

**OPEN ACCESS: “EPISTEMOLOGY”**

eISSN: 2663-5828;pISSN: 2519-6480

*Vol.10 Issue 11 June 2022*

## **AN ISLAMIC LEADERSHIP APPROACH TO DISASTER MANAGEMENT: A FRAMEWORK FOR THE CONTEMPORARY PANDEMIC**

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**Abstract:** Leadership is a vital and dynamic factor that provides guidance, confidence, inspiration, and coordination to achieve goals. A good leader not only leads individuals, but also anticipates for and responds to potential disasters as swiftly, tactically, and effectively as possible. Islam as a divine religion delivers comprehensive instructions for all spheres of life. Islamic leadership principles and practices offer an extensive and effective approach to the world's existing crisis management challenges, which need to be addressed. This article explores manifestations of effective and ethical leadership during disaster and crisis times by textual proof of the Quran and narrations of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). A rich convention of disaster and crisis management by leadership exists in Islam. By applying the qualitative method, this paper will analyze disaster management strategies in the context of Islamic leadership models highlighting Quranic verses and hadiths. This study aims to investigate the disaster administration tactics used by Islamic leaders such as Noah (A.S), Yusuf (A.S) Holy Prophet (PBUH), and his companions.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Disaster, Crisis, Management, Islam, Pandemic.

## 1. Introduction

The global Pandemic has brought a great paradigm shift in economic, social, educational, and other fields of life worldwide for the last couple of years. Covid-19 is one of the greatest calamities of the century that has been resulting in devastating consequences. Humankind has been facing calamities and disasters in various forms such as famines, floods, earthquakes, storms, epidemics, pandemics, etc. Effective leadership is the most required aspect to reduce disasters and manage emergencies. A proactive and well-managed leadership approach can downgrade the severity and devastating effects of the disaster. On the other hand, mismanagement of a calamity results in more adversity and loss. Islam is a divine religion that offers divine leadership approach to manage calamities and disasters. Effective leadership based on Islamic teachings assures the welfare and prosperity of mankind.

## 2. Importance of research

In the contemporary age, the importance of effective leadership has been increased as the current Pandemic put the managerial leadership in to spotlight revealing their shortcomings in crisis response, administration, readiness, and adaptability. There is a dire need to highlight effective disaster management models to can prevent, deal and recover from the mass devastation caused by pandemics. This research paper is of utmost importance in this regard as it studies model Muslim leaders who adopted divine leadership approaches in the light of Allah's commandments to save mankind from collapse and disaster.

## 3. Research Methodology

In this paper, the descriptive and qualitative research method is applied in order to highlight the Islamic leadership approach to disaster management.

- For Quranic verses software "Easy Quran-Wa-Hadees" is used.
- Hadiths are referred from authentic books (mostly from Saha'a Sattah).
- Data has been collected through various libraries and online repositories. Several books, articles, and interment resources have been consulted.
- In order to clarify the Islamic leadership approach to disaster management diagrams have been formed.

## 4. Leadership

Every human, as a societal entity, must spend his life in the context of a reciprocal partnership. He is incapable of doing every task on his own. This societal need for coordination puts forth the concept of leadership. In reality, leadership is a wonderful human trait. In terms of achieving their intended success, any organization or collection of individuals requires strong and effective leadership.

Leadership is a complex concept that has diverse meanings for different groups of people. The practice of directing or persuading individuals

and the masses is known as leadership. The command-and-control style of leadership in disaster risk management does have a long history that can be traced back to the wartime pattern of crisis response and management. The idea of leadership has recently garnered considerable attention in the economic, governmental, and societal arenas. For the development of contemporary civilization, effective leaders are required in all structures, including families, organizations, as well as national bodies at broad.<sup>1</sup>

Several leadership styles are perceived in today's society, such as sociological, governmental, administrative, spiritual, and so on, each kind seems to have its significance. As a consequence, it is a huge issue for the individual in the community and a critical aspect in attaining the desired aim of prosperity in all parts of life. It makes the greatest contribution to connecting the masses and performing the task in a comfortable setting under competent leadership.<sup>2</sup>

### **5. Islamic Approach to Leadership**

Islam as a universal and truly revealed religion, thoroughly examines the notion and theory of leadership for the growth of mankind's life and traditions. It provides detailed principles, guidelines, and directions in this regard.

