



Exploring the Theme of Leadership in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *By the Sea* from an Islamic Perspective

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Abstract:

This paper explores the concept of leadership in the novel *By the Sea* through an Islamic lens, distinguishing between the role of a leader and that of a manager. It highlights the evolving nature of leadership in contemporary context, where leaders should act as mentors, be change-oriented, and advocate inclusion and ethical practices. The paper draws on the significance of exemplary behavior, as demonstrated by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), highlighting ethical and professional responsibilities inherent in leadership. Key qualities, such as emotional intelligence, strategic thinking, and accountability are identified as essential for efficient leadership. By referencing to Quranic verses and prophetic traditions, the paper emphasizes the idea that true leadership is rooted in the provision of service, compassion, and commitment to a collective sense of social welfare. Ultimately, the paper reinforces the Islamic notion that leaders are "shepherds" entrusted with responsibilities and accountable for their actions and their influence on society. Thus, the present paper urges a holistic understanding of leadership that transcends mere authority or position

تحليل مفهوم القيادة في رواية عن "طريق البحر" لعبد الرزاق قرنح من منظور إسلامي

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الكلمات المفتاحية

1. القيادة
2. الإسلام
3. القيادة الإسلامية
4. عن طريق البحر
5. عبد الرزاق قرنح

المخلص:

تستكشف ورقة البحث مفهوم القيادة من منظور إسلامي في رواية "عن طريق البحر"، مميزة بين دور القائد والمدير، ومؤكدة على الطبيعة المتطورة للقيادة في السياق المعاصر، حيث يجب أن يكون القادة مرشدين، وعوامل تغيير، ومدافعين عن الشمولية والممارسات الأخلاقية. تستند المناقشة إلى أهمية السلوك النموذجي، كما يظهر في حياة النبي محمد (صلى الله عليه وسلم)، مسلطة الضوء على المسؤوليات الأخلاقية والمهنية المتأصلة في القيادة. تُحدد الصفات الرئيسية الضرورية للقيادة الفعالة، مثل الذكاء العاطفي، والتفكير الاستراتيجي، والمساءلة. من خلال الإشارة إلى الآيات القرآنية والأحاديث النبوية ذات الصلة. وتبرز الفكرة القائلة بأن القيادة الحقيقية مرتبطة بتقديم الخدمة وإظهار الرحمة والالتزام بالرفاهية الجماعية للمجتمع. وفي الختام، تحاول الورقة تعزيز مفهوم أن القادة هم "رعاة" موكلون بمسؤولية أفعالهم وتأثيرها على المجتمع، داعية إلى فهم شامل للقيادة يتجاوز مجرد السلطة أو المكانة.

Introduction:

The present paper is an attempt to explore the concept of leadership in Abdulrazak Gurnah's novel *By the Sea* through an Islamic lens, examining its principles, practices, and ethical implications. It emphasizes the evolving nature of leadership, distinguishing it from traditional management roles by highlighting the importance of innovation, empowerment, and ethical guidance. By drawing on Quranic teachings and the exemplary behavior and actions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the paper aims to investigate the theme of leadership in the selected novel and thus provides insights into the responsibilities and qualities expected of leaders from an Islamic perspective. It articulates the significance of moral character, community welfare, and accountability, portraying leadership as a multifaceted role that demands both influence and integrity. Through such exploration, not only does the paper aim to inform and educate readers about the ideals of leadership in Islam; it also aims to inspire current and future leaders to embody these values in their practices to ultimately foster a more just and compassionate society.

Objectives:

To investigate the theme of leadership in the selected novel;

To find out to what extent the characters assuming the role of leader in the novel are committed to the Islamic principles of leadership

Significance of the study:

As is mentioned earlier, this paper attempts to present a profound exploration of leadership from an Islamic perspective, underscoring its relevance in today's complex and dynamic world. No study, at least to the researcher's knowledge, has approached the theme of leadership in the selected novel from this perspective. By highlighting the exemplary conduct of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the paper may well be a reminder for those assuming the role of leadership of their

responsibilities towards their communities and the importance of justice and equity. It thus advocates for a collective mindset that prioritizes social welfare, urging leaders to act as "shepherds" who attend to the well-being of their flock. This emphasis on community responsibility is particularly relevant in addressing modern societal challenges. Overall, this research serves as a vital resource for understanding the intricacies of leadership within an ethical framework, advocating for a model that is grounded in service, compassion, and a commitment to the collective good.

