

BOOK REVIEW

Managerial Thoughts of the Prophet (PBUH)

Javed Iqbal Sani

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REVIEWED BY

Muhammad Qaiser Shafi ^{1*}, Khurram Shahzad ²

¹ Lecturer, Faculty of Management Sciences, Riphah International University, Islamabad, Pakistan

² Professor and Associate Dean at FMS, Riphah International University, Islamabad

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A lot has been said and written on managerial and leadership qualities found in the life and mission of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). One such attempt is the recent book authored by Professor Javed Iqbal Sani PhD, and published by "Intellectual Capital Enterprise Limited" from London.

As everyone has to manage any personal, family social or business affairs, management concepts have always been in practice in all spheres of one's life, either intentionally or unintentionally. As a *ḥadīth* of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) all of you are guardians and are responsible for your wards (Bukhari, Muslim) indirectly implies, the practice of management is as older as recorded history of mankind. Since the very beginning, humans have always been interested in knowing how to better manage self, others, organizations and societies. Documented work in domain of management is based on variety of perspectives including religious. So, the book under review, "Managerial Thoughts of Prophet (PBUH)" is an extension to this line of enquiry and depicts the principles and guidelines for effective management from the life of greatest leader of all times holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Prof Javed Iqbal Saani is a learned academician and author in the area of management writing 22 research articles and 23 books so far. His effort in producing the book in hand, highlighting the management practices & techniques from life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as a "Role Model" for managers, needs appreciation by the academia at large.

*Corresponding author: Muhammad Qaiser Shafi

There are already some books and articles, some of them by Dr. Iqbal Sani himself, about the subject matter or similar to it, like "The Prophet (PBUH) as a Military Leader", "Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as a Planning Expert" etc. However, the book under review has been compiled in management perspective from life of Prophet (PBUH) which makes it unique in nature. The life of holy Prophet (PBUH) is an all-time role model for managers and one can significantly learn about all aspects of management from his life. The book comprises 23 chapters which discuss four managerial functions i.e. planning, organizing, leading and controlling.

The book is a novel work on management and highlights successful management techniques for business managers, policy makers, academicians and students. It is helpful for managers and policy makers to understand ideal traits of a good manager and characteristics for effective planning, and essentials of organizing, decision making, managerial strategies, leadership and fundamentals of managerial control. The book is useful for academicians as its structure is in-line with the customary books of management being followed in universities at undergraduate level. So, the universities and the business schools could use it as co-book along with the text books on the subject. It is must read by teachers and the students as it introduces the traits of the best and the successful manager in the human history. It could be especially helpful for the students in preparing assignments and projects in Islamic perspective.

The book encompasses discussion on all concepts & practices in management from planning to execution and control. Chapter 1 on the management style of holy Prophet (PBUH) discusses the role and qualities of manager. Study of the chapter implies that a good manager would possess knowledge and wisdom, would be soft-spoken, consulting with subordinates, motivating the team and using fair means to achieve the goals, and believing in accountability and justice. Manager utilizes organizational resources to manage workforce for achieving desired ends. This chapter also discusses the four traditional managerial functions of a manager.

Chapter 2 discusses basis of wisdom and knowledge of management thoughts of the Prophet (PBUH). The Prophet blessed with the Divine knowledge based on revelation knew the principles and manners of dealing with the people of diverse backgrounds having different age, professions, social status and temperaments. In addition to that, the ancestral heritage from his grandfather and a paternal uncle made him rich in management skills.

Chapter 3 highlights the nature of the first function of a manager i.e. planning. Allah (SWT) appointed His Prophet (PBUH) to convey the message of Allah (SWT) to the entire mankind. This needed serious planning which the Prophet did effectively. Plans usually include effective resource allocation, preparing agendas, and other essential actions to achieve the goals. This chapter describes five questions which a manager must address i.e. what to do? When to do? Where to do? How to do? Who will do? The prophet (PBUH) had utilized all these steps for the successful establishment of Islamic state. The message of the chapter is that a vision, mission and key objectives should be clear to the manager. Chapter 4 discusses the elements of planning i.e. introducing and educating new idea, motivation, and inspiration the others about such ideas. The prophet (PBUH) motivated people based

on the life hereafter and inspired them to preach others. The author, in this context, has used the word of 'selling new idea' by the Prophet (P. 35). In our humble view, it does not seem to be proper as the Prophet performed his duties without any charge and the holy Qur'an testifies this aspect (25:57).

