



# Servant Leadership: A Phenomenological Study Of The Teachings and Practices of The Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

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**Abstract:** Effective leadership is required to achieve sustainable development. Over the years, both industrialized and developing nations have seen leadership as a crucial issue and recognized its significance, resulting in an abundance of research on various styles of leadership. Recent interest in servant leadership has increased due to its influence and impact. Literature on servant leadership is replete with examples of historical servant leaders, but there have been few attempts to highlight the servant leadership attributes of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This study reveals that the Holy Prophet (PBUH)'s servant leadership style fits the requirements for excellent leadership and has the potential to be very effective in addressing the difficulties of both developed and developing nations. This research employed qualitative methods. The phenomenological approach was utilized to describe the significance of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)'s servant leadership style through six primary themes: empowerment, humility, acceptance of people, direct provision, authenticity, and exemplary stewardship. The study concludes that Almighty Allah appointed the leadership of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)'s servant leadership to divert humanity from the path of darkness to the path of light therefore; Muslims in positions of authority should emulate the Prophet (PBUH)'s behavior by adopting his servant-leadership style in managing their various institutions.

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## 1. Introduction

The art of leadership is the fundamental condition for achieving success. It is a comprehensive requirement for all levels of human civilization (Alvehus, 2021). Researchers and academics have been interested in leadership since the beginning of recorded history. Allusions to effective and ineffective leadership in literature add weight to the desire for influential leaders that have grown scarce in human culture. Leadership effectiveness, which, when exercised, results in, enhanced performance and behaviour that is more ethical. Effective leadership is required to realize sustainable development. Since its independence, Africa has been predicted to be the next economic stronghold (Leshoele, 2019). Despite the continent's abundant resources, political instability and poor administration are the primary obstacles to Africa reaching its real growth potential. The lack of openness, accountability, and independence of important state institutions has significantly affected the growth of African states. In the absence of



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strong leadership, economic, social, and financial catastrophes will ensue and pervade these nations (Mlambo, Thusi, & Sbonelo, 2022). The failure of leadership in Africa, notably in Nigeria, has rekindled interest in effective and efficient leadership. Without competent leadership, no amount of aid will propel African nations toward prosperity. Nigeria has not attained good governance despite its population and resource endowment due to a lack of strong leadership. Leadership effectiveness is a prerequisite for sustainable growth. It is an entity's most visible and promising quality. Effective leadership is inwardly focused and cognizant of the advantages the community can derive from the global environment (Nwogu, Obara & George 2018). Effective leaders embrace responsibility for the general interest, deploy knowledge, solve challenges, and motivate followers to see and utilize their latent and unrealized potential.

Over the years, industrialized and emerging nations have regarded leadership as a crucial issue and recognized its significance, resulting in voluminous research studies. These investigations led to the development of visionary, transformational, transactional, charismatic, ethical, and servant leadership concepts. Benson & Peprah (2021) suggested servant leadership as a model for contemporary leaders. This leadership meets the criteria for effective leadership and may be desirable for all companies in the twenty-first century and beyond (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018). The concept of servant leadership examines leadership through the lens of the leader's moral and ethical conduct moreover; it deviates significantly from the norms of several leadership styles (Brière, Le Roy, & Meier, 2021).

The leadership style of servant leadership is not new. Numerous historical leaders broadly agree that servant leadership is for the people and the nation (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). The increasing interest in servant leadership is a result of its influence and effect. There are numerous examples of historical servant leaders in the literature on servant leadership, including Jesus Christ (PBUH), Confucius, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King Jr. (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018). Nevertheless, despite the abundance of studies on servant leadership, few attempts to explicate the servant leadership attributes of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This study arises in this context. Hence, it aims to elucidate the Holy Prophet (PBUH)'s leadership as a servant leadership style. The specific purpose is to demonstrate that the servant leadership of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) fits the requirements for excellent leadership and has the potential to be highly effective in meeting the challenges of developed and emerging nations.

This paper's remaining sections are organized as follows:

- i. The study's conceptual and theoretical basis.
- ii. Methodology.
- iii. Empirical findings.
- iv. Findings, limitations, and future areas for research.