Islam is a complete life code and living system. It defines leadership to be a commitment (Amanah) and describes it in depth. As per Islamic teachings, leadership is a revered status that may cure mankind's issues and lead them to everlasting prosperity in this world and hereafter. It is an individual or an organization of professionals who direct and steer the adherents, humankind, from the verge of extinction to Allah's path. Offering public welfare precedence in Islam, leadership is revealed as a mental commitment between a leader and team members that he'll do his utmost for advice, safeguard, and treat them properly and justly. As a result, in Islam, the leadership style is centered on doing justice.

### **6. Disasters and Islam**

Islam is the religion that instills a full rule of conduct. Qur'an is the primary guideline for all humans, providing complete understanding and adaptability in all aspects of life. The Muslim community is frequently encouraged by Quranic Verses to examine, study, research, and comprehend facts about disasters.

Disasters and catastrophes happen worldwide in varied incarnations and affect humankind in various ways. A few regions of the world suffer less as a result of a single calamity, whereas others are highly affected by the very same incident with much the same regularity, severity, or scale. So, various levels of understanding, planning, disaster prevention methods, reaction mechanisms, restoration, and progress have emerged. If people disobey the natural laws in various ways, namely by lacking an understanding of

precautionary measures and procedures, or by breaking legislation, this can be regarded as an evil that results in calamities, and devastation.

There are diverse conceptions about disasters among Muslims. According to a popular notion, natural disasters are the symbols of God's wrath or people's sins.

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ  
يَرْجِعُونَ

Calamities have appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of the people have earned so that He (Allah) makes them taste some of what they did, so that they may return (to the right way)<sup>3</sup>.

Drought, pandemic illnesses, an increase in the number of fires, drowning, an absence of Allah's favor in almost everything, and a decrease in revenues and failures in profitable markets are all examples of "Fasad". It also can be argued from this verse that the conduct of crimes as well as other despicable deeds by individuals is the source of the world's largest misfortunes and disasters. Quran says,

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُوا عَنْ كَثِيرٍ

Whatever hardship befalls you is because of what your own hands have committed, while He overlooks many (of your faults)<sup>4</sup>.

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا قَرْيَةً كَانَتْ آمِنَةً مُطْمَئِنَّةً يَأْتِيهَا رِزْقُهَا رَغَدًا مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ فَكَفَرَتْ بِأَنْعُمِ اللَّهِ فَأَذَاقَهَا اللَّهُ لِبَاسَ الْجُوعِ وَالْخَوْفِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ

Allah gives an example: There was a town, secure and content with its sustenance coming in plenty from every place. Then, it turned ungrateful to the bounties of Allah; so, Allah made it to taste hunger and terror (that covered it) like a garment, as the recompense for what its people used to do<sup>5</sup>.

Similarly, Quran describes examples of ancient nations that were destroyed due to their collective sins and evils.

فَكُلًّا أَخَذْنَا بِذُنُوبِهِمْ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِ حَاصِبًا وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ أَخَذَتْهُ الصَّيْحَةُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ  
خَسَفْنَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ أَغْرَقْنَا وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

Thus, We seized each one of them for his sin. So to some of them, We sent a violent wind; and some of them were seized by a Cry, and some of them We made to sink in the earth; and some of them We drowned. And Allah was not to do injustice to them, but they used to do injustice to their selves<sup>6</sup>.

It shows that many ancient nations faced natural calamities and were destroyed as a result of their sins. Disasters strike not only the culpable or evil but also the virtuous and upright, as well as faithful. For those impacted by the

calamity who are truthful, it signifies 'bala' or testing to enhance the quality of their commitment (Azmaesh), as mentioned in Quran

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ، وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ

Surely, We will test you with a bit of fear and hunger, and loss in wealth and lives and fruits, and give good tidings to the patient<sup>7</sup>.

So, It is only a misconception that disaster results from the sins of people, but disaster can also strike nobles as Allah's test and introspection.

### **7. Significance of leadership in Disaster Management**

Leadership is an essential aspect of effectively managing catastrophes and disasters. Diverse talents and attributes are needed for leadership before, throughout, and after disasters.

