A MODEL OF ISLAMIC LEADERSHIP BASED ON HASAN BANNA'S WRITINGS

Ismail bin Mamat[1]

Anuar Al-Sadat Haji Noor[2]

ABSTRACT

Leadership has long been an often-discussed topic among intellectuals of a variety of disciplines. Analysis of leadership is often centered on day-to-day practices of particular organizations. Leadership is defined by many scholars and researchers, such as a process of whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. In Islam, leadership is a process of inspiring and coaching voluntary followers in an effort to achieve a clear and defined shared vision. It is seen as human factors that bind a group together and motivate it toward desired goals. Hence, in Islam, a leader is not free to act as he or she chooses, nor must he submit to the wishes of any group, he or she must act only to implement Allah's laws on earth. Allah says: "And We made them leaders guiding men by Our command and We sent inspiration to do good deeds, to establish regular prayers, and to practice regular charity; and they constantly served Us only" (Surah Al-Anbiya', [21] 73). The purpose of this article is to address the model of leadership in Islamic organizations or movements, particularly practiced by a well-known Islamic organization in the Muslim world, namely Ikhwan Muslimin (IM) of Egypt. The paper highlights, too, that the nature and view of leadership, in the Islamic organizations or movements, should be in line with the teaching of Islam, based on the Qur'an and the sunnah as dual sources of Islamic conceptions of the role of a leader, and the doing of leadership. The Qur'an is the holy book of Islam and the foundational constitution of Muslims around the world. The sunnah concerns the life of the Prophet Muhammad, which Muslims are encouraged to emulate; and this exemplary life is largely understood through the hadith, which preserve his words and deeds.

Keywords: Islam, Leadership, Ikhwan Muslimin (IM), Hasan Banna, Servant-Leadership Approach.

DESIGN/METHODOLOGY/APPROACH

The article briefly surveys the development of leadership style applied by IM of Egypt. The paper, then, suggests a model of leadership relevant to Islamic organization or movement.

The study consists of content analysis of Hasan Banna's writings, to identify key concepts and principles, concerning the nature of leadership. The methodological aim is to develop characterizations of Islamic leadership model that are recognizable to practicing Muslims today.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

(1)   A Brief Introduction on IM Movement

In less than twenty years, IM movement grew from a small association, in the city of Isma'iliyah, to a major political power with numerous branches scattered throughout Egypt. Hasan Banna employed an elaborate structure to organize this movement. Its various branches in each province were headed by an Administrative Board (*maktab idari*) composed of the members of the Executive Council (*majlis idari*) of the central branch in a province, as well as representatives of all branches in that province. Administration Boards were in turn connected together through IM headquarters (*al-markaz al-'amm*), located in Cairo. The headquarters was divided into a number of specialized committees and departments: General Committee, Education Committee, Department of Labor, Department of Scouting, Department of Propaganda, Department of Phalanxes, Department of Families, Department of Social Services, Department of Communication with the Muslim World, and Department of Muslim Sisters.

The leadership of IM was divided among three bodies:

1)   the Founding Assembly (*al-hay'a al-ta'sisiyah*) composed of one hundred members representing the various provinces and branches, (the Assembly was the policy-making body which set the general policy, of the movement);
2)   the executive power was assigned to the Executive Office (*al-maktab al-tanfidhi*), which was composed of twelve members and headed by the Supreme Guide (*al-murshid al'amm*);
3)   the members of the Executive Office were selected by a special committee, which was known as the Membership Committee (*maktab 'udwiyah*). The committee was also responsible for investigating all charges made against the members of the Founding Assembly, and if need be disciplining them.

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[1] Assistant Professor at the Department of Usuluddin and Comparative Religion, Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia.

[2] Senior Assistant Director, Department of Islamic Affairs, Kelantan.