The fifth chapter describes three phases of planning with respect to time duration named as short-term (up to one year), medium-term (one to three years), long-term (three or more years). The prophet (PBUH) used to invite people on one-o-one basis as per above mentioned phases. The total tenure of Holy Prophet's mission at Makkah was 13 years which comprised short, medium and long term planning. Chapter 6 depicts examples from the Holy Prophet's life about planning in Madina. The prophet (PBUH) himself participated in 27 battles and won all of them. He properly planned with regard to all factors like human resources, weapons and working capital. A manager must make sure having required resources for effective functioning and implementation.

The seventh chapter is about *hijrah* journey of Holy Prophet (PBUH). The *hijrah* project was a short-term, but a contingency plan, and the Holy Prophet (PBUH) performed with minute planning in sequence. The first trigger was the revelation of Allah (SWT) to migrate. The second step was his visit to Abu Bakr (RA) so that further steps might be taken. The meeting was to execute the plan, the plan was drawn as a team effort, and appointment was made of a representative in Makkah (Ali ibn Abu Talib), an Information Officer (Abdullah bin Abu Bakr), a Guide (Ibnul Ayqadh), and a representative in Makkah (Asma bint Abu Bakr). The prophet (PBUH) organized the 7-member team for *hijrah* journey. The total span of control¹ was 1 to 3 and 1 to 7. There can be the three responses in decision making i.e. do nothing, follow a routine response and design a non-programmed response. The Holy Prophet made non-programmed type responses because all the issues were unique in nature during *hijrah* journey.

Chapter 8 discusses the basics of organizing. Five key aspects namely dividing organization, reporting relationships, distributing workload, setting job duties and accountability mechanism have been highlighted. Here the term 'dividing organization' seems to be vague. Division of labor is defined as dividing the work into specialized sub-tasks; it cannot be taken as 'dividing organization'. The fixing of Black Stone and making team of fifty archers as a sub-team at the battle of *Uhad* to protect a certain entry point of enemy are few examples of it from the life of Prophet (PBUH). Management triangle has also been discussed that is made up of 3 components i.e. authority, responsibility and accountability.

Chapter 9 discusses organization structure and its importance. The purpose of departmentalization is to divide organization's resources and working capital. The holy Prophet (PBUH) also set up several departments such as education, finance and defense in Madina for effective functioning. Span of control has been discussed as it means how many subordinates, a manager can efficiently manage. The holy Prophet (PBUH) called a meeting of advisory board and carried out a cautious discussion on a plan to defend Madinah. Each group of 10 was allocated forty yards to dig. At team level, the span of control was 1 to 10 because a team head was managing 10 personnel. This is the real example of span of control

¹Span of control refers to the number of people that a manager can supervise." (Allen, Louis A. (1958))

from Prophet's (PBUH) life.

Chapter 10 talks about effective utilization of available resources and resource allocation. The prophet (PBUH) faced shortage of resources, but he managed the situation at all such times with joint efforts of his team members. He managed his human & financial resources successfully. Organizational structures have also been discussed in the chapter. The Prophet (PBUH) followed a flat structure; where the tribal leaders were implicitly reporting to the prophet (PBUH).

Chapter 11 is about communication and its channels. Communication is defined as the understanding & transfer of information. The prophet (PBUH) communicated the message of Allah, to all. He used to communicate with tribal leaders and different heads of states via letters. He greeted people for communication with smiling face. He never interrupted to someone's speech & listened actively.

Chapter 12 is actually a case study on the battle of *Uḥad*. The goal was clear - defending the new state of Madinah. The organizational structure was consisting of the Prophet (PBUH) as a leader, his companions, tribal leaders and the *shūrā*. There were total 3000 enemy troops. The Prophet (PBUH) selected his troops carefully. Nearly, everyone in Madinah who was able of military service was part of his team.

