

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 (4:58), and elaborates upon the Hadith: "Every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock" (Sahih al-Bukhari). The second chapter delineates the core responsibilities of those in authority, focusing primarily on establishing absolute justice (Quran 38:26), serving the people selflessly, and governing through consultation (Shura), as exemplified by the Prophet (ﷺ) during critical events such as the Battle of the Trench and the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah. The third chapter transitions to an analysis of how the Seerah provides a framework for character building (Tarbiyah) for successive generations. It highlights the Prophet's (ﷺ) methodology in mentoring young companions, such as Mu'adh ibn Jabal, by entrusting them with significant responsibilities, thereby establishing a paradigm for youth development grounded in knowledge, moral integrity, and progressive empowerment. 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.

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.

1. THE LEGAL STATUS OF POSITION AND THE CONCEPT OF TRUST (AMANAH):

1.1. THE CONCEPT OF POSITION IN THE QURAN:

Allah the Exalted states:

(لَا نَسَاءٌ) "أَهْلَهَا إِلَيِ الْأَمَانَاتِ تُؤْدِيُ أَنْ يَأْمُرُكُمُ اللَّهُ إِنْ 58)

Allah does, in fact, command you to put your reliance in them. ...") (An-Nisa': 58)

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.

1.2. THE CONCEPT OF RESPONSIBILITY IN THE PROPHETIC HADITH:

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

(بِ خَارِي) "رَعِيْتُهُ عَنْ مَسْئُولٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ كُلُّكُمْ

As shepherds, you are all in charge of your flock.") (Sahih al-Bukhari)

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

2. MISINTERPRETATION OF POSITION AND ITS REMEDY

In contemporary contexts, positions are often viewed as a means of power and privilege, whereas in Islam they constitute a form of service and worship. As stated by Caliph 'Umar

ibn al-Khattab (عنه الله رضي) "If a dog were to die hungry on the banks of the Euphrates, 'Umar would be held accountable for it on the Day of Judgment."

2. RESPONSIBILITIES AND REQUISITES OF A POSITION:

2.1. 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 (عنه الله رضي) declared:

If I am upright, assist me; and if I deviate, correct me."

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

(بِ خَارِي) "رَعِيْتَهُ عَنْ مَسْؤُلٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ لَكُلُّهُمْ

As shepherds, you are all in charge of your flock.") (Sahih al-Bukhari)

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

2.2. JUSTICE AND EQUITY:

58: (الذاء) "بِالْعَدْلِ تَحْكُمُوا أَنَّ النَّاسَ بَيْنَ حَكْمَتِهِمْ وَإِذَا

Additionally, use fairness when making decisions amongst individuals.") (An-Nisa': 58)

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

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

فِيمَ سرَقَ وَإِذَا تَرَكُوهُ، إِلَّا شَرِيفٌ فِيمَ سرَقَ إِذَا أَنْهَمُوهُ بِلَكُمْ مِنَ الْذِي نَحْنُ أَهْلُكُ إِذَا مَا

(بِ خَارِي) "الْحَدِ عَلَيْهِ أَقْامُوا إِلَّا ضَعَفُ يَفِ

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.") (Sahih al-Bukhari)

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

2.3. CONSULTATION (SHURA) AS AN ESSENTIAL ASPECT OF GOVERNANCE:

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

159: (عَمَرَانَ آلَ) الْأَمْرِ فِي وَشَاءُرُهُمْ

And consult them in this matter.") (Al 'Imran: 159)

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

2.4. 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:

58: (ال نساء) بِالْعَدْلِ تَحْكُمُوا أَنَّ النَّاسَ بَيْنَ حَكْمَتِهِنَّ وَإِذَا

And when you judge between people, judge with justice.") (An-Nisa': 58)

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.

Upon the conquest of Makkah, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) declared:

الْمَرْحَمَةُ يَوْمٌ إِلَّا يَوْمٌ

Today is a day of mercy.")