Limitation of the study:

This paper offers valuable insights into the concept of leadership from an Islamic perspective. Like any research endeavor, however, the paper has its own limitations, primarily relying on personal narratives and traditional Islamic teachings without incorporating contemporary empirical research or case studies. This focus may restrict the applicability of its conclusions in diverse modern contexts, as it does not sufficiently address the complexities and dynamics of leadership in varied organizational environments. Additionally, while the paper highlights the ethical responsibilities of leaders dictated by Islam, it does not attempt to explore the challenges leaders face in balancing these ideals with pragmatic decision-making in today's fast-paced world. By integrating a broader range of perspectives and contemporary examples, the discourse on leadership could be enriched and better adapted to the multifaceted realities that leaders encounter today.

Research Methodology:

The study is aimed at investigating the theme of leadership in the novel under scrutiny from an Islamic perspective. Toward this end, the study adopts a multifaceted approach to examining leadership in the novel. That is, the study first analyzes the actions and behaviors of the characters who assume leadership roles

(e.g. parents, presidents, and teachers) in the novel. A comparison is then conducted between those actions, behaviors, and those of leaders as dictated by Islamic principles; this in turns involves referencing to Quranic verses and Hadiths that mandate and depict efficient leadership. Analysis of this theme is thus enriched by Moslem scholars' interpretations of the relevant Quranic verses and hadiths, connecting historical perspectives to contemporary responsibilities in leadership.

Theme of Leadership in *By the Sea*:

Leadership is a multifaceted and dynamic concept that transcends mere authority or position. At its core, leadership is about inspiring and guiding individuals or groups toward a common vision or goal. It involves the ability to influence others, foster collaboration, and cultivate an environment where creativity and innovation can thrive. Efficient leaders possess a unique blend of emotional intelligence, strategic thinking, and resilience, allowing them to navigate challenges and adapt to change with grace. Leadership in Islam, according to the definition by Professor Jassim Mohammed Al-Yaseen, is, "the behavior exhibited by the occupant of the caliphate position during their interaction with other members of the community. It is a behavioral process, a social interaction that involves directed and influential activity, in addition to being a center and a force."

In today's rapidly evolving world, the significance of strong leadership has never been more pronounced. Organizations face unprecedented challenges—be it technological advancements, shifting market dynamics, or the complexities of a diverse workforce. As such, the role of a leader has expanded beyond traditional boundaries; it now encompasses being a mentor, a change agent, and a champion for inclusiveness and ethical practices.

Before comparing how the characters in the selected novel behave as leaders with how leadership should be from an Islamic

perspective, we will briefly clarify the difference between a leader and a manager. According to Mohd Ezani, Nordin, Nur Atiqah, and Khairul Akmaliah, the distinction between a manager and a leader is clear: a manager focuses on administration, while a leader emphasizes innovation. A manager ensures maintenance, whereas a leader is concerned with development. Managers depend on systems, while leaders prioritize people. Managers exercise control, while leaders build trust. Lastly, a manager aims to do things correctly, while a leader strives to do the right things (Thaib and Muhammad, 346). For example, uncle Abdullah represents the administrative aspect of life, making decisions related to the family and community, but he lacks the ability to communicate well with others. His stances show that he focuses on practical and procedural aspects without considering human emotions. Rajab, on the other hand, embodies leadership through his ability to influence those around him, despite the challenges he faces. He seeks to find solutions to the problems of migrants and works to strengthen the bonds between them, making him an influential figure who guides them towards hope.

In the novel under discussion, these essential qualities of a leader are missing. For example, the first character who can be viewed as one who assumes the role of a leader is the protagonist Saleh Omar's father. As Saleh Omar mentions, his father sometimes leads the congregation in prayer and reads Quran all day after returning from work, spending the entire evening in the mosque studying and reading from the books of Sharia (i.e. Islamic law). He also states that his father barely spends any quality time in their new home, and when he does, he is immersed in his prayers and books, showing little concern for his family members "He becomes a shaykh: sometimes leading the congregation in prayers, reading the Koran all day after he comes back from work, spending all evening at the mosque studying and reading from the books of doctrine." Saleh Omar recalls that even when he traveled to study in Germany, his father told him he did not care if he would

become a communist or anything else. When Saleh Omar was in Germany, he said he sent letters to his father to reassure him that he (i.e. Saleh) was doing well, but his father did not care to respond to his letters "I had written to my father to tell him where I was and to explain I was on my slow way home. I had written not expecting a reply. After all, he had not replied to a single one of my few and desultory communication over the previous three or so years." Being a parent, Omar is supposed to fulfil the role of a leader at the familial level, but he fails to do that. He is neglectful to his family members and their needs, spending no quality time with them and caring little for his son's education. Such a behavior contradicts the ordinances of Islam, which affirm that everyone is responsible for those they provide for.

