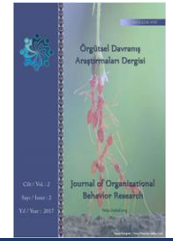




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MORAL NECESSITIES IN ISLAMIC MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Well-qualified management, in every management level, is a key factor in accomplishing the material, educational and ethical objectives of every society besides being a paver for selecting the best in lower levels. The present study makes use of Islamic teachings to investigate the most important ethical and behavioral characteristics of the managers. It can be stated according to these teachings that one of the most distinct ethical and behavioral features of the managers is their avoidance of haughtiness and boastfulness, selfishness and self-love and being characterized by patience and forbearance; also, gentleness, mildness and affection, serving others with no reminding as well as being transparent when the others are suspicious of one's sinfulness and unjustness are amongst the most outstanding behavioral qualities of every manager in treating and interacting with his or her subordinates.

Keywords: Manager, Management, Islamic Management, Ethics

INTRODUCTION

The importance in dealing with such a topic as management and investigation of solutions to enhance its quality lies in the amount of effect it has on the various components of the society as well as the very outstanding role it plays in the improvement of the efficiency and output of the different institutions and organizations. For the same reason, there are many scientists and researchers who have explored and evaluated the issues related thereto in the east and the west; such issues include the infrastructures, methods, harms, dos and don'ts and an array of the others that have been examined from various angles and aspects and based on variegated attitudes and perspectives.

The present study tries making use of Islamic teachings to express the most prominent ethical necessities of a sublime and successful management in material and educational areas; a type of management that can be accompanied by optimum results in the area of work progress and material output and be simultaneously exerting valuable ethical effects on the manager and his or her subordinates in the educational domain and, more importantly, be practically implementable and executable in various levels, from family and classroom management to macro-level and country-scale management.

The Necessity for Appointing Competent Managers:

From the Islam's viewpoint, responsibility is not an opportunity for accumulating wealth and satisfying one's own needs of fame and authority or power craze rather it is entrusted to a responsible person and it does not differ whether s/he is a manager or a chairman or holding whatever the other positions; Amir AlOMu'menin (PBUH) orders in a letter to Ash'ath Ibn Qais, Azerbaijan's governor, that "you should verily know that your responsibility is not a lure rather

it is a duty entrusted to you” (Sayyed Razi, 1993, Letter 5, 366); hence, the responsibility should be vested in a person who is qualified for it.

The importance of the issue becomes more vivid when we know that the selection and installation of the competent managers in every managerial level, besides having positive effects on the other task-related and organizational grounds, is an effective and ground-setting factor helping a lot to the selection of qualified individuals in the lower levels. And, based thereon, the selection of the gifted and skilled individuals is of a great importance and sensitivity in the higher managerial levels. Imam Ali (PBUH) has been quoted ordering that “the king is like a big river from which the small rivers are fed, so if it is delectable they will become delectable and if it is saline they will become the same” (Ibn Abi Al-Hadidi, 1983, 20/279).

Therefore, it can be stated that one of the most important and most essential indices of the Islamic management is the selection of the qualified individuals that will be followed by the fostering of the qualified individuals.

Emphasizing this same issue, Amir Al-Mu'menin (PBUH) addresses Malek Ashtar in Malek-e-Ashtar's Treaty with the following commands:

“Then, be careful in regard of your government's functionaries and employ them after they are tested and do not appoint them based on your own personal will and out of egocentrism because personal will and despotism are the most comprehensive sources of tyranny and betrayal. From amongst them, search for and select those who are experienced and decent and are from the well-qualified families pioneering in Islam because they are more virtuous in their deeds and moralities and healthier in their nature and feature less avarice and more penetrating in their looks and contemplations over the outcomes of the tasks” (Ansariyan, 2008; Sayyed Razi, 1993, Letter 53, 435).

As it is clear from the abovementioned statements, His Highness outlines the indicators that have to be taken into account in selecting the qualified individuals some of the most important of which are being experienced and tactfulness as well as healthiness in the ego and being bound to ethics.