(2)   **Main Objectives of IM**

IM outlines its main objectives which begin with the self and end with a united Islamist world in their image by advocating:

1) Building the Muslim individual: Building an organized person, strong in body and mind, able to earn a living, correct in worship, and possessing a self-struggling character.
2) Building the Muslim family: Choosing a proper spouse, educating children Islamically, and building a community network of family support groups.
3) Building a Muslim society: Creating a society starting with individuals and families and addressing the problems of society honestly, realistically, and through open debate.
4) Building a Muslim State: The IM publicly espouses that preparing a society for an Islamic government should be the first step toward Islamization. This means spreading Islamic culture, ideals, and policy through media, the mosque, and charitable works as well as through soliciting membership from public organizations like unions, syndicates, and student unions.
5) Building the Caliphate: This means building a united Islamic world.
6) Mastering the world of Islam: Muslims should control their own destiny within *Dar al-Islam*.

(3)   **Tools of IM**

Hasan Banna proclaimed that, "Our tools are the tools of our righteous predecessors and our weapons are what our guide and leader, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions used to address the world, despite their limited number and resources. These tools are five: (1) A deep internal love of Allah and belief in His help and His support. "If Allah helps you, none can overcome you: if He forsakes you, who is there, after that, that can help you? [Qur'an 3:160]. (2) A conviction that the Qur'an is a universally applicable guide. "There has come to you from Allah a (new) light and a perspicuous Book, with which Allah guides all who seek His good pleasure to ways of peace and safety." [Qur'an 5:17-18]. (3) A strong sense of the rights and importance of brotherhood. "The believers are but a single brotherhood." [Qur'an 49: 10]. (4) Firm reliance on Allah's love and justice. - Because all their sufferings and efforts were reckoned to their credit as deeds of righteousness whether they suffered thirst, or fatigue, or hunger, in the cause of Allah, or took any steps that angered or confounded the unbelievers, or sustained any injury whatever from an enemy; for Allah does not fail to give a just reward to those who do good. [Qur'an 9:120]. (5) Supreme confidence that they are among those chosen by Allah to bring truth, justice, and peace to the world.

(4)   **Servant-Leadership Approach (SLA)**

The servant-leadership approach is more dominant in leaders or supervisors in the movement. This is not to say that transformational and transactional leadership approaches are neglected. They are used when situations demand that added further value of flexibility to allow leaders to respond to the changing circumstances of environmental and group dynamics.

The viewpoint of servant-leadership approach as practiced by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is that leadership is not seen as a privilege or position. It is rather a huge responsibility. Thus, leaders need to feel as if they are servants in order to be able to fulfill their duties in the best way possible. They share their responsibilities and authority with others to meet a greater need, that is, by involving followers in planning and decision making (*shura*). The approach revolves on brotherhood in which the leader and all members of organization are considered part of extended family.

In his educational discourse, Hasan Banna outlined more than thirty responsibilities of a member of an Islamic movement. These responsibilities are obligations to himself or herself, family, and community.

(5)   **Leadership Bound With Brotherhood**

In Islam, faith or *'aqidah* is the core of brotherhood. It keeps Muslims close to each other in a fraternal relationship. This relationship is based on each brother's submission to the Lord, the Almighty, and on their mutual efforts to be closer to Him. Islamic brotherhood is a bond of faith as mentioned in the following saying of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): The strongest relationship is built on loving for the sake of Allah and becoming angry for the sake of Allah. [Narrated by Ahmad]. Brotherhood in Islam strengthens the process of building a Muslim community and keeps Muslims close to each other. An Islamic movement based on true brotherhood is as solid as concrete and functions with organic unity as a body that feels the pain when any of its part suffers. In order to ensure that brotherhood can play this role in the Muslim movement, Islam has laid down specific duties and rights of practicing brotherhood.

The duties and responsibilities are in the following:

1. Brotherhood must be able to help each brother obey Allah, the Almighty, and accept the teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him).
2. Brotherhood is a spiritual bond that helps a person feel the needs of his brother and cooperate with him in fulfilling those needs.
3. Brotherhood gives rise to cooperation also in a material sense.
4. Brotherhood is a communal responsibility with many duties.
5. Brotherhood in Islam means caring, loving, and cooperating with one another.

6. Brotherhood in Islam implies loyalty and truthfulness.

(6) Leadership Bound With *Bai'ah*

Every Muslim has the ability to help the Islamic organization in its course of Islamic work, but only by disciplining himself or herself as a member of the organization. This character-building can also be accomplished simply by experiencing the hardships faced by the Muslim community and other communities in society. Constructive action requires the members of the movement to rise above these hardships by understanding their causes and putting faith in the power of Islam (submission to Allah) to save mankind. Men and women can be asset to the Islamic movement only when they have developed a balanced personality, i.e. developed a high level of humanity and internalized the rules of good character, so that they can submit fully to the principles and laws of Islam throughout their lives.