Another character who can be seen as a leader in his capacity as minister is Yusuf. Instead of taking care of his job as Minister of Education to help his fellow citizens, he takes advantage of Latif's mother's animosity towards Omar's family. That is, he helps her orchestrate a campaign to tarnish Omar's reputation and have him imprisoned in exchange for an illicit affair with her. Because of such an abuse of power, Saleh Omar will spend eleven years in prison. This has in return resulted in a long-lasting feeling of hate and grudge between Saleh Omar and Latif's mother. Consequently, a whole generation (symbolized by Saleh Omar and Latif Shabaan) was wasted because of abuse of power.

Saleh Omar notes that the prison chief, Lieutenant Adel, who represents the "shepherd" or authority, personally supervises them, but he does not improve the conditions of the prisoners or reassure them; rather, he does so from time to time merely for the pleasure of seeing all his enemies securely detained, all in a state of panic and terror, hearing them plead for mercy and release. Saleh Omar explains this by saying: "In my

third week, the President of the Republic dropped in. He did this now and then for the sheer pleasure of seeing his enemies all safely locked up, all abject and terrified, and to hear them beg for mercy and release."

It is also essential to analyze the terminology associated with leadership in Islam and its applications. This examination will provide valuable insights into the concept of leadership within the Islamic framework. In Arabic, various terms refer to a leader. The term "Amir," often translated as prince, originates from the verb "Amara," which means to command or order. An Amir serves as a commander or leader. Numerous prophetic traditions instruct that whenever a group of Muslims embarks on a mission, they should choose an Amir to guide them. This term encompasses a broad spectrum of leaders, including those who lead teams, groups, associations, societies, provinces, or nations. It applies to both appointed and elected leaders (quoted in Beekun and Badawi, 27).

The second term that refers to a leader is "Khalifa," (i.e. Calipha); it comes from the verb "khalafa," meaning to succeed a ruler or act in his stead. Therefore, "Khalifa" can signify either a successor or a vicegerent. This term appears twice in the Holy Quran to refer to a vicegerent: first, during God's conversation with the Angels about creating Adam, where He states, "And remember when Your Lord said to the Angels: 'I will establish a vicegerent (Khalifa) on earth'" [2:30]. The second instance describes God's appointment of Prophet David to govern the Children of Israel: "O David, We have appointed you a vicegerent (Khalifa) on earth. So, rule over the people with justice and do not follow your desires, lest they lead you astray from the path of God" [38:26]. The term "Khilafa" refers to the reign of a Khalifa, and "Khalifa" is specifically used in Islamic literature to denote head of an Islamic state (ibid; 28).

The third term used to refer to a leader in Islam is "Imam," which comes from the verb "Amma," meaning to face towards. While it primarily signifies someone who leads prayers, its meaning has broadened to encompass general leadership as well. The term "Imam" carries religious significance, unlike "Khalifa" or "Amir," which do not have to be associated with religious authority. "Imam" suggests the role of offering guidance to people, whereas "Amir" and "Khalifa" emphasize aspects of command and governance.

Leadership is also the ability of an individual to guide a group of people towards achieving a specific goal while nurturing their followers for future leadership, ensuring that no mistakes occur. A genuine leader is characterized by strong principles, effective communication skills, decisiveness, and dynamism. They should be committed and maintain a positive outlook in both their personal and professional lives. Leadership then as a way to inspire and direct individuals in a planned manner that aligns with the organization's best interests, fundamentally aiming to bring about positive change for the organization (Jamil, 25).

The Holy Quran outlines specific qualities that a leader must possess to ensure efficient leadership. Our beloved Prophet Muhammad (SAW) acted as the head of the state in Madina, fulfilling roles such as Chief Executive Officer, chief judge, commander-in-chief, and mentor. He addressed and resolved societal issues in an organized and efficient manner. To achieve the expected outcomes from a leader, it is essential to adhere fully to the principles of Sharia. A leader must consistently act in ways that align with the expectations of Allah and His Prophet. Key attributes such as trust, responsibility, and accountability—known as Amanah, Taklif, and Mas'uliyah, respectively—serve as guiding principles for leaders. Consequently, a leader is a crucial figure in any organization. It is important to recognize and reflect on the strong leadership traits embedded in Islam, as exemplified by

Allah's Prophets. From Islamic perspective, leadership involves steering an organization toward achieving common goals and establishing a system that ensures well-being, or (i.e. *alfalah*) for all (ibid, 25-56).