Also, in another part of the aforementioned treaty regarding the selection of the individuals who perform as secretaries and scribes, His Highness expresses such qualities as successful past experiences, good fame, trustworthiness and competency in administrating the affairs and implementation of the works

“Moreover, do not select the secretaries through relying on sharp-sightedness, astuteness and confidence and optimism because there are men who influence the sharp-sightedness and astuteness of the governors via duplicity and proving themselves as well-serving individuals while there is no sign of benevolence and trustworthiness behind this mask of duplicity and sycophancy; rather, you can examine them by those good elders who had been the supervisors of the good-doers before you and be inclined towards those of them who are remembered good amongst the people and had been famous for trustworthiness and this, if you do, would be a sign of your charitableness before the God and also for the one you have been assigned to. And, for heading every work of the tasks appoint the one who does not kneel down upon being confronted with huge tasks and does not get stressed out by the large number of them and if there is any fault in your secretaries and you neglect it, it will be pointed at you and you will be responsible for it” (Ansariyan, 2008; Sayyed Razi, 1993, Letter 53, 437).



Therefore, every society willing to organize its affairs and reach sublimity and development and find its material, educational, ethical and spiritual objectives accomplished or get as close as possible to these goals should step on the path of “selecting the qualified individuals to be assigned to managerial responsibilities”.

Ethical Characteristics of a Manager:

In this section, Islamic teachings have been taken into consideration to deal with the expressing of the managers’ ethical traits that directly influence the management performance and quality and the manager’s coordination of affairs in the system headed by him or her.

- ***Haughtiness Avoidance:***

Haughtiness and pompousness do not comply with serving others and trustworthiness and a manager who knows oneself committed to serving others well and staying accountable to them and better fulfillment of his or her duties cannot be essentially haughty; that is because such a delusive and imaginary feature (boastfulness) has been recounted as a barrier hindering the accomplishment of the foresaid tasks. Due to the same reason, the managers should be strictly keeping themselves away from such a unfavorable characteristics and, also, they should engage in reforming their perspectives regarding their own selves and their positions and the stance of their Creator and take other corrective measures of the like if they found themselves feeling thoughts and imaginations stemming from haughtiness or performing behaviors, even tiny, originating from these ideas.

Imam Ali (PBUH) has ordered Malek-e-Ashtar that:

“Whenever you found your authority bringing you pompousness or haughtiness, consider the vast sultanate of the God who is above you and has a power over you and think that you have no genuine power over yourself and the authorities you have been bestowed because such a consideration suppresses your haughtiness and pompousness and repels arrogance and snobbishness from you and returns to you the sagacity you have lost. Beware not to equal yourself to the God in grandeur and do not resemble yourself to the God in power and omnipotence; that is because the God will despise every haughty tyrant person and renders every pompousness inferior and unworthy” (Ansariyan, 2008; Sayyed Razi, 1993, Letter 53, 428).

The way Amir Al-Mu’menin (PBUH) looks at his highness’s own self and subordinates and also at Malek and the God is an informative lesson and a pattern to be followed; part of His Highness’s response to one of his assistants who extolled His Highness in a long lecture has been given below: “... So, do not speak to me the way the mutinous haughty individuals are addressed and do not exercise caution before me the way it is exercised before the arrogant people who are feared to harm and do not converse with me with [fake or fear-driven] compromise and gentleness and do not think that it is hard for me to hear the truth and do not reckon that I ask you to revere me because he who takes it hard on oneself upon hearing the truth and being offered with justice will find it more difficult to act right and serve justice. Therefore, do not dodge telling the truth or consult [along with] justice because I do not think of myself as being so superior so as not to be faultless, neither am I immune of mistake unless I am saved by the God from what is projected out of my ego and the God is much more of a possessor to it than me because you and I are servants possessed by the God and there is no possessor except him and He is the possessor of affairs of our egos on which we have no right ...” (Ansariyan, 2008; Sayyed Razi, 1993, Sermon: 216, 335).