## **2 Conceptual and theoretical framework**

### **2.1 The Leadership Concept**

In late 1800, the concept of leadership first appeared in the Oxford Dictionary. Extensive research has yielded over 350 definitions of this phrase (Khaliq, Usman, & Ahmad, 2021). These definitions have spawned numerous leadership style interpretations. Each of these interpretations is incomplete and unable to account for the dynamic, continuously changing global environment however; there is consensus that leadership style is one of the essential characteristics that can lead institutions to the path of success or failure (Al Rahbi et al., 2017). The existence of leadership failures is evident in our current climate. Ineffective leadership destroys individuals, organizations, communities, and even entire societies. (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018).

Gandolfi & Stone (2018) provide five components of a useful working definition of leadership: (i) there must be one or more leaders; (ii) leadership must have followers; (iii) and (iv) leadership must be action-oriented and legitimate; and (v) there must be goals and objectives. Based on these five requirements, the following definitions serve as the basis for this article's discussion.

Leadership is the process by which a person encourages a group to attain a common objective (Northouse, 2013). According to Jones, George, and Hills (2011), leadership is the process by which an individual exerts influence over others and inspires, motivates, and directs their efforts to achieve group and organizational-wide objectives. In addition, Robbins and Couler (2016) assert that leadership is the process of influencing a group to accomplish its objectives (Robbins & Couler, 2016).

Based on the review of the literature on leadership, Uthman al Hazaim (2011) differentiates the essential parts of the leadership phenomenon as follows:

- Leadership is a "process."
- Leadership involves "influence."
- A "group" establishes its leadership.
- Leadership entails "goal achievement."

In summary, Lawal (2012) defines leadership as influencing others in a predetermined direction through inspiring, motivating, and guiding their activities to achieve group or organizational goals using non-coercive ways.

## **2.2 The Concept of Servant Leadership**

The concept of servant leadership has existed since the beginning of time. Theologians and historians have written so extensively on the topic that some experts have erroneously concluded that servant leadership is a Christian paradigm however; servant leadership has affected and influenced global cultures (Gandolfi et al., 2017). After reading Hesse's *Journey to the East*, Greenleaf codified and popularized the concept of servant leadership.

-Greenleaf (1904-1990), in his seminal work "The Servant as Leader," first published in 1970: coined the concept of servant leadership. The concepts of servant and leader are opposites. However, Robert Greenleaf (1977) brought the two concepts together in an innovative and meaningful way to create a paradoxical idea of servant leadership.

The servile begins with the inherent desire to serve, to put others before oneself, then aspire to leadership via conscious choosing. The best and most challenging test is whether those served to develop as individuals. Are they healthier, wiser, more accessible, independent, and more likely to become servants themselves due to the servant leadership they received moreover, what effect does this have on the least fortunate members of society? Will they profit, or at the very least suffer no further harm (1977: 7)?

Greenleaf's experience with influential organizations partly contributed to the conception of servant leadership. However, Greenleaf's views became more evident after reading *The Journey to the East* by Herman Hesse (1956). It is the tale of a group of men who, on their initiative, embarked on a spiritual trip with no apparent purpose or destination. The primary responsibilities of a servant were assigned to Leo, the protagonist. Leo's talent for uplifting tunes and optimistic attitude united the group by instilling confidence and purpose however, when Leo left the group, cohesion and the group's quest disappeared. In later years, it was realized that Leo, whom the group members mistook for a servant, was the leader of the group that sponsored the journey and his initial service to others proved Leo's excellence as a leader. Greenleaf found that those with a strong desire to assist others demonstrate genuine leadership.

The rising leadership styles of servant leadership, transformational leadership, visionary leadership, and ethical leadership are proactive, ambitious, and driven leadership (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018). Servant leadership, transformational and charismatic leadership are moral and inspirational however, research has revealed that servant leadership is more distinctive than other leadership styles, particularly transformational leadership. The directions and reasons that govern the leadership styles of servant leaders vary. The foremost priority of servant leadership is the follower (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004).

Most emerging leadership styles are primarily focused on realizing the mission and vision of their organizations by empowering followers to achieve these objectives. Instead of an attachment to their organizations, servant-leaders value the individuals within their organizations. Emphasis is placed on a concern for the well-being of the individuals who comprise the organizational body. The focus of servant leadership exemplifies the strength, discipline, and humility of a leader who places the needs of his followers before his own. To achieve organizational objectives, servant-leaders are crucial to the development and success of their followers.