Bai'ah means taking an oath of loyalty. Whoever makes *bai'ah* agrees to submit his entire life to the leader and the ummah. He will not act against the leader in agreed matters, and will be loyal to him in every action, regardless of his personal likes or dislikes. *Bai'ah* is a tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him), such as the first and second *bai'at al-'aqabah* and the *bai'ah ar-ridwan* . This kind of *bai'ah* was taken regularly after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him), whereby the Muslims pledged their loyalty to the leaders of the Muslim community. Bukhari narrated from Junadah ibn Abi Umaiyah who said that Ubadah ibn Shamit said: "The Prophet (peace be upon him) called us, and we gave *bai'ah* to him. He asked us to promise, among other things, to obey in specific matters, whether we like it or not, and whether in happiness or hardship, and not to give priority to ourselves, and not to go against the orders of authority unless we see that they are clearly against Allah's rules and we have clear witness."

Defining the principles of *bai'ah*, Hasan Banna said: "Our principles of *bai'ah* are ten: understanding, sincerity, *ibadah* (worship), jihad (struggle), sacrifice, obedience, perseverance, integrity, brotherhood, and trust".

1. Understanding: The first principle of Islamic *bai'ah* is the clear understanding that the philosophy of life, or ideology of the Islamic Movement is a purely Islamic ideology. This philosophy of life contains the following twenty sub-principles:

    (a) Islam is a complete system and covers all aspects of life.
    (b) The Qur'an and the sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him), are the ultimate sources of reference for all Muslims.
    (c) True faith, acceptable worship, and striving for the cause of Allah, the Almighty, are the lights and sweetness given by Allah, the Almighty, to those He chooses. Mystical enlightenment (*kashf)*, dreams, inspiration (*ilham*), and various other illusions, cannot serve as proofs if these are against the teachings of the Islam and shari'ah.
    (d) Talismans, charms, palm reading, fortune telling, and horoscopes, as well as everything related, are practices contrary to Islam. They must be fought, including talismans and charms inscribed with verses of the Qur'an such as those compiled by Hasan Banna, in his *al-ma'thurat*.
    (e) The opinions of a leader or his deputies concerning matters of public welfare (*maslahah mursalah*) can be acceptable if they are not in conflict with the principles of Islamic shari'ah.
    (f) The sayings of any person other than the Prophet (peace be upon him), may be either accepted or rejected on its merits.
    (g) A Muslim whose knowledge has not reached a level of discernment sufficient to understand the reasoning behind various rules of Islamic law must follow one of the four most authoritative leaders of the Islamic law - Malik, Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, Abu Hanifah, and Shaf'i.
    (h) Differences of opinion in minor matters of law or details of regulations should not be a reason for causing disunity in the Muslim community.
    (i) To discuss theoretical issues and problems that do not benefit one's practical life, can be categorized as unduly burdensome and is forbidden by the shari'ah.
    (j) To know Allah, the Almighty, to believe in Him and not to admit any rivals to Him, constitutes the core of the Islamic creed. The verses of the Qur'an and hadith from the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the attributes of Allah must be accepted without trying unduly to put on them false interpretation, because their true meaning is beyond human experience and comprehension.
    (k) All innovations (*bid'ah*) in the din of Allah that are baseless and have support from the Qur'an or hadith should be countered in a most intelligent way.
    (l) Committing *bid'ah* by deliberately adding or leaving out something from formal worship is a minor problem in Islamic law.
    (m) Making supplication (*dua*) to Allah through an intermediary (*tawasul*), such as a saint, is also a relatively minor problem of *fiqh* (Islamic law); it is not a problem of creed or *'aqidah*.
    (n) Visiting graves is a sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him), as long as it according to his practice and teachings.
    (o) To love and respect pious people because of their piety is a legitimate form of developing closeness to Allah.
    (p) Wrong custom cannot legitimize *bid'ah* or alter the meaning of the shari'ah.
    (q) Faith is the basis of worship. Worshipping internally with the mind and heart is better than worshipping externally through the body, but Islam requires both forms of worship for balance and perfection.
    (r) Islam liberates the mind and encourages people to observe, analyze and understand the universe as a means to advance them in knowledge and wisdom, because Islam welcomes all useful things.