Leadership is also a crucial element of human society that goes beyond cultural and religious differences, influencing people at all levels within communities and organizations. In Islam, leadership is not an exclusive right for a limited group; instead, it is a role that anyone can take on, irrespective of age, gender, or social status. This inclusive view of leadership is firmly grounded in Islamic teachings, with the Quran offering enduring insights into the traits and duties of leaders (Siddique et al, 59). Allah says:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (سورة البقرة: 30)

And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels: "Verily, I am going to place (mankind) generations after generations on earth." They said: "Will You place therein those who will make mischief therein and shed blood, while we glorify You with praises and thanks and sanctify You?" He (Allāh) said: "I know that which you do not know" (Al-Baqarah, 2:30).

The context of this verse is part of the larger creation narrative in the Quran. Allah informs the angels of His plan to create a human who will act as His representative on Earth. The term "khalifah" signifies a role of stewardship and governance, indicating that humans are committed to caring for the Earth and its creatures. This announcement marks a crucial moment in the cosmic order, introducing a being with free will and moral choice.

According to Ibn Jarir, the interpretation of the verse is as follows: "Indeed, I am making a vicegerent (khalifah) on earth," meaning that he (Adam) will succeed Me in judging among My creation, and that vicegerent is Adam and those who follow him in obeying Allah and ruling justly among His creation. As for

corruption and shedding blood unjustly, this is not the act of His vicegerents (Ibn Katheer, 6). Al-Aghaway said that the intended meaning of "vicegerent" here is Adam, who is called a vicegerent because he succeeded the jinn, meaning he came after them. It is also said that he is called a vicegerent because others will succeed him. The correct view is that Adam is the vicegerent of Allah on His earth to establish His laws and implement His commandments (6).

The angels react to Allah's statement with a question that shows their understanding of justice and order: "Will You create one who causes corruption and sheds blood?" This question reflects their awareness of the potential for humans to commit wrongdoings, including violence and conflict. As beings created to worship and glorify Allah, the angels express concern about the possible disruption to the harmony of creation that may arise from creating such a being.

This dialogue underscores a key theme in Islamic theology: the difference between divine knowledge and human ignorance. Although the angels possess wisdom, they do not have the complete understanding that Allah does. Their question highlights their belief in the sanctity of life and the need to maintain order in creation, while also illustrating their limited perspective, as they cannot foresee humanity's full capacity for both good and evil.

In response to the angels' concerns, Allah states, "Indeed, I know what you do not know." This emphasizes Allah's all-knowing nature and wisdom. It suggests that while humans can engage in wrongdoing, they also have the potential for goodness, creativity, and moral decision-making. Allah's knowledge includes all possibilities—both the potential for evil and for righteousness. This statement serves as a reminder that humanity is endowed with qualities like compassion, justice, and the ability to seek knowledge. The

creation of Adam is not just about populating Earth; it is an opportunity for humans to learn, develop, and fulfill their role as caretakers of creation. It encourages believers to reflect on their responsibilities towards each other and the Earth.

Ultimately, this verse establishes humanity's dual nature: capable of both tremendous good and significant harm. Being a vicegerent comes with inherent responsibilities—to uphold justice, promote peace, and protect life. This role involves not only authority but also accountability to Allah. Humans are urged to be mindful of their actions and their consequences.

This verse also serves as a call to pursue moral excellence. It encourages individuals to foster virtues like compassion, justice, and humility while remaining alert to tendencies toward corruption and violence. Acknowledging human frailty is balanced by an emphasis on seeking divine guidance, inviting believers to pursue knowledge and wisdom from Allah in their lives.

In the broadest sense, and as mentioned in the previous verse, the word "khalifa" also means representative or vicegerent. In the Islamic concept, it refers to humans as agents or vicegerents on earth. This stewardship is manifested in preserving and taking care of all aspects of life. This concept is mentioned in Quran, and it is a responsibility, not an honor, for humans, as this stewardship is a trust and humans will be questioned about it. Allah says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا (سورة النساء: 58).

"Verily, Allāh commands that you should render back the trusts to those to whom they are due; and that when you judge between men, you judge with justice. Verily, how excel

lent is the teaching which He (Allāh) gives you! Truly, Allāh is Ever All-Hearer, All-Seer" (An-Nisa 3:58).

Amanah, which comes from the Arabic root word "أمن," denotes trust, responsibility, and honesty. In Islamic thought, it encompasses a broad spectrum of meanings, ranging from the trust present in personal relationships to the responsibilities associated with social and political roles. And the verse instructs believers to hand over trusts to those who deserve them and to judge fairly among people. This dual focus highlights both personal integrity and social accountability.