Effective leadership is not a one-way form of the communication process; it must be highly engaged (Northouse, 2007). The traditional school's idea of leadership as a one-way connection renders many conventional leadership techniques ineffective. The most involved leadership style for managing leader-follower interactions is servant leadership. (Stone & Gandolfi, 2018).

Since Greenleaf's (1977) invention of servant leadership, scholars have been able to create models illustrating the attributes of servant leaders. After closely considering Greenleaf's 1977 servant leadership, Spears (1995) extracted the following 10 crucial aspects of servant leadership: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, dedication to the growth of people, and community building.

Patterson's Model of Servant Leadership outlined seven components employed by servant leaders to manage the affairs of their followers. These include agape love, acts of humility, selflessness, the followers' vision, trust, service, and the empowerment of members. (Patterson, 2006). Dierendonck (2011) identified six aspects of servant leadership that provide conceptual coherence. Servant leaders demonstrate humility, they are real, accept individuals for who they are, provide guidance, and are stewards who work for the benefit of the entire group.

The preceding analysis illustrates experts' divergent perceptions of the traits of a servant leader. This is due to the absence of a precise definition of servant leadership nevertheless, Dierendonck's (2011) six servant leadership qualities will serve as a basis for studying the servant leadership practices of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Method**

This study provides a theoretical analysis of the servant leadership styles of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). It requires the collection of evidence from available literature and the narrative analysis of the opinions of Islamic scholars. Specifically, qualitative research was employed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena of servant leadership as described by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Qualitative research employs methods that aim to provide in-depth knowledge of attitudes and opinions without relying on concept measurement. The objective of this study is not to generalize the servant traits of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) but to investigate in depth the servant leadership phenomena or experiences of the Prophet (PBUH) as a foundation for future research.

This study employed the phenomenological method of qualitative research. Ethnologically, the phenomenological study describes the significance of a unique phenomenon's lived experiences. According to Maglione and Neville (2021),

phenomenological research aims to describe individuals' everyday interpretations of a particular topic. It is the study of individuals' lived experiences to characterize the substance of such incidents instead of understanding why they occur. Interviews, conversations, participant observations, action-oriented focus meetings, and the study of personal texts are some of the methodologies employed in phenomenologically-based research (Williams,2021).

### 3.2 Data Collection

Phenomenological research values data collection from individuals' direct experiences (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 146). In qualitative research, the participants' words, stories, and incidents are related following the case study. (Adnan, Omar & Baykai,2022). In phenomenological research, interpretation is a very involved process. The primary sources of information are the Quran, Hadith, and works on the life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). These three crucial documents contain extensive knowledge regarding the causes, processes, and effects of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)'s servant leadership practices. The data also included Islamic scholars' opinions.

The research employed an analytical technique to provide a comprehensive knowledge of the Prophet's leadership style. Using an analytical induction technique, the narrative analysis was conducted. Analytic induction is the careful analysis of a purposefully chosen research case (or cases) to empirically demonstrate the reasons for a particular phenomenon (Johnson, 2004). Following the analytic induction method requirements, the narrative analysis' foundational elements were established by structuring servant leadership as empowerment and development of followers, humility, acceptance of people, direction for followers, and demonstrating authentic leadership and exemplary stewardship. In the context of this analysis, the description of the Prophet (PBUH)'s servant leadership will successfully pave the way toward achieving the research objectives.

## 4. Results

From the text analysis of the sources mentioned above, eight groupings of major servant leadership characteristics with many references and connections are synthesized:

- Prophet (PBUH) empowered and developed followers
- Prophet (PBUH) demonstrated humility
- Prophet (PBUH) accepted people for who they were
- Prophet (PBUH) provided direction for his followers
- Prophet (PBUH) was authentic and
- Prophet (PBUH) showed exemplary stewardship
- Prophet (PBUH) proffered a workable model for modern interfaith, especially Muslim-Christian relations.

