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The Principles of Leadership

in the Light of Islamic Heritage
and the American Experience

by

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DARUSSALAM

THE DEFINITION OF 'LEADERSHIP'

"True leaders are ordinary people with exceptional resilience and extraordinary determination."

(John Seaman Garns – translated)

Linguistic Definition of 'Leadership'

(الْفُؤد) [Q-w-d]: "to be led"; it is said, *an animal is "led" in front and is "steered/driven/guided" from behind.*⁽¹⁾

Ibn Dureed mentions that the word القيادة [Al-Qiyādah]: "leadership"; "driving/steering/guiding", is derived from the verb (قاد) [Q-a-d], i.e. "led", as in: The man "led" his camel, i.e. he was "leading/steering/guiding" it. Also, ينفاد [Yunqād]: "compliance", "yielding", "submission", as in: the murderer was "made to yield/succumb/surrender", i.e. he was killed himself.

In *As-Suhāh fil-Lughā wal-'Ulūm* ["The Veritable Book of Language and Science"], it is confirmed as being taken from the word القيادة [Al-qiyād]: the "leading rope, halter" of an animal. In turn القيادة [Al-qiyādah] ("leadership"): is "a means of arriving at a desired aim by overcoming any obstacles and avoiding any pitfalls and whoever undertakes it must therefore adhere to this".⁽²⁾

(1) *Khazāna al-Adab* ["The Treasure of Literature"] and *Lisān al-'Arab* ["The Arab Tongue"], Vol. (3), Maktabah al-Khānjī, 4th edition, Cairo, 1997, p.84.

(2) *As-Suhāh fil-Lughā wal-'Ulūm* ["The Veritable Book of Language and Science"], Vol. (2), by 'Abdullah al-Alaylī, Dar al-Hadhāra 'Arabiyyah, first edition, Beirut, 1975, p. 261.

Al-Munjad states that القيادة [*Al-Qiyād*] refers to the one guiding the animal forward by its halter; thus, this person might be called “so and so, the halter-guider”, that is, a person might be characterized by this act, or “so and so, the guider”, which implies one concedes obediently and is used derogatively.

القيادة [*Al-qiyādah*] (“leadership”): The leader’s base; the place where the leader operates and from which general leadership takes place, i.e. the headquarters.

القائد [*Al-Qā'id*] (“leader”), plurals include, قواد [*Qawād*], قود [*Qawad*], قادة [*Qādah*], فادات [*Qādāt*] (“leaders”): of a rectangular area of land or mountain (including) mountain peak; leading the mountain also extends to the land.⁽³⁾

Conceptual Definition of Leadership

Leadership is centered on the phenomenon of influencing others and this occurs when a person possesses particular characteristics that make him capable of exercising this influence effectively, thereby distinguishing himself as a leader.⁽⁴⁾ Thomas Gordon recognizes leadership as “a post in which a person utilizes their characteristics and qualities in order to acquire experience and education.” Frans and Sander, on the other hand, define it as “the social influences embedded within part of society.” As for Hyman, he prefers to define it as “a process by which an individual is able to direct and guide others and influence their thoughts, behavior and emotions.”⁽⁵⁾ Faysal Bāshrāhīl puts forward the definition of “a process that mobilizes

(3) Al-Munjad, *fī Al-Lughā wa al-'Ilām* [“Language and Information”], Dār al-Mashriq, 40th edition, Beirut, 2003, p.660.

(4) Māher, Dr. Ahmad, *As-Sulūk at-Tanzīmī* [“Organizational Behavior”] (section: ‘Developing Skills’), ad-Dār al-Jamī'iyya (n.d.), Alexandria, (n.ed.), p. 304.

(5) Al-Qahtānī, Dr. Sālim, *Al-Qiyāda al-Idāriyya* [“Managerial Leadership – The Transformation towards the Global Leadership Model”], first edition, Riyadh, 2001, p. 7.

people towards an aim.”⁽⁶⁾ Max Landsberg defines it as “the ability to create visions, dreams and momentum amongst a group of people.”⁽⁷⁾ In *Extraordinary Leadership*, Norman Schwarzkopf defines it as “a combination of the personal and the strategic; however, if it were necessary to dispense of one of them, then it would have to be the strategic.”⁽⁸⁾ Finally, Peter Northhouse states that leadership is “a term that describes the power relationship between a leader and his followers. Thus, it can be inferred that leaders exercise their power in order to influence others.”

In addition to the many definitions that have been put forward for the concept of leadership, which attempt to explicate the meaning of leadership, there are several key elements related to the phenomenon of leadership that can be defined as follows:

1. Leadership is a “process”
2. Leadership involves “influence”
3. Leadership is established within a “group”
4. Leadership entails “goal achievement”

In light of these key elements, the following definition will be adopted throughout this book: “Leadership is a process by which an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.”⁽⁹⁾

Colonel Samuel Hein and Lieutenant William Thomas elaborate

(6) Bāshrāhīl, Faysal and Dr. Tāriq as-Swaydān, *Sana'a al-Qa'id* [“Forming the Leader”], third edition, Riyadh, 2004, p. 40.

(7) Landsberg and McKee, *Adwāt al-Qiyāda* [“The Tools of Leadership”], Ta'rīb Ghada ash-Shahābī, Maktabah al-'Ubaykān, first edition, Riyadh, 2003, p. 20.

(8) Peter J. Reed, *Al-Qiyāda al-Mutamīyya* [“Extraordinary Leadership”], translated by Ahmad 'Alaa', *Majmu'a Nīl Arabiyyah*, first edition, Cairo, 2005, p.35.

(9) Northhouse, Peter, *Al-Qiyāda al-Idāriyya: an-nazariyyah wat-tatbīq* [“Managerial Leadership: Theory and Practice”], translated by Dr.Salāh al-Ma'yūf, The Institute of General Administration, (n. ed.), Riyadh, 2007, p. 20.