(s) Human opinion and the shari'ah may legitimately differ, but not on indubitable matters. In such cases positive assertions of law will take precedence over individual opinion. Dubious matters should be interpreted to conform to indubitable truths. Where a person's opinion differs with the shari'ah, the shari'ah must be followed until the correctness of the person's opinion is either proven or disproven.

(t) A Muslim should never be deliberately designated as a *kafir* (an infidel), even though he or she is a sinner, unless he or she should admit to being an unbeliever or act in a way that cannot be interpreted as anything other than *kufr*.

2. Sincerity: Every Muslim should aspire only to please Allah in every aspect of his life, whether in word, action, or jihad. He should not look for self-interest, respect, prestige, or title, because a Muslim believes in an ideology and a creed; he is not a fortune-hunter who merely seeks worldly gains.

3. Worship (*ibadah):* It means to perfect oneself, to build a Muslim family, educate the community, liberate the Muslim nation, correct a ruler until he follows Islam, regain the respect and influence of the Muslim ummah in the world community, and provide leadership by propagating the message of Islam to the ends of the earth until no trials and barriers are left, and all mankind willingly submits to its Creator, Allah.

4. Jihad: It is a continuous struggle that will last till the Day of Judgement. Failure to engage in jihad or to have no intention for it is a sure sign of *jahiliyyah*, as the Prophet (s), said: Those who die and never went to war (in the cause of Allah), nor had the intention of doing so, will die as in the state of *jahiliyyah* (ignorance).

5. Sacrifice: It means to sacrifice life, wealth, time, and everything in life for the sake of reaching his ultimate goal.

6. Obedience: It means to obey every command and implement it whether in time of happiness or hardship, and whether one likes it or not.

7. Perseverance: A Muslim must always worship Allah and wage *jihad* until death in order to reach his ultimate goal, although the goal is invisible and it takes a long time to achieve. Therefore the steadfast Muslim will achieve this goal either through a lifetime of effort or through sudden death as a martyr.

8. Integrity: This means to be true to one's self, and honest in one's thinking, to do one believes, and to refuse to compromise with what is false, whether a system or an ideology, for Islam is the most comprehensive and perfect truth.

9. Brotherhood: Brotherhood is to unite one's soul and spirit with one's faith and beliefs.

10. Trust and confidence in competence, sincerity, and ability of leadership inspire feelings of love, appreciation, honor, and obedience.

(7)   Leaders Must Loyal to Shari'ah Law

Loyalty includes obedience to legitimate orders and responsiveness to every request. When loyalty is not observed, there will be iniquity, oppression and persecution. The early signs of these may not be visible to a believer, and so he may feel that nothing is wrong. Therefore he must be careful not to let his speech or action become a source of trial (*fitnah*) for others and for himself. Loyalty is a must so long as it is not sinful or an occasion of sin. Allah, the Almighty, has said: O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey His Messenger and those charged with authority among you. If you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger if you do believe in Allah and the Last Day. This is the best [for you] and best in the end. [Qur'an 4:59] It is narrated from Abu Hurairah that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), said: Those who obey me obey Allah, the Almighty. Those who disobey me disobey Allah, the Almighty. Those who obey my leader obey me and those who disobey my leader disobey me. Bukhari related a hadith from Anas ibn Malik in which Anas said that the Prophet (peace be upon him), said: Listen and obey even though your leader is a slave from Ethiopia. Bukhari also has recorded a hadith from Ibn Abbas that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), said: Those who dislike something their leader does, must be patient with him because anyone who leaves the *jama'ah* (community) and later dies in that condition, he dies in *jahiliyyah*. From Abdullah ibn'Umar, Bukhari relates that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), said: To listen and obey is a must for every Muslim in every matter whether he likes it or not. But if he is asked to commit sin, then he is not under obligation to listen and obey.