Prophet (PBUH) showed love and kindness to his Companions

### 4.1 Prophet-Empowered and Developed Followers

To empower is to give someone with power. Empowerment is increasing self-efficacy by applying empowerment tactics (Kanungo, 1988). The focus of servant-leadership conduct is the growth and empowerment of followers. Empowerment behavior consists of giving meaningful work, encouraging participation in decision-making, expressing confidence in an excellent performance, and promoting autonomy. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)'s public administration method was predicated on identifying subordinates with distinct skills who were entrusted with authority and allocated specific assignments (Jamil, 2015). He appointed leaders based on their own abilities, regardless of their age, which was an uncommon leadership practice at the time. The selection procedure was incredibly effective and exceptional in leadership development training. After the demise of the Prophet (PBUH), the companions used the knowledge, morals, and direction they had gained from the Prophet (PBUH), which made them highly valuable social leaders. The Prophet (PBUH) inspired his people to pursue a path of constant self-improvement. In one of his Hadith he was reported to have said, "If

somebody treads a path in search of knowledge, God would make his path to paradise easy"

#### **4.2 Prophet Demonstrated Humility**

The psychological definition of humility is self-perception (Lawrence, 2020). It is a recognition of one's skill, a readiness to learn from others, and a desire to hear fresh ideas. The opposite of humility is pride (Morris, Brotheridge, & Urbanski, 2019). One of the primary characteristics of servant leadership is humility. Muslims display humility by submitting entirely to Allah's will. For example, by responding to the needs of Bedion, the Prophet (PBUH) altered the harsh customs and languages of the Bedouin people. This clan was notorious for its insatiable thirst for wealth. One day, a Bedouin approached the Prophet (PBUH) and begged for money using vulgar words. The followers attempted to hurt him for misbehavior. The Prophet (PBUH) prevented his followers from interceding and took the misbehaving Bedouin into his home. The Prophet (PBUH)'s humble dwelling startled the Bedouins to the extent their attitude changed so that they later showed their gratitude to him.

Similarly, the Prophet (PBUH) intervened during the battle of Khandaq in the fifth (5th) year of migration, when adversaries from Makkah plotted with clans from around Madinah to launch an assault on the city of Madinah. As a focused leader, he gathered his followers to determine how to confront an adversary with far greater personnel and equipment. The collective agreement required a defensive war to be waged. The suggestion of an experienced Persian, Salmah Farsi, that they construct trenches around the city to keep the invaders at bay was deemed the wisest course of action given the circumstances. For instance, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) agreed with the proposal, and they all decided to dig a trench on the open land to the north of Al-Madinah. It was understood that the city was only vulnerable on its northern flank, so the decision was appropriate moreover; it was well shielded to the west, south, and east by enormous populations of date palms, rocky volcanic plains, and granite hills.

#### **4.3 Prophet (PBUH) as Authentic**

Integrating servant, transformative, charismatic, and spiritual leadership constitutes authentic leadership (Chen & Scriphon, 2022). Northouse (2018) proposed three perspectives on these leadership styles. They include the intrapersonal perspective, which focuses on the personality of the leader; the interpersonal perspective, which defines authentic leadership as a relational process binding the leader and the follower; and the development perspective, which views authentic leadership as a behavior that can be fostered in a leader as opposed to a fixed trait. A genuine individual has a real personality substantiated by irrefutable facts. According to the contemporary concept of authentic leadership, they are all aware of their values and convictions; they are self-assured, sincere, and trustworthy, and they focus on enhancing the capabilities and well-being of others. In fact, true leaders possess adaptability, hope, self-assurance, optimism, and a sense of ethics and morals.

Makhmooor (2018) acknowledges that the personality of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the best model of an authentic leader. Throughout his life in his effort to propagate Islam, his deeds and words remained constant. As a leader, he was incredibly influential on both the religious and secular levels. His genuineness, reliability, and sincerity were unparalleled. He remains the most trustworthy and truthful person in history, setting an example with his exemplary moral behavior.

The Prophet (PBUH) was charismatic and influential enough to persuade and shape the attitudes and behaviors of others. As a model of servant leadership, the Apostle (PBUH) changed the dismal lives of Arabs into meaningful ones. His significant and influential Sunnah made the global spread of Islam feasible. It is hardly surprising that his followers and followers of other religions ranked him as the most important individual in history. Once, he commented about truthfulness: "You must be honest. Indeed, sincerity leads to justice and justice leads to paradise".