Leadership in disaster and emergency management can reduce the risk and damage caused by an occurrence, while an absence of effective management aggravates the severity. Leaders need specific expertise to control disasters, depending on the weather, the organizations they serve, and the disaster's scale.<sup>8</sup>

Leadership behaviors are required for disaster situations and typical problems. Leaders must be able to deal with unexpected events, which are most common in disasters. Since leadership approaches differ depending upon the nature of the catastrophe, setting, organizational structure, field, and extent of the occurrence, a paradigm for emergency and disaster managerial leadership skills may be drawn. In summary, the most significant leadership attributes are the capacity to collaborate with several other parties, flexibility in judgment and management, adaptation to catastrophe situations, and excellent interpersonal skills.<sup>9</sup>

### **8. Disaster Management in Islam**

Islam possesses comprehensive instructions for throughout aspects of human existence, including how to deal with all threats and vulnerabilities.

To deal with adverse conditions, disaster management has become an important obligation. Modern nations have made investments in calamity preventive actions as part of everyday initiatives, and they are well-furnished in terms of science to turn a calamity into a typical occurrence or even to alleviate harms caused by disasters. Emerging economies are still relying solely on post-calamity reaction and humanitarian relief, ignoring catastrophe preventive measures. It is critical to include a potential risk in their daily lives for progress to be sustained. Until the fifteenth century, the Islamic world had a growth advantage in research, but afterward, they fell behind in engineering and innovation. Quran emphasized the importance of forethought and preparation in the face of potential calamity. Islam is a holistic faith with comprehensive precepts for mankind's welfare.<sup>10</sup>

Quranic verses and Hadiths highlighted the importance of forethought and preparation in the face of potential calamity. Prophets were the leaders of their

times. Prophetic stories in Quran can be explored in this regard. Holy Prophet (PBUH) and his caliphs were also the great leaders who managed the disasters. In Islam, disaster was managed in three steps:

- Preventive measures (Management before the disaster)
- Emergency measure (Management during a disaster)
- Recovery measures (Management after the disaster)

Disasters and epidemics like the previous peoples and other nations have come down from time to time in Islamic history. Islamic leadership approach of all three stages (Preventive, Emergency, Recovery) towards managing various disasters such as flood, famine, and epidemics will be highlighted below:

### 9. Flood Disaster Management: Leadership approach of Noah (A.S)

Quran explains the story of Noah (A.S) and the great flood of his time in many surahs such as Surah Noah, Surah Hud, Surah Ash-Shua'ara, etc. Noah invited his nation to the oneness of Allah, but they disobeyed constantly and challenged him. Allah ordered him to make an ark and predicted a flood that will destroy the unbelievers, as mentioned in Quran:

وَاصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحْيِنَا وَلَا تُخَاطِبْنِي فِي الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِنَّهُمْ مُغْرَقُونَ

And make an Ark under Our eyes and according to Our revelation; and do not speak to Me about those who have crossed the limits, as they are destined to be drowned.<sup>11</sup>

He started making the Ark and people used to make fun of him while passing by him.<sup>12</sup> They were unaware of the disaster that was waiting for them.

إِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنُّورُ، قُلْنَا احْمِلْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَأَهْلَكَ إِلَّا مَنْ سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ  
الْقَوْلُ وَمَنْ آمَنَ، وَمَا آمَنَ مَعَهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ

At last, when Our command came and the oven overflowed, We said: Take into the Ark a pair of two from every species, along with your family, except those against whom the Word has already been pronounced and (also take into it) those who have believed. And there were only a few who had believed with him<sup>13</sup>.

This verse shows that the whole nation was destroyed except for a few. So, making the ark was a preventive measure that saved the faithful.

وَقَالَ ارْكَبُوا فِيهَا بِسْمِ اللَّهِ مَجْرِبَهَا وَمُرسِسَهَا، إِنَّ رَبِّي لَعَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

He (Noah) said: Embark it. With the name of Allah, it sails and anchors. Surely, my Lord is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful<sup>14</sup>.

Noah (as a leader) ordered his followers to get into the ark, praising Allah Almighty. This commandment refers that even after preventive measures leader should advise his people to praise Allah and demand his mercy.

