



Concept of Leadership in Islam

Leadership can be learned, practiced and adopted by an individual. Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) said, "Each one of you is a shepherd on his flock".

Different Definitions of Leadership

Leadership is difficult to define in a single definition. However, we can say that it is the quality to do acts of goodness and then people join you and you lead them.

"Leadership is like beauty. It's hard to define, but you know it when you see it". Warren Bennis

Leadership is

1. The pursuit of bettering your environment
2. Knowing your team and yourself well
3. Giving people the tools to succeed
4. Open, authentic and positive influence
5. Clarity, confidence, and courage
6. Building consensus and common goals
7. Being the solution to problems
8. Helping others achieve the impossible
9. To develop next-generation leaders
10. Building followers

Leadership is the ability to help people achieve things they don't think are possible.

Leader

Leaders are coaches with a passion for developing people, not the players; they get satisfaction from achieving the objects through others.

As a leader, one must know which of his team members are to be used where? It's a part of being a good leader because you understand which person should be used in which capacity.

Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) did this in his life, he took the advice of Hazrat Suleman Farsi (RA) of digging the trench for a battle as he was an expert of that area. He made Hazrat Khalid bin Waleed (RA), one of the generals as he (PBUH) knew that Hazrat Khalid bin Waleed (RA) was a master of the battlefield. So, Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) put each person in the right place. He did what a leader does, irrespective of considering his blood relations for higher ranks. Each one of them was given the task on merit. A leader recognizes the strengths of his team members.

The imam of a masjid is a very good example of a leader:

- Follow him in Salah
- Don't overtake him
- If he makes a mistake, inform him
- If he doesn't listen, you're not to blame
- Imam has to be the best from you (most knowledge of the Qur'an & Sunnah)

Imam must be the best and knowledgeable person as per general rule so that people can consult him in case of any confusion or query.

Mashwara – Seeking Advice

It is recommended in Islam to seek advice from all. The Even Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) seeks advice from his companions.

The decisions can be taken in three different ways.

1. **Democratic:** The majority opinion
2. **Consultative:** Ask those who know best or most qualified
3. **Authoritative:** Take a decision yourself

All these methods are fine depending upon the situation. So as a leader can use all these options can depend upon the situation.

- **Pray Istikhara** – For this we pray 2 nafal and then recite the dua of Istekhara in which we ask Allah (SWT) that “O Allah, if this decision is good for me then make it easy for me, but if it's bad for me in this world and akhirah then move me away from it and give peace to my heart that I am able to take that decision”.
- Then take the decision without waiting for any sign.
- If there is a hindrance, you can change course
- Once the decision has been made, adhere to it
- Don't say “I told you so”
- Obey the ameer unless he/she goes against the Shariah

Once you make the decision, then put your trust in Allah (SWT), and even if something happens which is not in our favor even then there must be some Khair (betterment) for us in it.

There is no “I” in the team

Leaders focus on their teams, not on themselves. They think of themselves as a part of the team so there is no "I" in the team. They referred every victory to the common effort of their team.

5 Reasons Why Leaders are Followed

These are the levels of the relationship of leadership with their subordinates.

1. Leader commands the top position
2. Leader has a relationship with the subordinates regardless of status
3. Employee wants to be part of the leader's team as they produce results
4. Employee wants to grow as an individual and learn new skills
5. Employee respects the leader's judgment and personality

Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) did the same. He (PBUH) first made his space in the people of Arab, won their trust that they did the honor of fixing Hajr-e-Aswad even when he didn't announce him as a Prophet.

He was famous for his honesty and truthfulness so when he invited people towards Allah (SWT), some people accepted him who have purity in their hearts.

(Yusuf) said, "Appoint me over the storehouses of the land. Indeed, I will be a knowing guardian." [Surah Yusuf:55]

Hazrat Yusuf (AS), asked the king of Egypt that I am trustworthy and knowledgeable in this area so appoint me for this job of finance minister. Also, Allah (SWT) has bestowed Hazrat Yusuf (AS) with the knowledge of interpreting dreams so it was his plus point. So, he interpreted the dream of the king of Egypt and told him that you will have seven years of prosperity and then seven years of hardship. As he was sure of his knowledge so he asked to be appointed to this position and other people may not be able to perform this task as he would have performed.

Leader is also accountable for their deeds as leaders.

"And keep yourself patient (by being) with those who call upon their Lord in the morning and the evening, seeking His face. And let not your eyes pass beyond them, desiring adornment of the worldly life, and do not obey one whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance and who follows his desire and whose affair is ever (in) neglect." [Surah Al-Kahf:28]

A leader, a friend and any relationship should only be made with those who fear and worship Allah (SWT).

"Do not extend your eyes toward that by which We have given enjoyment to [certain] categories of the disbelievers, and do not grieve over them. And lower your wing to the believers". [Surah Hijr:88]

Allah (SWT) said to Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) that you serve them (believers). Leadership concept in Islam is completely different. In Islam, a leader serves the people and people get benefits from him.

At the battle of Uhud, archers did not obey Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) but he did not turn his back on them.

“So, by mercy from Allah, [O Mohammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So, pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely [upon Him]”.

[Surah Al-Imran:159]

Although Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) was getting revelations from Allah (SWT), he did not need anyone’s advice on any decision, but he always took advice from his companions which show that taking advice is an important aspect of a leader and makes team bonding.