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was not alone in his display of genuine and unique servant leadership; his companions (or followers) were also among those who met the requirements of authentic leaders. Umar Ibn Khattab, Abu Bakar, Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz, etc. (may Allah be pleased with them all); as well as many Muslim leaders from later generations, such as Salah Uddin Ayyub, who recaptured Jerusalem; Muhammad Ali Jinnah, founder of Pakistan; etc. exhibited servant leadership styles.

#### **4.4.The Prophet (PBUH) Showed Exemplary Stewardship**

The formal definition of stewardship is the prudent and accountable management of something entrusted to one's care. (Webster, 1999). Leaders, as stewards, must successfully and efficiently manage the physical, material, and human resources entrusted to them to achieve predefined goals. Successful servant leaders focus on others, the community, and society rather than on themselves. Leaders that display stewardship behaviors impact community building, responsible behavior, trust, personal mastery, personal vision, mentorship, appreciating diversity, shared vision, risk-taking, experimentation, vulnerability, and maturity, increasing awareness, and producing outcomes.

Prophet (PBUH) frequently communicated with his disciples, instructing and supervising their affairs. He did not seek comfort or a position of authority over his people nevertheless, he fulfilled his responsibility personally. This style is derived from his sayings: "Allah is not pleased with the slave who differentiates himself from his fellows and fancies himself superior to others." Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) engaged with individuals regardless of their social standing. He expressed compassion for people and adopted a participative leadership style by adhering to Allah's command...and advising them on the topic. In making decisions, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) consulted with his followers, including men, women, children, the wealthy, the poor, whites, blacks, natives, foreigners, slaves, and leaders. Abu Hurairah narrated the following about the Prophet's (PBUH) advice to his companions: "I never saw anyone consult his companions more often than the Messenger of Allah".

The mutual consultations concerned situations where neither the Quran nor the Sunnah provided divine direction. The Prophet (PBUH) never engaged in battle without consulting his followers. For instance, the battle of Badr was determined based on Al-Habbab ibn Al's-recommendation. In most situations, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) would urge, "Give me your opinion, people" This practice of Shura has become a defining characteristic of the ideal Muslim community. The Holy Quran corroborates this in the following verse. ...and whose concerns are a topic for consultation... (Ash-Shura, 42: 38).

Among the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)'s most notable servant-leadership traits was his ability to lead by example. He guided his disciples with compassion, fairness, a kind hand, and an attentive ear. According to verse 3:159 of the Quran, the Prophet (PBUH)'s gentleness was a model for his followers. "O Prophet of Allah! It is a great mercy of God that you are kind and kind to them since if you had been harsh and heartless; they would have all abandoned you." Compassion and mercy are described in the next verse. "Now there has come to you from among yourselves a Messenger; it grieves him to see you in suffering; he is ardently concerned for you; towards the Believers, he is sympathetic and merciful." (Quran 9:128).

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)'s attitude to the training and development of the Sahaba proved his kindness. His approach to instruction consisted of employing a wise manner that entailed respect for the pupil. A Bedouin, for instance, urinated in the mosque, prompting the locals to rush and beat him. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "Do not interrupt him when he is urinating. The Prophet (PBUH) then requested a tumbler of water and put it over the location of the pee" (Al-Bukhari).

In the following Hadith, the Prophet (PBUH) emphasized that leadership implies responsibility and accountability: "You are all shepherds, and every one of you is responsible for his flock....".

In addition, the Prophet (PBUH) accentuated the significance of being accountable to those to whom leaders are answerable and considering the expected benefit for all without harming one another or damaging the environment. An abundance of facts supports his awareness of ecology and resource sustainability for future generations. His mosque's eco-friendly design and his counsel for tree planting and judicious use of natural resources serve as illustrative examples. When one of his associates observed excessive water use for ablution, he disapproved of his conduct and instructed him to use water sparingly, demonstrating a dedication to the person's requirements.

As illustrated by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), leadership is also slavery. The Prophet (PBUH) was a servant-leader who listened to his followers and was dedicated to their improvement in this world and the next. He affirmed this in the next Hadith: "The most effective leaders among you are those you love and who love you back. They pray for your well-being, and you pray for theirs.

