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## THE PROPHET AND HIS MANAGERIAL METTLE

Persecuted and chased the Prophet (SA) reaches the precincts of Yathrab and is joined by a small group of the faithful. Spreading the message of Allah is his objective and mission. Within a short period of ten years, the message gets across the boundaries of Arabia. The warring tribes are galvanised into one Ummah, their life style and its quality under goes a complete change and Islam appears as a new force and light for the rest of mankind. A social system based on equality, justice and freedom from exploitation, tyranny, class-hatred and prejudices of race, colour or language is established. All this happened so swiftly and in such depth of convictions that we may rightly call that "an Age of Discontinuity" instead of the present century, as described by some writers on management. After all, a change for better material comforts cannot be equated with dramatic changes in human convictions which impel people to accept for themselves a little less in material comforts and much more in self-discipline for the sake of higher ideals covering all aspects of life.

The revolution was brought about in a short span of ten years under conditions of extreme scarcity of means and in the teeth of maximum opposition from all around. The Prophet (SA) thus proved to be the most effective leader the world can ever produce.

Was it a miracle or achievement? It was certainly a miraculous achievement. To identify the ingredients of his success is the purpose of my humble attempt. In doing so, I am fully aware of my personal limitations and I seek Allah's mercy and guidance. This is also my endeavour to highlight the leadership and managerial qualities of the Prophet (SA) which if practised by us can improve the quality of our performance. Beside planning and organising, the Prophet (SA) possessed immense qualities of leadership as proved by his achievements. The subject of leadership has been extensively studied and researched by management experts and behavioural scientists in the recent past. The extent of the work done in this field can be judged from the fact that Mr. Stogdil



who completed his survey in 1974 consulted about 3,000 books and articles on the subject of leadership. It is very educative to know that their major findings and conclusions are supported by the qualities and practices of the Holy Prophet (SA).

According to Harold Koontz and Cyril O'Donnel, the essence of leadership is the 'followership' that is willingness of people to follow that makes a person a LEADER. People tend to follow those whom they perceive as providing a means of achieving their own desires and ideals. The zeal of the followers or subordinates correlates positively with the quality of leadership and the standard of any human group or organization is set by the performance of its leaders. If the leadership performance is high, with it the average performance goes up. Leadership and motivation are closely interrelated. Followers and subordinates want to be led effectively and with effective leadership they work with zeal and confidence towards the peak of their capabilities. Leadership, therefore, is the ability to induce the followers and subordinates to work with zeal and confidence upto their maximum capability. The following three major ingredients of leadership have been identified :

- (a) Ability to comprehend human behaviour and to apply this knowledge to people and situations.
- (b) The rare ability to inspire.
- (c) The ability to develop a climate for responding to and arousing motivation which is influenced by organizational climate, that is, maintenance of an environment for performance thus making common people achieve uncommon performance.

In the whole process the followers and subordinates have to be led and not pushed or prodded. In Fiedler's view, leadership performance depends on leader's own attributes and to the extent group members/subordinates trust him and are willing to follow him.

The question is as to what persuades a human being to repose his trust in another and implicitly accept his authority to lead? I would say that respect is the basis of authority. Respect to leaders and superiors is given to them for their basic human virtues and professional excellence as applicable. I call basic human virtues ETERNAL as these are timeless and remain unchanged. Luckily for us these virtues are few in number though temptations and pressures to deviate from them are great many and ever present. It is not possible for me to detail the virtues and qualities of the Prophet (SA) in a short paper like this. More learned people have written volumes on *Seerat*. For his abundant virtues and attributes, the Prophet (SA) was given complete respect and



his authority over his followers was total. Respect is the real basis of authority can be equally applied in situations where people enjoy a formal authority by virtue of their office. To improve effectiveness and performance the formal authority has got to be augmented with that informal authority which emanates from respect. Formal authority alone is a very weak ground to rely upon.

We have seen the folly of relying on the strength of the chair alone. We have also seen leaders being praised for their knowledge, intelligence and shrewdness. But praise and respect are different things. Respect is given to a man for his basic virtues and more for his accomplishments if these virtues remain present. The followers/subordinates can differentiate between sincerity and manipulation. This also explains why our actions will be judged in the light of our intentions.

