ethical framework applicable to a variety of contemporary fields. Beyond focusing on achieving results, prophetic leadership also prioritizes justice, morality, and humanity in all its actions. In the political realm, the Prophet's leadership demonstrates that true politics is a tool for service, not a platform for domination. The notion of good governance advocated by contemporary governments aligns with the values of accountability and transparency he embodied. An ideal leader must be accountable for his choices, transparent in public policy, and open to criticism. This technique is evident in a number of modern leaders who strive to incorporate moral principles and public service into their leadership, such as Ridwan Kamil, who prioritizes social innovation and openness with the community, and Mahathir Mohamad, who is renowned for his integrity and discipline.

In the field of education, within the educational environment, the spirit of exemplary behavior (uswah hasanah) reflects the prophetic values of the Prophet. In addition to teaching, he set a practical example for his followers. For today's educators, who serve as both moral guides and academic motivators, this idea is highly relevant. Students' moral and character development should be given equal weight to intellectual success in educational institutions. A number of contemporary Islamic educational institutions have sought to incorporate these prophetic principles into the educational process while maintaining a humanistic and spiritual perspective. In the business world and organizations, the Prophet's leadership principles also apply to today's corporate and organizational environments. His integrity, accountability, and social awareness form the foundation of an Islamic work ethic that remains relevant today.

This can be realized in corporate practices through attention to the welfare of society and employees, financial transparency, and fairness in transactions. This prophetic leadership style can create a positive and productive work atmosphere and increase loyalty and trust. Therefore, an alternative paradigm to the moral dilemmas in contemporary leadership is provided by the prophetic leadership of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). These principles can serve as a universal framework for leaders across various industrial sectors, encouraging them to prioritize social justice, service, and sustainable humanistic values before power or profit.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the overall discussion, it can be said that the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) exemplifies universal leadership that skillfully combines political, moral, and spiritual aspects. The Prophet (peace be upon him) exemplifies a leader who upholds social obligations, justice, and humanity in addition to exercising power over society. His four main principles of honesty (shiddiq), trustworthiness (amanah), astuteness (fathanah), and openness (tabligh) make authority a trust to serve society, not a tool of domination. The teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) regarding prophetic values such as justice ('adl), deliberation (shura), empathy, and accountability are highly relevant to the moral dilemmas, abuse of power, and declining public integrity that characterize today's leadership issues. An alternative paradigm is provided by the teachings of prophetic leadership, which emphasize that true leadership should be focused on the welfare of society and the common good (maslahah al-'ammah).

Furthermore, Islamic leadership is inclusive, respects diversity, and upholds the rule of law without discrimination, as evidenced by the political ethics of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) through the Medina Charter. These values align with contemporary political theory that prioritizes

social justice, transparency, and participation. Therefore, the leadership style of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) can be used as a strategic guide for creating contemporary governance, education, and organizational governance that is ethical, spiritual, and human-centered. Besides being important for Muslims, prophetic leadership also serves as a source of inspiration for developing a just, peaceful, and moral society in the contemporary era.

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