#### **4.5.The Prophet (PBUH)Accepted People**

The nature of human orientation is virtuous and connected. This condition or working order is predicated on the principle that persons must be treated with respect and dignity. It includes dealing with others with compassion, genuine concern, care for their well-being, and recognizing and protecting their rights. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) guaranteed numerous individual freedom rights, including freedom so long as the individual did not cause harm to others, which dictates that all people should be treated equally, regardless of their social standing, economic standing, or political connections. Freedom, therefore, is guaranteed by the promise that everyone will participate in society in a manner that ensures society maintains a safe and secure environment for all.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) remained in close contact with his people and was aware of their circumstances. He exhibited sufficient empathy for the predicaments of his followers and was always a part of them. This leadership trait is recognized in the Holy Quran: "Undoubtedly, a Messenger has come to you from among yourselves. What you endure is distressing to him; he worries for you and is kind and merciful to believers." [Quran, 9: 128]

The preceding Ayah reveals in detail the Prophet (PBUH)'s intimate relationship with His people, which formed the basis for their respect and confidence in his leadership. Knowledge and familiarity with the follower helped the selection of leadership and the dedication of followers, resulting in a rise in output and productivity.

The Prophet (PBUH) noticed and made use of the positive characteristics of his followers. One of the prominent companions, for instance, Bilal ibn Rabah, had a beautiful voice. The Prophet recognized this gift and designated Bilal a Mu'adhin (caller to prayer). In contrast, the Prophet (peace be upon him) rejected to award Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, a prominent Sahaba, an administrative position because he lacked the necessary abilities and expertise.

The philosophy of the Prophet (PBUH) is based on the idea that humans are not angels but rather mortals. They are prone to making mistakes. Therefore, it is essential to manage errors by learning from them and avoiding repetition. In one of his renowned Hadiths, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) stated, "Every son of Adam makes mistakes, and the best of those who make mistakes are those who repent."

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) commanded respect for human dignity, property, and life. In his administration, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) clearly stated that another man's possessions are forbidden for a Muslim, as are his blood and esteem. The best example of human rights is seen in the final sermon of the Prophet (PBUH), "Hujjatul Wada." The Prophet (PBUH) proclaimed, "Your lives, your property, and your honor have the same value as today (Day of Arafah)" This Hadith illustrates the significance of human dignity in Islam. Constitutions of the United States, United Kingdom, France, Switzerland, and the rest of the world contain the most notable and prominent examples of these related elements. The United Nations has also proclaimed these principles essential for every person on the earth. The Holy Prophet (PBUH)



validates his administrative position on state duty. He (PBUH) asserts that humanity or humankind has received assurance from Allah and His Prophet (PBUH) on the safety of his life and property.

#### **4.6. Prophet (PBUH) Providing Direction for Followers**

Leadership's directing feature is persuading, guiding, overseeing, inspiring, and communicating with followers to achieve predetermined objectives. Leadership is vital for directing through instilling followers with trust and zeal. This necessitates directing and advising followers comprehensively and effectively.

In preparation for his relocation to Madinah, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) organized and coordinated the activities of his followers from 622 BCE, when he had not yet joined them in Madinah, to 622 CE, when he finally did. The Prophet (PBUH)'s arrival in Medina signaled the beginning of a new era in Islamic history. As the leader of the nascent Islamic nation, the Prophet (PBUH) oversaw the transformation of the entire Arabian Peninsula into a nation-state. Prior to the formation of the Islamic State, Arab nations consisted of several tribes without a unified government. Under the leadership of the Prophet (PBUH), the Islamic state extended from the Arabian Peninsula to Spain, Central Asia, and northwestern India (Cook, 2006).

#### **4.7 The Prophet (PBUH) proffered a workable model for modern interfaith and especially Muslim-Christian relations.**

On the instruction of the Beloved Prophet (PBUH), a group of Muslim believers traveled to Abyssinia in the fifth year after the Prophet's callings precisely 615 AD) due to the persecution of the Quresh of Makkah. The King of Abshah, Najsh, met the delegation of Muslims and his behavior towards Muslims was exceptional and quite proactive. During their time in Abyssinia, the King was influenced by Muslims' beliefs and conduct, and he ultimately converted to Islam. As soon as he learned of his death, the Prophet (PBUH) prayed for his burial in Madinah. This occurrence is supported by numerous hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and historical data. Imam Muhammad bin Ismail Bukhari said in his book of Hadith: "Abu Huraira narrated that the Prophet of Allah (PBUH) told the people of the death of Negus on the day he died, then took them to the prayer location and performed four takbirs. (Saeed,2019)