Acquisition of knowledge has been highly commended in Religion, for nobody's opinion is better than his information. Yet the measure of superiority is *Taqwa* and not knowledge alone. *Taqwa* is action, that is doing and saying some things and not doing and saying some others. Professional excellence remaining constant, the basis of respect for a leader or superior is his *Taqwa*. '*Amal* (action) has precedence over '*Ilm* (knowledge). Thoughts without action do not achieve a thing just as science without technology produces nothing. The Prophet (SA) practised what he promised or preached. He preached forgiveness by forgiving those who had hurt him personally in worst ways. He abolished blood-feuds by forsaking claims of his family. He abolished *Riba* by foregoing what was receivable to his own near ones and reinforced precepts by setting personal examples.

Motivation is defined by Berelson and Steiner as an inner state that energizes, activates or moves and directs or channels behaviour towards goals. Psychologist Abraham Maslow indentified human needs that motivate the people. He has seen these human needs in the form of a hierarchy beginning from primary needs to higher needs. The highest motivating force he has identified, is the human need for self-actualisation which he defined by him as a desire to become what one is capable of becoming. Materialists will see it in their own light. But we know that the early Muslims were motivated by the highest considerations of self-actualisation in the path of Allah. This was the quality of the leader, that was reflected in his followers.

The managerial and leadership style of the Prophet (SA) was open and informal which encouraged a two way communication.



Fear is a sure obstacle to communication and understanding. The Prophet (SA) was not feared but respected. He was a patient listener and listening is prelude to understanding. It is a Divine attribute too. He was accessible to every one. He encouraged participation and accepted a good suggestion from any one. He showed respect and consideration for the humblest. He was helpful to all who needed it. Slaves took him by the hand to their masters for the redress of their grievances. He was found in the front line of a battle-ground and another time digging earth alongside the common man.

Here I refer to the researches by Prof. Rensis Likert and his associates who have studied patterns and styles of leadership behaviour for three decades and have identified four different styles:—

- (1) Exploitative (2) Authoritative (3) Consultative (4) Participative/ supportive.

The fourth has been found by Prof. Rensis Likert as most productive and affective in achieving the goals and conducive to greatest success of a leader. The salient features of this style are as follows:—

1. Participation in goal-setting.
2. Trust and confidence in subordinates.
3. Constructive use of subordinates' ideas and opinions.
4. Two way communication and better understanding.
5. Decision making at lower levels in the organization (other than goal getting).

Another approach to dramatizing leadership style is the well known 'managerial grid' developed by Dr. Robert Blake and Jane Mouton. Of the various styles, they conclude, the best results are achieved where respect and trust is shown to people alongside emphasis on achievements.

The Prophet (SA) provided opportunity for growth and development to his followers including his former slave by entrusting to them the command of troops on various missions. Equal opportunity, laws and positive action programmes introduced in some countries are of very recent origin. Such opportunities helped in building a successor management which function is now considered a responsibility of top management in all enlightened organizations. The result was when the boundaries of the new state widened, it did not find itself short of able administrators.

Courage was another abundant quality of the Prophet (SA). Courage is not what is required only in time of danger. It is a quality for doing or getting right things done all the time. Some persons confuse obstinacy or vindictiveness for courage. Courage is to do justice



with the man whose face we don't like, to resist temptations and to keep our passions in check. Courage is to impose one's decision on time and events, rather than people. This is concentration, a key to success and we find the Prophet (SA) concentrating on his mission ever since the truth was revealed to him. Thinking is another great managerial quality. The Prophet (SA) spent years in meditating at Hira and the Quran repeatedly invites people to think. The Prophet (SA) was action oriented. He converted decisions into actions simultaneously. Similarly all divine instructions were implemented immediately. He took initiative in good time and did not allow bottlenecks to develop. He gave clear and concise instructions avoiding information overload. Good management of time is a key to effectiveness and offering prayers five times a day at appointed hours trains for budgeting of time. Simplicity of habits, manners and dress was the Prophet's (SA) routine. Psychologists tell us simplicity is the product of a great mind. Simple living and high thinking is best illustrated in his case. He never used force, coercion or temptations to liquidate opposition. He relied on reason and kindness to win over enemies and the change of heart was lasting. Not doing justice and depriving the weak or subordinate of his due, develops cracks in all spheres of collective activity. Banishing all forms of discrimination, exploitation, tyranny and injustice the Prophet (SA) liberated the energy of the people and channelised it for constructive purpose. Beside all said above, the truth of his mission was the biggest reason of his success. Truth was the cause and truth was the effect.