In this regard, part of the recommendations made by Imam Kazem (PBUH) to Hisham Ibn Hakam is noteworthy: “Lo, Hisham! The angels from the sky and earth curse he who is haughty and boasts oneself, and he who treats his brothers haughtily and pompously has risen in opposition against the God” (Harrani, 1983, 397).

In selection stage, as well, the appointment of the individuals characterized by such features should be avoided as it is ordered by the great apostle of Islam (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny the best of His regards) to the commanders in regard of what they ought to do: “avoid hiring the haughty and despots and pompous individuals and the ones who like being admired and are fond of a lot of praises and extolments and fame and seek for honor [and the magnificence] of the world” (Ibn Hayun, 1964, 1: 361).

So, one of the most important moral traits of the managers in successful management is avoiding haughtiness and boastfulness.

- ***Avoidance of Selfishness and Self-Absorption:***

Another characteristic of a competent manager is avoiding selfishness and self-absorption. Selfishness, whether be it in respect to one’s own self or one’s own knowledge, work and management, causes one not to see his or her flaws and defects of himself or herself or his or her work so consider oneself righteous hence become unreceptive of the criticisms and find it hard to listen to the criticisms and objections and disallow them to the maximum extent possible or, even, become an enemy of the critics or the objectors and only be willing to hear and expect admiration and compliment, resist the others’ ideas and cannot stand the existence of another person better than him or her, become despotic and domineering and remain in his or her faults and shortcomings and as it is expressed in a narrative from Imam Sadeq (PBUH), eventually perish: “he who lets selfishness in to his or herself will be perished” (Kolaini, 1986, 2: 313).

Amir Al-Mu’menin (PBUH) addresses Malek-e-Ashtar in Malek-e-Ashtar Treaty as stated below: “Avoid selfishness and trusting only in your own internal features about which you feel excited and pleased do not wish being praised and extoled by the others because these states, from Satan’s perspective, the best chances for destroying the good-doing of the righteous individuals” (Ansariyan, 2008; Sayyed Razi, 1993, Letter 53, 443-444).

In denouncing such an unfavorable characteristic, it is narrated from Imam Sadeq (PBUH) that “he who is selfish will be perished and he who is enchanted with his or her own ideas will be perished” (Mofid, 1992, 221). Then, the generous Imam quotes Jesus, the son of Marry, (PBUH) that “a selfish person who is fond of his own ideas and self and finds oneself the sum of all virtues and knows all rights obligatory in favor of oneself and does not find oneself having to shoulder even an example of right before the others is the very stupid (unwise) person who cannot be cured” (Ibid).

- ***Forbearance:***

Another necessary qualification of a manager is his or her being characterized by patience and forbearance. That is because performing all the duties and fulfilling all the responsibilities assigned to a manager is very difficult and heavy and, additionally, there may come about situations in which the manager would feel s/he is pressed and confronted with a true bottleneck and if s/he is not tolerant and patient enough, s/he cannot properly administrate the affairs as a result of which s/he might lose part of the task and responsibility s/he has shouldered or waste a part of the rights s/he has to fulfill. The more the manager’s area of responsibility is vaster the more s/he is going to need such a quality.



Imam Ali (PBUH) in Malek-e-Ashtar Treaty, after strongly recommending him to take care of the lower classes of people and expressing how to treat them, addresses Malek with the following words:

“The things I recommended to you are heavy duties of the governors. Of course, serving the rights is difficult and heavy as a whole and the God sometimes makes it easy for those of the people who wish benevolence and happy ending of the affairs and exercise patience and endurance and truly trust in the God’s promises” (Ansariyan, 2008; Sayyed Razi, 1993, Letter 53, 430).

The issue is important to the extent that His Highness introduces the extensiveness of the heart as a means of heading a group of people: “the vastness of the heart is an instrument of leadership” (Laisi Waseti, 1998, 18).

Here, it is deemed appropriate to put forth a solution that can be applied according to the ethereal words mentioned above to become characterized by or possibly strengthen such virtues. It is narrated from His Highness that “if you are not a tolerant person pretend you are because there have been a lot of people pretended to be like a group of the other people and have happened to be actually like them” (Ansariyan, 2008; Sayyed Razi, 1993, Motto: 207, 506).