## 10. Famine Disaster Management: Leadership approach of Yusuf (A.S)

The huge famine in Yusuf (A.S)'s era, was one of the greatest famines on the earth. This famine was foreseen in a symbolic dream by the king of Egypt, Yusuf (A.S) interpreted this dream predicting the famine, as mentioned in Quran

قَالَ تَزْرَعُونَ سَبْعَ سِنِينَ دَابَّاهُ فَمَا حَصَدْتُمْ فَذَرُوهُ فِي سُنْبُلِهِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ . ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ سَبْعٌ شِدَادٌ يَأْكُلْنَ مَا قَدَّمْتُمْ لَهُنَّ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِمَّا تَحْصِنُونَ . ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ عَامٌ فِيهِ يُغَاثُ النَّاسُ وَفِيهِ يَعْرِضُونَ .

He said You will grow crops for seven years consecutively. So, what you have harvested, leave it in its ear, except a little which you eat. Then seven hard years shall come after that, which shall eat up what you have stored for them, except a little which you preserve (to sow). Then there shall come after that a year in which people will have rains and in which they will extract juices<sup>15</sup>.

Yusuf (A.S) knew that a great calamity was about to befall this country and if proper and effective measures were not taken in time to deal with this possible situation, not only Egypt itself would be hit by a terrible famine but terrible conditions will also arise for the surrounding areas. That is why he offered his services that if he has full management of the treasury and food and agriculture, then he will be able to make a comprehensive and solid plan to deal with this disaster.

قَالَ اجْعَلْنِي عَلَى خَزَائِنِ الْأَرْضِ إِنِّي حَفِيظٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

He said: Appoint me to (supervise) the treasures of the land. I am indeed a knowledgeable keeper.<sup>16</sup>

He effectively led the masses before the famine to take preventive measures (such as saving harvest for family time) and during the famine, he used disaster management skills to save the masses, as he was given power and full authority in the land.

وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَتَّبِعُونَ مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَاءُ ، نُصِيبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَنْ نَشَاءُ وَلَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

And thus, we gave Yusuf power in the land. He could settle in it wherever he wished. We extend Our mercy to whomsoever We will, and We do not let the reward of the righteous people go to waste<sup>17</sup>.

The famine continued for seven consecutive years and it was well-managed by Yusuf (A.S) as under his leadership the people were saved from mass devastation.

These preventive and management strategies explicit Islamic approaches towards management.

## 11. Holy Prophet (PBUH)'s leadership approach to disaster management

Holy Prophet (PBUH) provided universal leadership strategies for managing disasters. Holy Prophet (PBUH) gave a code of conduct and fundamentals to manage all of the disasters.<sup>18</sup> He (PBUH) provided a comprehensive health disaster management strategy.

Epidemics were rampant even at the time of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Traditions related to the global epidemic called "leprosy" are found in the hadiths.

Similarly, instructions are given in hadiths about the plague that has claimed many lives in human history. Though in the era of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) there was no break out of any devastating epidemic the strategies and instructions given by Him, provided the basis of health disaster management.

**Preventing measures:** Preventing epidemics and health emergencies require cleanliness, proper sanitation, and healthcare. Healthcare does not only include keeping oneself clean, but it also means keeping the surroundings and community clean as well as having healthy eating habits, etc. Healthy eating habits mean eating Halal food and avoiding Haram as it may lead to physical and spiritual disorders. That is why, Allah has commanded us to eat Halal eatable on earth, as mentioned in Quran

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ

O you who believe, eat of the good things We have provided to you.<sup>19</sup>

The source or origin of the Covid-19 virus is unclear but it is assumed that it was transmitted from bats and pangolins to the human body and then spread from one person to another person.<sup>20</sup>

It shows that the eating unhealthy and unhygienic food causes health calamities, that's why Allah orders:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا

O people, eat permissible good things out of what lies on the earth<sup>21</sup>

And even the Halal should be used appropriately.

وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا

Eat and drink and do not be extravagant<sup>22</sup>.

These Quranic verses show that Islam provides preventing measures that protect mankind from the health crisis. Holy Prophet (PBUH) hygienic principles to lead a healthy life. The teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) offer basic principles to manage epidemics and pandemics.