This statement is attributed to the Prophet (ﷺ) during the Conquest of Makkah (8 AH), when he announced:

إِلَّا سَلَامٌ فِي يَوْمٍ إِلَّا يَوْمٌ الْمَرْحَمَةُ، يَوْمٌ إِلَّا يَوْمٌ

It is a day of kindness today. Allah has exalted Islam on this day.

Key principle: Refraining from vengeance despite victory, granting forgiveness.

2.5. CORE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THOSE IN AUTHORITY:

2.5.1. JUSTICE AND EQUITY: A RELIGIOUS OBLIGATION:

Allah the Exalted states:

26: (ص) "الْهَوَى تَتَّبِعُ وَلَا بِالْحَقِّ النَّاسَ بَيْنَ فَلَاحِكُمُ الْأَرْضِ فِي خَلِيفَةٍ جَعْلَنَاكَ إِنَّا دَائِرُونَ يَا

O David, We have made you successor on earth, so judge between people with truth and do not follow your desires. ...") (Sad: 26)

This verse demonstrates the grandeur and responsibility of the position of vicegerency (Khilafah) entrusted by Allah to Prophet David (عليه السلام 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.

Hadith:

(الحدود ك تاب ب خاري،) "يَدَهَا لَقْطَعْتُ سَرَقْتُ مُحَمَّدَ بْنَتَ فَاطِمَةَ أَنْ لَوْ بَيْدِهِ نَفْسِي وَالَّذِي

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.") (Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Prescribed Punishments)

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.

2.5.2. SERVICE TO THE PEOPLE: THE PURPOSE OF LEADERSHIP:

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

(الْبَيْقَهِيُّ الْأَوَّلُ سَطِ، الْمَعْجَمُ طِ بَرَادِيُّ،) "خَادِمُهُمُ الْقَوْمُ سَيِّدُ

("A people's leader serves them.") (At-Tabarani, Al-Mu'jam al-Awsat; Al-Bayhaqi)

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

Principle: The leader must be actively involved alongside their team.

3. Character Building for New Generations: Prophetic Principles

3.1. Education and Upbringing: The Primary Responsibility

Allah the Exalted states:

6: (الْتَّرْهِيمُ نَارًا وَأَهْلِكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ فُوْا آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ أَيَّهَا يَا

O you who have faith, keep your families and yourself safe from a fire.") (At-Tahrim: 6)

3.2. PROPHETIC SEERAH AND THE UPBRINGING OF THE NEW GENERATION: ENTRUSTING RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE YOUTH:

The Prophet (ﷺ) appointed the young Mu'adh ibn Jabal (عَنْهُ اللَّهُ رَضِيَّ) as the governor of Yemen, a clear example of entrusting responsibility to youth.

3.3. 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:

13: (الْحُجَّرَاتُ) أَنْفَاقُكُمُ اللَّهُ عِنْدَ أَكْرَمَكُمْ إِنَّ

The most virtuous among you is, in fact, the most noble in Allah's eyes.") (Al-Hujurat: 13)

Hadith:

الله عَلَيْكُمْ أَعْزَى مَعَادٍ، إِنَّمَا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنْكُمْ (تَرْمِذِي)

("Indeed, Allah loves you, O Mu'adh.") (At-Tirmidhi)

Lesson: Trust in and upbringing of the youth.

3.4. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS:

Hadith:

ما جه أَبْنَاهُمْ وَأَحْسِنُوا إِلَيْهِمْ أَكْرَمُهُمْ

Respect your kids and teach them etiquette.") (Ibn Majah)

3.5. PRACTICAL UPBRINGING: ENTRUSTING RESPONSIBILITIES:

Progressive upbringing: Assigning age-appropriate responsibilities from childhood to youth.

Identifying capabilities: Training individuals in their specific skills.