Therefore, patience is one sign of the individual’s managerial empowerment and amongst the most important moral characteristic of a manager or a boss in various managerial levels.

Behavioral Characteristics of a Manager in Respect to the Subordinates:

The following sections outline, using the Islamic teachings, the most outstanding necessities of the managers’ behaviors in treating and interacting with their subordinates.

- ***Mildness, Gentleness and Affection:***

The importance of mildness and kindness becomes clear when we come to the realization that aggressiveness and cruelty cause the freezing of the relationships between the managers and their subordinates and make him stand alone in confrontation with the problems and difficulties. The harsh and aggressive behavior of a manager makes the subordinates leave his or her side and be stimulated to knock him or her down and a consequence of such a type of behavior is that the manager will not be able to be equipped with the appropriate intellectual and psychological and task empowerments to administrate and advance the assignments and cope with the problems. The Holy Quran orders the following command regarding the moral virtues and type of the behavior exhibited by the great apostle (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny the best of His regards) in respect to his assistants and subordinates:

“So, you became soft in your way of treating them with the [blessing] of a mercy by the God and if you were harsh and stone-hearted towards them, they would have surely scattered from around you¹” (AL-e-IMRAN, 159).

And that apostle of mercifulness and good-heartedness expresses affection as the underlying premise of his mission: “the basis and foundation [of my work] is love” (Nouri, 1987, 11: 173). Imam Ali (PBUH), as well, in the treaty 53 of NAHJ AL-BALAQAH, addresses Malek-e-Ashtar with the following recommendations regarding being kind towards the people and loving them:

“Keep kindness and love and courteousness towards the people in your heart and do not be like a brutal animal [in treating] them so as to consider eating them a chance to be seized” (Ansariyan, 2008; Sayyed Razi, 1993, Letter 53, 427).

¹ Holy Quran translation, Fooladvand, with some changes



This is why the softness, temperateness and treating others with love is an important behavioral index of the managers and authorities holding offices based on the Islamic teachings.

- ***Serving Others without Reminding them of the Favor:***

According to Islamic teachings, the perspective of every supervisor or manager towards his or her subordinates should be serving them using the position and authority assigned to them not a perspective based on superiority and utilitarianism and not even serving them for obtaining personal objectives or satisfaction of one's internal wishes. It means that the manager should always envision oneself a servant in the position or stance s/he is holding and make it his or her belief and thus try being ornamented with the tools and requirements of such a viewpoint. It is narrated in a precious statement from the great apostle (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny the best of his regards) that "the head of a group is the servant of that group" (Sadugh, 1992, 4: 378).

Also, it can be discerned through contemplation in the words of the leader of the believers (PBUH) that in the recommendations by His Highness, recommendations to a type of behavior and performance stemming from this same perspective serving others are clearly visible and distinct. As a specimen in this regard, the recommendations of His Highness to his governor, Malek-e-Ashtar, can be pointed out:

"Dedicate part of your time to the needful people and at that time put all the other tasks away and sit with them in a public gathering and be humble towards the God who has created you and discharge your army troopers and assistants, from the guards to the protectors, so that their speakers can speak with you without stammering [and fear and worry]; because I have heard it many times from the God's apostle (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny the best of His regards) that "the nation amongst which the rights of the poor and unable individuals are taken from the powerful individuals with stammering will never be purified". Then, tolerate their aggression and inability in speaking and keep yourself clean of hardness, haughtiness and pompousness towards them so that the God might open the boundaries of His mercifulness to you and make you qualified for receiving the reward of His obedience. Endow with all your heart whatever you endow and accompany any denial of the endowments with beauty and excuse" (Ansariyan, 2008; Sayyed Razi, 1993, Letter 53, pp.439-440).

Elsewhere, His Highness explicitly warns Malek against reminding the people of the favors:

"Avoid reminding the people of the favors you have done and do not overestimate your good deeds" (Ansariyan, 2008). In continuation, His Highness posits the following reason for such a demand: "that is because reminding the others of the favors makes them diminished and overestimating the good deeds puts off the light of right" (Ansariyan, 2008).