(8)   The Need of Strategic Planning in Islamic Organization

Leaders of the Islamic organizations must clear about its purpose, goals and strategies, and must know to distinguish them from subordinate objectives, courses of action and tactics.

(i)   Clear Goals

Clarity of purpose in the Islamic organization is a source of strength for the fully committed. This purposiveness and coherent goals structure avoids wasted or inefficient effort and permits all one's abilities and strength to focus on the most effective Islamic work. From study of Islamic methodology and analysis of texts of the Qur'an and hadith, and Islamic history, it is clear that the purpose of Revelation is for mankind to serve Allah, the Almighty, both individually and collectively. Men and women should be the servants of Allah not only while praying in the mosques but in their daily lives while earning a living or doing business; not only during their fasting, but also while they are governing. Not only when they make supplications to Allah but also when they sit in judgment on others. Allah, the Almighty, says: I have created Jinns and men only that they may [know, worship, and] serve Me. [Qur'an 51:56].

In other words, Muslims in an Islamic organization are the true servants of Allah and their obedience is only to Allah, the Almighty, in all matters of life. It encompasses not only religious affairs but also worldly affairs. This is because Islam teaches its followers that there is no segregation or separation between religion and worldly affairs. Islam rejects the idea of secularism which is based on separation of religion and state. The servitude of man means that he must reject all manmade philosophies and

systems that by nature lead mankind to submit to the false gods of materialism. Islam rejects totally all of these paradigms, systems and methods because:

1. It is clear that they transgress against Allah's rights and rules. Allah, the Almighty, says: The Command Rests with none but Allah. [Qur'an 6:57]
2. All such man-made concepts and practices cause weakness and failure. Therefore they are unable to bring out the true nature of mankind in the trials of life. Allah, the Almighty, says: Is then He Who creates like one that creates not? Will you not receive admonition? [Qur'an 16:17]

(ii) Clear Methods

Working for Islam means to establish Allah's rule on this earth. The Islamic organization wants to bring all people to a state of total submission to Allah, the Almighty, in their practice, their interactions, their political and economic systems, their laws, and in every aspect of their lives. Fundamental transformation of society requires actions that can change it at its very roots. It must reject un-Islamic methods and every cosmetic act or process of putting band-aids on the wounds of the fundamentally flawed societies of materialism. As to its method four things are critical to the movement's success; comprehensive, universal, faithful to the way of the Prophet, and materially strong.

Conclusion

After analyzing the thought of Hasan Banna, we found that he tried to develop the servant-leadership approach to IM. It is a principle of a natural law (*fitrah*) and that getting our social value systems and personal habits aligned with it is one of the great challenges of our lives. The fundamental motivation for leadership should be a desire to serve. Therefore, a capable Islamic leader must possess spiritual awareness as slave of God and rational awareness as vicegerent of God. As God's slave, a human becomes a faithful creature who always does or does not do actions, as commanded by God. As God's vicegerent, a human becomes a successful creature here in this world through the acquisition of knowledge. The integration of rational excellence (vicegerent of God) and emotional and spiritual balance (slave of God) will in turn give birth to soul and conviction which drive activities favored by God. Islamic leaders must unite divine awareness (*rabbaniy*) and rational awareness (*'ilmiy*). People of knowledge, capable of reading, understanding, and making proper use of the realities of life for their benefit and their heart feel fear (*khasyyah*) of God; they are those considered as capable and qualified leaders in the Qur'an. In essence, Islamic leaders are those who possess knowledge integrated to their profession along with continuous fear of God.

That servant-leader leads and serves people with love, acts with humility. It is altruistic, visionary for the followers, trusting, serving, and empowers followers. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:"A ruler who has been entrusted with the affairs of the Muslims, but makes no endeavor (for their material and moral uplift) and is not concerned (for their welfare) will not enter Paradise with them." (narrated by Muslim).

Leaders should be imbued with the aptitude to integrate the rulings and directives in the Qur'an and Hadith with the regulations of the organization. This may enhance mutual and cooperative efforts in cooperative resolution of differences and conflicts among subordinates in a true sense of achieving organizational justice. The subordinates are to obey the directives of their leaders as long as those directives do not go against guidance and the declarations of Allah and his prophets.

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Ismail bin Mamat

Anuar Al-Sadat Haji Noor