**Emergency measures:** Though there occurred no serious health disasters during the era of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) as the greatest leader of the whole Ummah, he provided disaster management principles. Here is some

health emergency measures Holy Prophet (PBUH) suggested that are model lessons for leaders in a contemporary pandemic:

**a) Sealing Epidemic Area:** Epidemics are usually infectious and dreadful on a large scale. It refers to a massive breakout of a contagious disease in the population at a specific moment. The plague was the most dreadful disease of ancient times. Referring to that epidemic the messenger of Allah (PBUH) said,

الطَّاعُونَ رَجُزٌ أَوْ عَذَابٌ أُرْسِلَ عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَوْ عَلَى مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ، فَإِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ بِهِ  
بِأَرْضٍ فَلَا تَقْدَمُوا عَلَيْهِ، وَإِذَا وَقَعَ بِأَرْضٍ وَأَنْتُمْ بِهَا فَلَا تَخْرُجُوا فِرَارًا مِنْهُ

The plague is a torment that was sent to Bani Israel or the next nation. Then when you hear of a plague in a land, do not go there, and when the plague appears in your town, do not run away from it.<sup>23</sup>

It shows that moving or transferring from the affected area causes the spread of epidemics. As a leader, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) barred people from doing so. This hadith provides the lesson to contemporary leaders to stop the pandemic. According to modern research, this hadith is valid as lockdown in affected areas helped to decrease transmission of virus and death rates.<sup>24</sup>

It is the responsibility of the leader to seal that area and stop people from moving there as if an epidemic spreads in an area, the person moving from there may carry the germs with him. During the pandemic, the balance of life has deteriorated due to the untimely implementation of Hadith. A leader should also not allow the persons to run away from the affected area as it is the will of God but he must take measures to tackle that emergency.

**b) Inspiration:** During disasters, people often face great anxieties and depression. Holy Prophet (PBUH) had as a motivational leader, gave incentives for people who tolerate the hardships during disasters. As, it is narrated on account of Aisha (R.A):

أَتَتْهَا سَأَلَتْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنِ الطَّاعُونَ، فَأَخْبَرَهَا نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ  
وَسَلَّمَ، أَنَّهُ كَانَ عَذَابًا يَبْعَثُهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ، فَجَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ رَحْمَةً لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ، فَلَيْسَ مِنْ  
عَبْدٍ يَفْعُ الطَّاعُونَ فَيَمُوتُ فِي بَلَدِهِ صَابِرًا يَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ لَنْ يُصِيبَهُ إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ، إِلَّا كَانَ  
لَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِ الشَّهِيدِ

The plague was a punishment that Allah used to send on whom He wished, but Allah made it a blessing for the believers. None (among the believers) remains patient in a land in which plague has broken out and considers that nothing will befall him except what Allah has ordained for him, but that Allah will grant him a reward similar to that of a martyr.<sup>25</sup>

The incentives given by people inspired the masses that they will get the best reward for their tolerance. Researches show that the outbreak of

Covid-19 also caused a massive prevalence of anxiety disorders and depressive behaviors in people.<sup>26</sup> Contemporary leaders can also learn from this instance that psychological counseling of people and giving them incentives in this world hereafter motivates them to face the calamities.

**c) Life-saving measures:** It is a leadership trait to save the lives of people in disaster in every possible way and stop ignorant people from endangering their lives. In Quran Allah says,

وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ

Spend in the way of Allah and do not put yourselves into destruction,<sup>27</sup>

The leader is also responsible for safeguarding the lives of his subjects and he will be answerable for that to Allah, as Holy Prophet (PBUH) said,

“أَلَا كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، فَالْأَمِيرُ الَّذِي عَلَى النَّاسِ رَاعٍ عَلَيْهِمْ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهُمْ، وَالرَّجُلُ رَاعٍ عَلَى أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهُمْ، وَالْمَرْأَةُ رَاعِيَةٌ عَلَى بَيْتِ بَعْلِهَا وَوَلَدِهِ وَهِيَ مَسْئُولَةٌ عَنْهُمْ، وَالْعَبْدُ رَاعٍ عَلَى مَالِ سَيِّدِهِ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهُ فَكُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ”

Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock. The amir (ruler/leader) who is over the people is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock; a man is a shepherd in charge of the inhabitants of his household and he is responsible for his flock; a woman is a shepherdess in charge of her husband's house and children and she is responsible for them, and a man's slave is a shepherd in charge of his master's property and he is responsible for it. So, each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock.<sup>28</sup>

So every leader is like a shepherd who takes care of his flock and protects them. During the pandemic, leaders can provide due protection to the masses with the fearing spirit of Allah, by saving their lives and sustaining them.