Therefore, the managers can truly serve the rights of the work and the things entrusted in them and also the rights of their subordinates when see themselves as mere servants of the others and do not remind the others of the services they provide.

- ***Clarification:***

One of the important duties of a manager in respect to the subordinates is clarification when the manager is suspicious of being sinful and unjust in his or her behaviors and performance. Managers failing to clarify under such circumstances will buy a greater deal of suspicion for themselves and these doubts are sometimes strengthened by some individuals the result of which will be optimism and dissidence in regard of the manager. On the other hand, as it is understood



from Imam Ali (PBUH)'s recommendation to Malek-e-Ashtar, clarification will be followed by educational and constructive effects both for the manager and his or her subordinates:

“If the people became suspicious of you for performing a sin or an act of wrath, you should clearly reveal your reasons to them thereby to turn away their suspicions of yourself; that is because there is a sort of mortification for your soul and also there is a kind of softness and mildness with the people in doing so and this helps you attain your goal that is the very serving of the right” (Ansariyan, 2008; Sayeyd Razi, 1993, Letter 53, 442).

In his practical way of conduct, His Highness's actual practicing of such qualities and virtues is clearly vivid; in such a way that when his assistants saw His Highness's delay in starting and ordering the commencement of the war in Seffain Battle and rumors were spread about His Highness that His Highness is afraid of death or he has become doubtful about getting engaged in war with the Shāmis, His Highness addresses them with the following words:

“As for your whispers that whether the things [I did] were because I find death unpleasant [for me], I swear to the God that I do not fear if death finds me or I find death and regarding your rumors that [my delay in starting the war] has been out of my doubtfulness about the Shāmis, I swear to the God that I did not postpone the war even for a day unless for the excuse that a group [of them] might join me and become guided by me and see my light [in their darkness] and find their path towards it [even with a weak sight] and this is more likeable to me than killing them while they are deviant; however, [if I kill them] they return [to the God] with their sins [and they will join the fellows of hell]” (Ansariyan, 2008; Sayyed Razi, 1993, Discourse 55, 9).

Therefore, it is envisaged appropriate for the managers to clarify the suspicions created about them and explicitly speak of their reasons and be accountable and responsive to the questions and suspicions created about them in the minds of their subordinates not that avoid clarifying the issues out of haughtiness, self-absorption, selfishness and self-centeredness.



CONCLUSION:

1. From the perspective of Islam, responsibility is entrusted and it has to be assigned to those who are qualified. The selection of competent and qualified individuals is amongst the most important and most essential indices of Islamic management that will be followed by meritocracy and the fostering of the qualified.
2. Sophistication, having successful experiences, healthiness of the soul and being bound to the ethics, good fame, trustworthiness and capability of administrating the affairs and enforcement of tasks are amongst the most important indicators that has to be the base of action in selecting the qualified and competent individuals
3. Avoidance of haughtiness and boastfulness are amongst the most important moral characteristics of managers because these inferior qualities are essentially in opposition to serving others and trustworthiness.
4. Another characteristic of the competent managers is their avoidance of selfishness and self-absorption, whether be towards one's own self or be it in respect to one's ideas or knowledge or work or management style.
5. Being characterized by patience and forbearance is a sign of an individual's managerial capability and one of the most important moral characteristic of the managers in various managerial levels.

6. Mildness, temperateness and affection towards the subordinates are amongst the important behavioral indicators of the managers and holders of tenures based on the Islamic teachings and harshness and cruelty cause coldness in relationships between the manager and the subordinates and make him stand alone in difficulties and hardship.
7. Managers can truly serve the rights of the tasks and the assignments they are entrusted as well as their subordinates' rights when see themselves as servants of the others and do not remind the others of the favors they do.
8. One important duty of every manager in respect to his or her subordinates is clarification when they become suspicious of the manager for perpetrating sin and unjust deeds. Clarification is accompanied by educational outcomes both for the manager and the subordinates

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