#### **4.8 Prophet showed kindness to followers**

Every aspect of the character of the Prophet (PBUH) is tremendously alluring and captivating. His compassion, generosity for his disciples, and unselfish compassion were multifaceted. The clouds laden with his love and mercy continually showered everywhere and on everyone to such an extent that everyone was thoroughly saturated. No one was deprived of his kindness. This gesture of compassion enriched both the underprivileged and the wealthy. The youngsters and the elderly profited from it. Men and women participated equally. Both free people and slaves received it.

This demonstration of affection and giving lasted throughout the day and night. In both adversity and success, their beneficent Master was good to them. In short, the love and kindness of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) never ceased to rain down over each section of the Companions.

Zaid ibn Thabit met the Holy Prophet (PBUH) as a young slave. The Prophet (PBUH) set him free and adopted him as his son. He earned the distinction of being the first slave to convert to Islam. Hazrat Zaid's love and intense affection for the Prophet (PBUH) caused him to forget his parents' love. Due to the love and kindness of God's Beloved, he had grown so close to the Prophet (PBUH) that he preferred his company to that of his parents. When Zaid's parents and relatives once attempted to take him away, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) gladly authorized his departure, but Zaid refused to leave. Even though his parents insisted, he refused to accompany them.

Similarly, Anas was blessed to have served the Holy Prophet (PBUH) for a decade. As a servant, the Prophet (PBUH) treated him with such deference that Anas could claim, "I served the Prophet (PBUH) for ten years. By the grace of God, he never once used the

word "Uff" [a harsh term indicating irritation] to me. He never questioned my actions or inactions. If I made a mistake, he would never chastise me; rather, he would console and instruct me with affection. He was never unkind to me. He consistently supported me with a variety of tasks. Anas states, "On several instances, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) sent me on an errand; however, as a youngster, I would join other children in play and forget all about the assignment, not returning for an extended period. Instead of correcting me, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) would sneak up behind me and grab my ear or head. I would say, I will now depart. He would release me affectionately. I would then proceed to complete the task.

In the context of the Prophet (PBUH)'s affection and charity for his companions, his treatment of his servants stands out. In general, servants are seen as valueless slaves. They are deprived of their dignity and subjected to numerous sorts of cruelty. In comparison, the behavior of mankind's benefactor was quite different.

### 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) famously said, "The master or leader of the people's (country) is he who serves them." Essentially, this is the foundation of the concept of servant leadership. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)'s servant leadership is a model ordained by Allah to transform humanity from the path of ignorance, humiliation, backwardness, arbitrariness, monopoly, oligopoly, anarchy, instability, materialism, and religious blasphemy into the direction of light, truth, and sustainable development. The Holy Prophet (PBUH)'s knowledge and wisdom resulted in a successful change in human existence and a large number of devoted followers willing to sacrifice their lives and property for the propagation of Islam.

The accompanying Islamic traditions and the Islamic civilization have revealed the servant leadership style of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the leadership qualities exhibited by companions like Sayyidina Abu Bakar, Sayyidina Umar, and many more (may Allah be pleased with them all). Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)'s inclusion on the 100 Most Influential People in History list is not surprising (Hart, 1992). Hart selected the Prophet (PBUH) because he was the only one who had evident accomplishments on both the religious and secular levels. Muhammad (PBUH) founded one of the world's most well-known religions and became an influential political leader. In the modern global environment, his effect is still potent and significant.

Despite the servant leadership methods displayed by the Prophet (PBUH) and the early Muslims, the majority of contemporary Islamic societies have weak leadership. This is contrary to reality. Most Muslims in positions of authority and responsibility failed to adopt the servant-leadership attributes of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Muslims in leadership positions should reflect on the Prophet (PBUH)'s behavior and adopt his servant-leadership style in managing their various institutions. The love for the Prophet (PBUH) should be manifested by following the Prophet (PBUH)'s ways and guidance in all aspects of life - at home, at work, with family, relatives, friends, and neighbors regardless of race, religion, color, or social standing.

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