



The Status of the Mansabdar and His Responsibilities in Light of Islamic Teachings

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Abstract

This study investigates the Islamic conceptualization of positions of authority and their associated responsibilities through the lens of the Prophetic Seerah (biography), as informed by the primary sources of the Quran and Hadith. It asserts that within Islam, any position of leadership or public trust (Manṣab) constitutes not a privilege but a sacred duty (Amanah) and an act of worship. The research demonstrates that the Seerah offers a timeless, practical paradigm for ethical leadership and governance. The paper is organized into four principal chapters. The first chapter examines the conceptual foundations, defining authority as a divine trust, as underscored in the Quranic verse, and elaborates upon the Hadith: "Every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock". The final chapter discusses contemporary applications, deriving principles for combating corruption, fostering compassion in leadership, and instilling a profound sense of accountability both in this world and the Hereafter. The study concludes that the Seerah furnishes a comprehensive and divinely guided system for leadership and civic responsibility. It advocates for the integration of these Prophetic principles into modern educational curricula, family structures, and social institutions to cultivate a generation of ethical leaders and responsible citizens, thereby contributing to the establishment of a just and compassionate society as envisioned by Islam.

Keywords

Seerah, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), Islamic Leadership, Amanah (Trust), Justice, Shura (Consultation), Tarbiyah (Character Building), Quran, Hadith, Accountability, Islamic Governance

Introduction

In Islamic teachings, the concept of position and responsibility holds fundamental significance. The Quran and Hadith, along with the Seerah of the Prophet (ﷺ), define any position of authority as a sacred trust (Amanah) and an act of worship. In contemporary times, when positions are often perceived as means of power, privilege, and dominance, the Prophetic Seerah provides guidance for their correct interpretation and practical application. This document presents a comprehensive review of the legal status of positions, their requisites, and their societal implications in light of the Quran and Hadith. The noble Seerah of the Prophet (ﷺ) offers complete guidance concerning positions and responsibilities. Should we adhere to the principles He (ﷺ) established, those in authority will indeed become true servants, and new generations will receive an education that ensures success in both this world and the Hereafter. In an era characterized by neglect of responsibilities and misinterpretation of authority, the Prophetic Seerah remains the luminous guide that shows the correct path. The Prophet (ﷺ) designated positions as trusts, service, and responsibility not as means for pride, domination, or autocracy. Allah the Exalted states:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا¹

“Allah does, in fact, command you to put your reliance in them”

This verse clarifies the fundamental nature of a position: it is a divine trust. Breach of this trust is not only an ethical transgression but will also be subject to severe accountability in the Hereafter.

The Concept of Responsibility in the Prophetic Hadith

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ²

“As shepherds, you are all in charge of your flock”

This Hadith establishes every individual as responsible within their sphere of authority, be they a ruler, teacher, or head of a household.

Responsibilities and Requisites of a Position

Safeguarding the Trust (Amanah)

The foremost duty of an individual entrusted with a position is integrity in fulfilling that trust. Upon assuming the caliphate, Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (رضي الله عنه) declared

“If I am upright, assist me; and if I deviate, correct me”

This Hadith designates every person in authority as a guardian responsible for their charge.

Justice and Equity

A divine injunction states:

وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ³

“Additionally, use fairness when making decisions amongst individuals”

This verse addresses all rulers, judges, and responsible individuals within society, emphasizing justice to maintain peace and stability. ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab’s (رضي الله عنه) statement, "Justice is the foundation of governance," serves as a practical interpretation of this verse.

The Prophet (ﷺ) prohibited all forms of discrimination, stating

إنما أهلك الذين من قبلكم إذا سرق فيهم الشريف تركوه، وإذا سرق فيهم الضعيف أقاموا عليه الحد⁴
“The nations before you were destroyed because if a noble man stole, they would let him go, and if a weak man stole, they would punish him”

The Prophet (ﷺ) also demonstrated practical justice in matters such as the prisoners of the Battle of Badr.

Consultation (Shura) as an Essential Aspect of Governance

Consultation holds key importance in the noble Seerah. Allah the Exalted instructs:

وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ⁵
“And consult them in this matter”

The Prophet (ﷺ) consulted his companions during pivotal events such as the Battle of the Trench and the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah.

Deciding with Justice

Justice and equity are among the foundational principles of Islam. The Quran has established it as the basis of every society, whether in matters of governance, familial disputes, or economic affairs. Allah the Exalted explicitly states:

وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ⁶
“And when you judge between people, judge with justice”

This verse provides guidance not only for judges and rulers but for every individual capable of making decisions in any matter. This article will discuss in detail the importance of justice, its requisites, and its practical application in society in light of the Quran.

Allah the Exalted states:

يَا دَاوُدُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوَى⁷
“O David, we have made you successor on earth,
so judge between people with truth and do not follow your desires”

This verse demonstrates the grandeur and responsibility of the position of vicegerency (Khilafah) entrusted by Allah to Prophet David (عليه السلام). It serves as guidance for every person in authority ruler, judge, or leader that the position of vicegerency is, in truth, a divine trust.

وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَوْ أَنَّ فَاطِمَةَ بِنْتُ مُحَمَّدٍ سَرَقَتْ لَقَطَعْتُ يَدَهَا⁸
“By the One in Whose Hand is my life, if even Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad, were to steal, I would cut off her hand”

This Hadith was pronounced by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) when some companions sought leniency for a noble woman who had committed theft. It presents an unequivocal depiction of Islamic justice, wherein kinship, status, or social rank cannot justify preferential treatment. This principle remains the foremost evidence for the supremacy of law in Islamic societies today. Relationships and kinship do not nullify the requirements of justice.

Service to the People: The Purpose of Leadership

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

سَيِّدُ الْقَوْمِ خَادِمُهُمْ⁹

“A people's leader serves them”

During the Battle of the Trench, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) personally participated in digging the trench.

Character Building for New Generations: Prophetic Principles

Allah the Exalted states:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا¹⁰

“O you who have faith, keep your families and yourself safe from a fire”

Prophetic Seerah and the Upbringing of the New Generation: Entrusting Responsibilities to the Youth

The Prophet (ﷺ) appointed the young Mu‘adh ibn Jabal (رضي الله عنه) as the governor of Yemen, a clear example of entrusting responsibility to youth.

Moral Upbringing: Essential for Rightful Discharge of Duty

For the proper fulfillment of a position, faith (Iman) and piety (Taqwa) are essential. The Quran states:

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ¹¹

“The most virtuous among you is, in fact, the most noble in Allah's eyes”

Practical Upbringing: Entrusting Responsibilities

Progressive upbringing: Assigning age-appropriate responsibilities from childhood to youth.
Identifying capabilities: Training individuals in their specific skills.

Contemporary Applications: Prophetic Guiding Principles

Consequences of Breach of Trust

Allah the Exalted states:

وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ¹²

“Additionally, avoid unfairly consuming each other's wealth”

Mercy and Compassion: Central Themes of the Seerah

Embodying the Living Example of the Seerah

Quranic Invitation:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ¹³

“The Messenger of Allah has undoubtedly provided you with a great model”

System of Accountability (Al-Muhasabah)

In the Islamic state, rulers were accountable to the public. It was customary for ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) to patrol at night to assess the conditions of the people. The study of the Seerah of the Prophet (ﷺ) is not merely historical information; rather, it constitutes a living and implementable system of life. For the individual entrusted with a position, these are guiding principles; for the upbringing of new generations, it is the finest exemplar.

Data Availability

The data will be made available on a fair request to the corresponding author.

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