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Waleed Fekri Faris & Akram M. Zeki, *Prophetic Leadership*, Kuala Lumpur: International Institute for Muslim Unity and Centre for Islamisation, 2021. 371 pp. ISBN 978-967-25504-1-9.

Reviewer: Mohd Ezamir Azral Bin Mohd Azrul, Postgraduate Candidate, ISTAC-IIUM. Email: ezamir8401@gmail.com

The hour is dire. Modern man has progressively backed itself into a moral and philosophical corner of which it may not be able to escape from, as timeless civilisational values like justice, honour, compassion, dignity and accountability in the form of true governance and leadership are now being torn down to make way for the rise and dominance of individualist notions of freedom, arrogance and greed, to name a few. In looking at current events saturating the world in this ‘new normal’ endemic of poor leadership, and the global leaders making the headlines with atrocious policies and self-serving governance, my mind paints a picture of the world as a ship, ever making its way towards its journey’s end, while constantly bearing its way through the tumultuous seas, all the while staving off efforts by 10,000 self-helming captains to run it asunder, all with no true knowledge of the subject of sailing to begin with.

This is why I leaped at the opportunity to read and review the book *Prophetic Leadership* edited by Waleed Faris and Akram Zeki. I yearned for a resource that focusses not only on the application of divine revelations as the exclusive means of man’s salvation from his own shortcomings, but also on the presence of hope – that all is not lost; that mankind, in retreating two steps backwards, is striving to move one step forward; that we are able to avert our current course of senseless mutual destruction. I believe this book, which contains key arguments for the application of prophetic guidance in leadership, fulfils this expectation.

The edited work, a total of 371 pages, presents its contents in a succinct manner, yet its scope is pleasantly comprehensive and provides a breath of fresh air in the ongoing leadership discourses we have seen playing out in media and in politics the world over. This is the main thrust of the book; conveying principles that need to be

shared, and leaving the outcome to the will of Allah (ﷻ). This encapsulates the spirit of Islamic leadership – utilising a multi-pronged approach across interdisciplinary plains, yet grounded on their respective commonalities and core values that truly apply to all leaders, not just a few. This has to be so, as Prophetic leadership is divinely-inspired, and therefore is simplicity personified. As a result, simple, easy-to-understand principles lead to their more wholesome applications for the benefit of the leaders and those who follow. As we study and apply these principles, we are reminded to not only dissect the current predicaments in the exercise of leadership, management and governance, but also to always keep in mind the leader-follower dynamic, not to mention clarifying what it means to be a follower of a leader in terms of duties and sacrifices.

Chapter 1 lays the foundation of the book's premise, specifically the need for an alternative approach to modern-day leadership, calling for more scrutiny on the ethics of leadership rather than blind emphases on generating results, no matter the cost. It reminds readers of the Hadith of Jibril (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*), which outlines the fundamental dimensions of the religion; the principles of *Islām*, the articles of *Imān*, the importance of *Iḥsān*, and the mindfulness of the Last Hour. One particular outcome that is realised from observing these dimensions is an awareness of the impact of one's words and its accountability in the world and the Hereafter. A leader who is mindful of these dimensions, and therefore the truth they bear, is needed, for these are the characters that he embodies and exudes to his followers. By the same token, leaders are bound and governed by the source materials they encounter to realise change. Thus, all peoples are affected by this approach, which does not distinguish between races, religious beliefs or anything in between.

Chapters 2 to 7 further elaborate on this pressing need for leaders that are aware of their followers, and not disconnected from them. This level of connection can better affect the promulgation of "*ummatan wasatan*", or community of justice, excellence and balance. From an Islamic perspective, this is crucial for bringing forth a developed theocentric consciousness of Allah's supreme sovereignty. This consciousness is derived from the Prophetic model of leadership that is applicable and effective for all leaders. H. G.

Wells opines, “Without any ambiguous symbolism, without any darkening of altars or chanting of priests, Muhammad had brought home those attractive doctrines to the hearts of mankind.” This is possible, as this model emphasises and encompasses emotional and spiritual intelligences: both individually unique, yet universally compatible on a global scale, for the requirement of *‘aql* (reasoning) is not separate from these intelligences, but rather complements them, affecting a type of psycho-spiritualism in constant awareness and submission of Allah (ﷻ). This, in turns, builds a sense of excellence in all conducts that is consistent and sustainable, known as *ihsān*. Examples of *ihsān* can be observed from the Prophet’s level of *amānah*, *taklīf* and *mas’ulīyyah* (trust, responsibility and accountability), respectively and how he emphasises knowledge and education, empowering his followers to be enterprising and critical, which is certainly a boon for realising modern-day efforts like the United Nations’ 17 Sustainable Developmental Goals, as argued in Chapter 7.