**d) Saving from Hardships:** Islamic leadership approach entitles leaders to manage disasters while saving people from hardships. During the seal of an area or lockdown, the poor are unable to earn and feed their family, it is the duty of leaders to save them from hunger and hardships. In Islam, a leader is like a shield for the masses. As narrated on the account of Abu Hurairah (R.A) Holy

إِنَّمَا الْإِمَامُ جُنَّةٌ يُقَاتَلُ مِنْ وَرَائِهِ وَيُتَّقَى بِهِ

The Imam (Leader) is a shield, the Muslims fight behind him (against the disbelievers) and because of him, the people are saved from the calamity.<sup>29</sup>

This narration illustrates the fact that due to leaders; people are saved from calamity (as when the leader rules with justice and according to Allah's commandments). A real leader never leaves his masses in the lurch. According to a world bank report, the pandemic has put the poor and daily wagers in extreme poverty, as they have no other source of income. The pandemic has badly affected their homes and their work. Approximately more than 49 million people worldwide have been hit by poor conditions.<sup>30</sup>

In Pakistan, a lot of people lost their jobs and economic growth halted due to a business standstill.<sup>31</sup> The figures and facts show worsening conditions of people due to pandemics; the need of the time is to adopt the Islamic leadership approach that gives the concept of servant leadership. A leader is supposed to save the people from hardships. As Holy Prophet (PBUH) prayed,

اللَّهُمَّ مَنْ وُلِيَ مِنْ أُمَّرِ أُمَّتِي شَيْئًا، فَشَقَّ عَلَيْهِمْ فَاشْفُقْ عَلَيْهِ، وَمَنْ وُلِيَ مِنْ أُمَّرِ أُمَّتِي شَيْئًا  
فَرَفَقَ بِهِمْ فَارْزُقْ بِهِ

Oh my Lord, Whoever is the ruler of my ummah and he gets harsh on them, then you should also be harsh on them and whoever is the ruler of my ummah and he is kind to them, then be kind to him.<sup>32</sup>

Similarly, He (PBUH) made it obligatory for leaders to work for the welfare of their masses, otherwise, they will not be entered into heaven.

مَا مِنْ أَمِيرٍ يَلِي أُمَّرَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ثُمَّ لَا يَجْهَدُ لَهُمْ وَيَنْصَحُ، إِلَّا لَمْ يَدْخُلْ مَعَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ

He who is the ruler of the Muslims, if he does not strive for their good and will not seek their welfare with sincere intention, then he will not go to Paradise with them.<sup>33</sup>

It shows the intensity of a leader's responsibility to work for the good of people. These hadiths are not specified for the time of disasters, rather these are general. Actually, in case of disaster, the responsibilities of a leader increase. So, during the pandemic and after the pandemic, leadership must be more active and effective.

## 12. Leadership approach of Umar Farooq (R.A) in Health Disaster Management

After the Prophetic era, the four Righteous Caliphs (R.A) ruled according to the leadership approach provided by Holy Prophet (PBUH). To explicit Islamic leadership approach towards contemporary pandemic, the managerial skills of Umar (R.A) during the plague are worth-following during the contemporary pandemic. Narrated `Abdullah bin `Abbas:

`Umar bin Al-Khattab departed for Syria and when he reached Sargh, the commanders of the (Muslim) army, Abu 'Ubaida bin Al-Jarrah and his companions met him and told him that an epidemic had broken out in Syria. `Umar said, "Call for me the early emigrants." So `Umar called them, consulted them, and informed

them that an epidemic had broken out in Syria. Those people differed in their opinions. Some of them said, "We have come out for a purpose and we do not think that it is proper to give it up," while others said (to `Umar), "You have along with you. other people and the companions of Allah's Apostle so do not advise that we take them to this epidemic." `Umar said to them, "Leave me now." Then he said, "Call the Ansar for me." I called them and he consulted them and they followed the way of the emigrants and differed as they did. He then said to them, leave me now," and added, "Call for me the old people of Quraish who emigrated in the year of the Conquest of Mecca." I called them and they gave a unanimous opinion saying, "We advise that you should return with the people and do not take them to that (place) of the epidemic." So `Umar made an announcement, "I will ride back to Medina in the morning, so you should do the same."<sup>34</sup>