Allah the Exalted states:

الَّذِي لَا يَقْصُصُ (الْدُّنْيَا مِنْ نِصْيَابِكَ تَنْسَى وَلَا رَأْلَامَ الدَّارِ اللَّهُ أَنَّكَ فِيمَا وَابْتَغَيْتَ 77)

However, do not forget your portion of the world; instead, seek the home of the Hereafter by that which Allah has provided you.") (Al-Qasas: 77)

4. CONTEMPORARY APPLICATIONS: PROPHETIC GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

4.1. CONSEQUENCES OF BREACH OF TRUST:

Allah the Exalted states:

الَّذِي لَا يَقْرَءُ (بِالْبَاطِلِ بَيْنَكُمْ أَمْوَالُكُمْ تَأْكُلُوا وَلَا

Additionally, avoid unfairly consuming each other's wealth. ...") (Al-Baqarah: 188)

Hadith:

مَسْدِ لَمْ (الْجَنَّةَ عَلَيْهِ اللَّهُ حَرَمَ إِلَّا لِرَعِيَّتِهِ غَاشٌ وَهُوَ يَمُوتُ يَوْمَ يَمُوتُ رَعِيَّةً اللَّهُ يَسْتَرُ عِيهِ عَبْدٌ مِنْ مَا

No servant sent by Allah to lead a nation will die while defrauding them, unless Allah forbids him from entering Paradise..") (Sahih Muslim)

4.2. MERCY AND COMPASSION: CENTRAL THEMES OF THE SEERAH:

Divine Attribute:

107: (إِلَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ وَمَا بِيَاءَ) لِلْعَالَمِينَ رَحْمَةً إِلَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ وَمَا

"And the only reason we sent you was to show the world mercy.") (Al-Anbiya': 107)

Incident: A Bedouin urinated in the mosque.

The response of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): Gentle explanation, not reprimand.

Hadith:

(بِ خَارِي) تُنْفِرُوا وَلَا وَبَشِّرُوا تُعَسِّرُوا، وَلَا يَسِّرُوا

" Give good news and do not turn people away; facilitate things rather than make them difficult.") (Sahih al-Bukhari)

4.3. CONSCIOUSNESS OF ACCOUNTABILITY:

Accountability on the Day of Judgment.

Hadith:

(مَسْدِ لَمْ) "الْفَرِّنَّا الشَّاءُ مِنَ الْجَلَّاءِ لِلشَّاءِ يُقَادَ حَتَّى الْقِيَامَةِ يَوْمَ أَهْلَهَا إِلَى الْحُقُوقِ لِتُؤَدَّنُ

On the Day of Judgment, the rights will be granted to their owners until even the sheep without horns can take revenge on the sheep with horns.") (Sahih Muslim)

CONCLUSION: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMPREHENSIVE IMPLEMENTATION:

The study of the Seerah of the Prophet (ﷺ) demonstrates that it is not confined to historical narration but represents a comprehensive and practical framework for individual, familial, and societal reform. Through guidance derived from the Qur'an and authentic Hadith, the Seerah establishes trustworthiness, accountability, and moral responsibility as foundational values. Strengthening the family system by enhancing parental awareness and nurturing honesty in children ensures the continuity of these values across generations, while societal institutions such as mosques and educational centers play a vital role in translating prophetic teachings into lived practice. Personal accountability (muhasabah) emerges as a core mechanism for moral development, encouraging continuous self-evaluation and sincere reliance upon Allah for protection from breaches of trust. The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) remains the supreme model of ethical conduct, as affirmed by the Qur'anic declaration that he is the finest example for humanity and by his own statement that his mission was to perfect noble character. This prophetic model was reflected in the governance of the early Islamic state, where transparency and public accountability were upheld, exemplified by the practice of leaders such as 'Umar (عَنْهُ اللَّهُ رَضِيَ) who remained directly answerable to the people.

In contemporary contexts, the principles derived from the Seerah retain full relevance. Their application in modern institutions demands integrity in public processes, the eradication of corruption, and the prioritization of public welfare over personal gain. When these prophetic principles are embodied in personal conduct, family life, and institutional structures, the Seerah transforms into a living system that guides ethical leadership, social justice, and the moral upbringing of future generations.

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