



BOOK REVIEW

ISLAM AND MANAGEMENT

*By Naceur Jabnoun, Kuala Lumpur, Institut Kajian Dasar (IKD),
1994, ISBN 983-884-026-2, pp. 244, Price: RM 19.00*

Islam is a universal religion followed by over one billion people living in different areas in the world belonging to different professions and walks of life. The need for Islamic knowledge especially in terms of organizational setting is increasingly becoming more important each day. In any organization, Islam stresses cooperation and the sense of collectiveness. In fact, Islam cannot be practiced by any human being in isolation. This collective work of people should be aimed at achieving a certain goal because organizations are composed of very distinct people who are unique and each contributes in a very different way to its culture of unity in university.

Not many Muslims are well versed with the correct and most accurate method of achieving objectives of Islam in organizations of their choice, including business organizations. The individuals may be contributing to the firm's operation and growth but somehow, they may be working in a culture that is not encouraged in Islam. Or perhaps in other cases, Muslims may be competing healthily among one another in the firm, but somehow, without the right knowledge of Islam, they may be carrying out actions that Islam prohibits. This is where this book in the field of management from an Islamic perspective plays an essential role especially to inquisitive and interested Muslim readers.

The book entitled "Islam and Management" by Naceur Jabnoun formerly with the Kulliyah of Economics and Management Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia, provides readers with the knowledge and understanding of the perspectives of management from the Islamic viewpoint. According to the author, the truthful implication of Islam is compliance to the force of God. Islam has been one of the global major movements for the development for humankind. The

Islamic evolution has made remarkable and weighty contributions in many areas of human life.

Islam provides guidance and comprehension for people to make a meaningful use of possessions bestowed by Allah and to protect themselves from harm and wrongdoing. These objectives must be achieved within the framework of justice, dignity and benevolence. That Islamic teachings have become a strong principle and guide for Muslims to live by these objectives, is a conclusion drawn by the author.

This book covers also the enrichment of Islamic organizational management culture by concentrating on ways of regulation, conception, values, belief and philosophy of Islam (pp. 18-34). It contains beneficial information that explains thoroughly what is meant by the correct Islamic culture needed in order for an organization to excel in its business through means that are acceptable and permitted by Allah. In addition, this book includes interesting and creative situations that might lead to real conflicts with different consequences, which every Muslim may face. Many approaches to overcome such conflicts are also suggested by the author.

This book presents the long-term objectives that an organization should implement and how these objectives may be linked to the effective strategic planning skills and actions that are best encouraged by Islam in accomplishing targeted goals (pp. 41-6). Islam stands for strategic decision-making for both the short-term and long-term benefits of the organization. The author suggests that *tawakkul* plays a major role after due efforts have been undertaken by the management (p.89). To make proper use of God-given resources it is inevitable that an organizational structure is necessary. Authority and responsibility are an integral part of an organized effort, and they imply accountability not only in this world but the hereafter as well (p.119).

In addition, this Islamic management book presents several leadership traits as to how a Muslim leader should act behave. It is probably not enough for managers to be just; but they also need to make sure that their subordinates perceive them as just and fair to avoid mistrust among the workforce of the organization (p.145). According to the author, what is essential for a leader is to implement justice among workers at the workplace, accompanied by equity. Reward and punishment systems should accordingly be put into practice in order to encourage individual motivation towards a collective effort in attaining the visions of the organization. This book also concentrates

on the vitality of total quality management that leads to effective relationships between employees and higher-level officers. This is currently an area of extensive discussion since Islam emphasizes on overall quality of life. However, the inadequate discussion in the book on this area may be far from the satisfaction of readers. Should the author decide to publish new edition of the book, this is an area that would warrant his attention.

Overall, this book explains the details of important points that it has highlighted stress very vividly. It first explains the aim of the author in publishing this book, and this gives readers an early idea of what to expect as they continue reading. In fact, the content of the book has clearly been mentioned by the author in the introduction. In the first part of the book explains the powerful tools that are needed in improving managerial performances and how to manage conflict creatively with the help of enriching suggestions to managers in all walks of life. The conflicts are neither rejected in Islam not endorsed until they become dysfunctional (pp. 155-76). The book quotes a verse from the *Qur'ān* (2:143) suggesting a balanced approach in resolving the conflicts. However the readers may be anxious to see whether the book also offers any mechanism of conflict resolution from an Islamic perspective. The answer is no. It simply discusses conventional approaches and fails to offer any Islamic approach to it.

The author continues until the last part (part 6), where he wants readers to recall and put into practice the most effective way to lead an organization. The author's explanation is made more comprehensible by providing the closest example that any Muslim may relate to and be aware of, which is the leadership attributes of Khalifah ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb being one of the most successful leaders after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and Abū Bakr (ra) (pp.181-204).

What is likeable about the author's work is that he has included many simple and short translations of very relevant *Āyāt* (verses of *al-Qur'ān*) in areas that he thinks might contribute to readers' comprehension. Therefore, readers do not have to recall too many long translations and are able to link the relevance of every verse to what the author is trying to focus on. Besides, every verse translation provides a strong point for the author to argue his points. For example, when the author tries to stress the trait of patience, he includes the verse from *Surah al-Anfāl* (8:65), "If there are twenty amongst you, patient and persevering, they will vanquish two hundred."

On top of that, the author has made an effort in clarifying his explanations by inserting several graphs at relevant places, such as in the discussion of the contingency planning model. These graphs not only add creativity to his work but also increase readers' interest to continue reading. The author's division of the subject matter into topics and sub-topics of appropriate sizes serves to make the book more readable and less cumbersome. For example, the main topic on leading is divided into two smaller subtopics, leadership and motivation, which are later explained in smaller subtitles: leadership qualities, leadership development, planning for motivation, reward and punishment, spiritual motivation, hygiene factor and justice. Each contains at most four pages of details and clarifications and this helps readers to continue reading easily and efficiently.

Most importantly, the language and words used by the author are relatively easy for readers of various level including undergraduates who are basically the target readers of this book. Personally, the book has inspired me to write my own book on management from an Islamic perspective that can contribute to the future of students who will enter the workplace which is a challenging world by itself.

Also, I feel this book is the value for money, for it not only contributes effectively to organizations and people who are already working but also to those who have no experience of working, or even those who read for leisure. The author has succeeded also in bringing together concepts and processes of management and Islam in order to alter the relationship within the world's society. These concepts can be considered as complete with every element that anyone can think of in recommending excellent management perspectives in the Islamic way. Thus, in conclusion, the element brought forward by the author is satisfactory. Students will prefer reading this concise yet comprehensive book rather than a huge and thick management text, which will not necessarily be able to assure students' understanding. However, the present book lacks depth for scholarly readers due to its simplistic approach.

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