This piece of narration shows that:

- Umer (R.A) stopped moving and stayed at his place as he came to know about the plague in Syria. This shows that a leader should take every step after proper consideration and thinking as per the sensitivity of the matter.
- He (R.A) did not take the decision alone rather he liked to consult with his fellows. He called Mahajreen, Ansar, and the old Quraishi men respectively to ask their opinions. This illustrates that it is also permissible for a leader at the time of disaster to hold meetings with different experts individually so that he may know their concerns and consider the more effective one.

Another part of the above narration indicates what exactly should be the attitude of a leader during health disasters. As narrated `By Abdullah bin `Abbas:

(When Umer (R.A) decided to go back to Madina) Abu 'Obaida bin Al-Jarrah said (to `Umar), "Are you running away from what Allah had ordained?" `Umar said, "Would that someone else had said such a thing, O Abu 'Obaida! Yes, we are running from what Allah had ordained to what Allah has ordained. Don't you agree that if you had camels that went down a valley having two places, one green and the other dry, you would graze them on the green one only if Allah had ordained that, and you would graze them on the dry one only if Allah had ordained that?" At that time `Abdur-Rahman bin `Auf, who had been absent because of some job, came and said, "I have some knowledge about this. I have heard Allah's Apostle saying, 'If you hear about it (an outbreak of plague) in a land, do not go to it; but if the plague breaks out in a country where

you are staying, do not run away from it.' " `Umar thanked Allah and returned to Medina.<sup>35</sup>

Omar's decision to return was an excellent example of his leadership strategy and foresight. Here are the illustrations that we can further assume by this narration

- Umer (R.A) announced to go back but Abu Obaidah (R.A) objected to his decision. It shows that leaders are often brought to question their strategies.
- Umer (R.A) answered Abu Obaidah in such a manner that satisfied him. It clearly shows that the accountability system of a leader in Islam that even a single man could ask the question leader and answering way of Umer (R.A) shows that it is better for a leader is to reassure people on his verdicts.
- The conversation shows the leader's art of communication and listening before speaking.
- Umer (R.A) justified his decision by giving the example of a shepherd who is protective of his camels. It explains that the leader is like a shepherd who is responsible for his folks to save them from disaster.

Umer (R.A) was the epitome of servant leadership and his example in this regard is worth emulating not only in normal conditions but also in emergency times. His foresight and commitment saved the people from many calamities.<sup>36</sup> So contemporary leaders must also follow these principles and model leaders to manage disasters.

### **Conclusion**

Islamic leadership approach, being based on the revealed principles, guarantees effective management and growth. Disasters can be less devastating if well-managed by leaders. Islamic history has model leaders who had great attributes to manage disasters and catastrophes. Since ancient times, Prophets as the leaders of their times have been managing great disasters to save mankind, either from "Azab" in the form of natural disasters or other calamities such as Noah managed to escape faithful people from Flood and Yusuf sustained his people in severe famine. The greatest leader Holy Prophet (PBUH) provided principles and codes that protect from disasters. Though there occurred no massive disaster in the era of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), his teachings provide comprehensive teachings for the three stages of disaster management (Preventing measures, Emergency measures, and Recovery measures). Similarly, Umer's (R.A) foresight and well-management of 'The Plague of Syria' provide an excellent model for health disaster management. In the contemporary pandemic, the disaster management skills of these Muslim model leaders are worth-following. This article is an attempt to raise public awareness in contemporary pandemics about the notion of Islamic

leadership so that leaders and their masses can put the Islamic teachings into practice to attain ultimate victory in this lifetime and hereafter.

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- <sup>12</sup> Hud 11:38
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- <sup>14</sup>Hud 11:41
- <sup>15</sup> Yusuf 12:47-49
- <sup>16</sup> Yusuf 12:55
- <sup>17</sup> Yusuf 12:56
- <sup>18</sup> But only health disaster management approach will be discussed further, with reference to contemporary Pandemic.
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