Chapter 13 is about leadership. A leader or manager is the one who provides continuous support to subordinates, motivates, giving them essential resources and resolving their problems that occur out of work or beyond. The holy Prophet (PBUH) motivated his companions in all circumstances, sometime by saying them: be patient, you will get reward in form of paradise. The judicious distribution of spoils of war to members and visiting sick companions are the examples of non monetary motivation. The declaration of one *qiblah*, one law and a single leadership for all Muslims by holy Prophet (PBUH) teaches us lesson of equality.

Chapter 14 discusses about social responsibility - doing something good for society and boosting national prosperity. The general scarcity of water in Madinah was observed; the Prophet (PBUH) requested Hazrat Usman (RA) to buy the well from the Jew and devote it for public usage. He also planned marriages of people with financial constraints.

Chapter 15 is on Prophet (PBUH) as an innovator. Innovation means the development and execution of novel ideas and practices. Islam was introduced as new in the environment of polytheism phenomenon in a novel way. Building an effective line of defense at the time of the war of Trench and creating interest free economy are examples of innovative strategy.

Chapter 16 is about the managerial strategies. The Prophet (PBUH) set up business relationships with nearest tribes in order to neutralize them against the outside threats. In strategic context, it means development of mergers to compete against the competitors.

Chapter 17 discusses financial management. Introduction of interest free, voluntary and cooperative system for both individuals and the State by the Prophet (PBUH) was unique idea. The State had some share in war booty which was spent upon needy and poor subjects. In addition, the farmers need to share their crops with the government. Purpose was to collect from the "have" and distribute it to the "have not".

Chapter 18 is about the decision making. The installation of Black Stone is an example

of prophet's democratic decision making. Democratic decisions enable public to participate for the decision of problems linked with them. The prophet's mission (PBUH) was to invite people towards Islam. He identified the targets for his religion. He (PBUH) used to call a meeting of *shūrā*, brain storm the situation and decide with divine wisdom.

Chapter 19 discusses about cultural changes that certainly require effective management. Culture comprises the customs, attitudes and developed pattern of expected and accepted behaviour. The chapter emphasizes on key cultural values i.e. mutual respect, greetings, obedience, courtesy, advice and cooperation and how the same were practices. HRM process has also been discussed - how the Prophet (PBUH) appointed his successor, motivated & took approval from team and set terms/conditions. Training techniques like gentle & clear speech, repeating important words etc have been conferred from the life of Prophet (PBUH). Important traits have been proposed for spreading good ethics such as forgiveness, accountability, equality, fulfillment of promise, consistency, and support. In the light of these traits, personality of holy Prophet (PBUH) being "role model manger" has been discussed.

Chapter 20 is a case study on the treaty of *Hudybīyah*. The starting point of the journey to Makkah. The Prophet (PBUH) dispersed information verbally about his plan to the people of Madinah and Muslims. Important decisions/ steps like performing 'umrah, movement towards Makkah, and significance of peace truce were explained. These steps actually enabled him to get victory, ultimately.

Chapter 21 discusses the fundamentals of controlling. Controlling means performance evaluation and taking corrective measure in case of deviation. This chapter also outlines the control process comprising 3 steps i.e. measuring performance, comparing performance against set standards, and corrective action if deviation emerges. A few performance standards such as kindness and justice set by the Prophet (PBUH) have also been highlighted. Chapter 22 has discussed the three types of control namely feed-forward, concurrent, and the feedback.

The last chapter (23rd) of book is a case study: The Conquer of Makkah (in our humble view, it should have been Conquest of Makkah). The Prophet's objective (PBUH) was to conquer Makkah without bloodshed. In this chapter, important management themes like strategic management, HRM, project management, business intelligence & relationship management have been quoted from Prophet's expedition to conquer Makkah.

To conclude, The "*Managerial Thoughts of the Prophet (PBUH)*" is a learning guide for successful management of a State, business or entity. It discusses four important functions of management i.e. planning, organizing, leading and controlling by establishing linkage with the life of Prophet (PBUH). It includes key terms, marginal notes, verses, *ahādīth*, real examples and case studies to help express the ideas easily. As the reader get through the pages and parts, he or she turns out to be more progressive and knowledgeable about the subject matter. Structured sections and case studies covered in the book should prove it helpful across the globe. This book is not only useful for students and academics to guide

them further along the learning curve of management, but also for professionals to revise and modernize their understanding and knowledge on the topic and to facilitate them perform their duties more proficiently.