Divinely inspired leadership emphasises the Prophet’s role as both leader and teacher in his varied capacities as husband, father, judge and head of state among others. Chapters 8 to 11 explore this theme through examples of a framework that is peculiar to his prophetic style of leadership. In a nutshell, his framework inculcates in the people an unwavering conviction to act, with clear motives to achieve definable objectives. Such an approach cannot function on a foundation other than honesty and support, if success were to be the lot of his succeeding generations. Furthermore, this framework recognises the Quran as an integral component contributing to his effectiveness, both in stimulating a progressive mindset as well as indoctrinating the spirit of lifelong learning in the people. Additionally, it inculcates *adāb* in one’s relationship to His Maker and His creations when problem-solving, using the most effective solutions possible. Overall, the Prophet’s leadership framework is able to provide aspiring leaders with the necessary tools to achieve a balanced relationship with their followers, their duties and their Creator.

Chapters 12 to 17 build on the previous chapters’ contributions by providing readers with practical examples of the Prophet’s

leadership in action, reiterating how his life functions as divine guidance for all of mankind. Such events highlighted in these chapters include the Battle of *Al-Aḥzāb* (The Confederates), the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, and the Charter of Medina. What other books on leadership fail to highlight, but which this book does rather well, is the clear message that such events are not resolved through decisive actions alone. On the contrary, it stresses on the two approaches the Prophet (ﷺ) employs to resolve these events, namely putting up the best efforts humanly possible and supplicating to Allah (ﷻ) for victory and success. The human efforts include having a *shūrā* (consultation) with the people, being open to their suggestions and criticism, micromanaging their fears, anxieties and optimism, being ready to improvise and capitalise on an opportunity, as well as being firm and principled. In particular, chapters 15 to 17 highlight simple, easy to digest references to a significant number of Quranic statements and Hadiths that relay the true depth of divine inspiration as guidance for all people in the form of the Last Messenger's conduct. Readers stand to benefit greatly from these chapters as they prove how his leadership provides the template of a moral vicegerent who is mindful of one's humanity when seeking a particular outcome, and humble to the will and authority of Allah (ﷻ) in realising it.

A word of caution to the readers: while the content of this book is sure to inspire and motivate them to begin improving upon their respective leadership skills or qualities, such changes may not come so easily to some as it may for others, especially those who are not familiar with the terminologies and references that are made in the book. It may be slightly off-putting for readers who are not well-versed with Islamic events and figures, to read of such items without having the necessary context to link them to the invaluable pearls of wisdom to be found from this invaluable resource. Thus, I would suggest that future editions or revisions include a glossary of terms, giving clarification to such items as they are encountered in perusing the book.

I heartily recommend this book for those who are keen in learning more about the Prophet (ﷺ) from a leadership and management perspective, for through reading it they may uncover the

truth that his greatness as a leader does not stem from his excellence alone, but more importantly, from his complete submission to Allah (ﷻ). After all, the Quran affirms the outcome of such an approach in the following verse:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ٣١

Say, [O Muḥammad], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful."

Thupten Jinpa, ed., *Science and Philosophy in the Indian Buddhist Classics*, Vol 2: *The Mind*, conceived and introduced by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Somerville, MA, USA: Wisdom Publications, 2020. 554 pp. ISBN 9781614294740.

Reviewer: Osman Bakar, Emeritus Professor, Al-Ghazali Chair of Epistemology and Civilisational Studies and Renewal, ISTAC-IIUM.

My review of Volume 1 of the four-volume *Science and Philosophy in the Indian Buddhist Classics* appeared in *Al-Shajarah*, vol. 26, no. 1 (June 2021) issue. In that review, I promised readers that once I get hold of the second volume, I will try to write a review of it. However, by the time I received a copy of the book – as a complimentary copy from a Malaysian disciple of His Holiness the Dalai Lama – it was too late for me to prepare a review of it to be in time for publication in the December 2021 issue of this Journal. Nonetheless, I am glad that my review of the anticipated volume is now before readers in the present issue of this Journal. In welcoming the first volume, I emphasise the significance that it has for cross-civilisational studies of religion and science. I view the second volume as another significant contribution to the growing literature on such studies. It

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