This idea pertains to the capacity for responsibility. Amanah in leadership can be understood from two perspectives. The first perspective sees amanah as a recognition that a leadership role is a divine appointment from Allah, for which one will be held accountable. The second perspective views amanah as a quality that a leader must possess in terms of their competence and integrity in upholding the trust of those they lead and other stakeholders, to whom the leader is also accountable. These two perspectives are interconnected and cannot be viewed in isolation (Rizaldy et al, 95).

As Al-Sa'di states, trusts (amanat) refer to everything entrusted to humans and commanded to fulfill. Allah ordered His servants to discharge these trusts completely, perfectly, and without reduction, delay, or concealment. This includes trusts related to positions of authority, wealth, secrets, and obligations known only to Allah. Jurists have noted that whoever is entrusted with a trust must safeguard it with similar care and security.

Note that verse opens with a clear command: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ" (Indeed, Allah commands you). This statement indicates that the concept of amanah is not just a moral recommendation but also a divine order. The emphasis on fulfilling trusts shows that being trustworthy is essential to a believer's character. In Islam, meeting one's responsibilities and maintaining

trust reflects one's faith and connection with Allah.

The phrase "أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا" (that you should deliver trusts to those entitled to them) highlights the necessity of acknowledging rightful ownership and ensuring responsibilities are fulfilled. This dimension of amanah goes beyond financial or material aspects; it also includes obligations towards family, community, and society as a whole. Upholding trusts creates an environment of mutual respect and cooperation, which is crucial for social harmony. This is what Caliph Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq did, who knew that this responsibility required a lot of attention. When he was chosen to be the caliph of the Muslims, he ascended the pulpit and addressed the people, saying, "I am not the best of you. If I do well help me, and if I do ill, then put me right. The weak among you shall be strong in my eyes until I secure his right if God wills, and the strong among you shall be weak in my eyes until I wrest the right from him. Obey me as long as I obey God and his apostle, and if I disobey them, you owe me no obedience." (Quoted in Armstrong 1992. p. 258)

He further said, "I prefer that someone else was chosen, rather than me, for this task (ibid 258-259). The second Caliph, Omer stated, 'If you see me doing wrongs, then straighten me. In both cases, followers have the right to change or remove the leader and the leader is responsible and has to answer directly to the community.

Caliph Abu Bakr's statement highlights that leadership is fundamentally a responsibility, not a privilege. Abu Bakr recognizes his own fallibility and encourages the community to hold him accountable. This sense of humility is vital in Islamic leadership, as it creates an atmosphere where leaders are regarded as servants of the people instead of oppressors. By acknowledging that he can make mistakes and requires guidance, he fosters a mutual relationship with his followers, emphasizing

that true leadership revolves around serving others and being attentive to their needs.

Another important facet of Abu Bakr's leadership is his dedication to justice and the well-being of the community. He is well known for this, "Fear him whom you govern," which highlights the necessity for leaders to be cautious about their power and its effects on others. His administration focused on ensuring justice for everyone, especially for those who are marginalized and oppressed. Abu Bakr believed that genuine leadership means safeguarding the rights of others and guaranteeing that all community members have access to their entitlements. This viewpoint reinforces the idea that leadership is not just about wielding authority but also about fulfilling a moral duty to promote justice and fairness within society.

Abu Muslim al-Khawlani visited Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan and greeted him by saying, "Peace be upon you, O hired shepherd." Others present urged him to address Mu'awiyah as "Commander," but he insisted on his original greeting. Mu'awiyah then remarked, "Let Abu Muslim speak; he understands what he means." Abu Muslim went on to explain that Mu'awiyah was simply a hired shepherd, appointed by the true Owner of the sheep to look after them. He advised that if Mu'awiyah tended to their needs, treated their ailments, protected the weak from the strong, and fulfilled his responsibilities, his Master would reward him. However, if he neglected these duties, failed to provide care, and allowed the strong to harm the weak, he would face punishment from his Master (Ibn Taymiyyah, 25-26).

Ibn Katheer reported that Ibn Abi Hatim said, Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Ahmansi narrated to us, from Waki', from Sufyan, from Abdullah ibn al-Sa'ib, from Zadhan, from Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, who said, the Messenger said: Martyrdom atones for every sin except for trusts (Amanah). On the Day of Judgment, a

man will be brought forth - even if he was killed in the path of Allah - and told, 'Return the trust.' He will say, 'How can I, now that the world has passed?' The trust will then be represented to him at the bottom of Hell. He will rush towards it and carry it on his back. It will be lifted from his back, and he will plunge after it, falling eternally (87).

The next part of the verse, "وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ" (and when you judge between people, judge with justice), reinforces that trustworthiness also encompasses fairness and equity in decision-making. Justice is fundamental to Islamic governance and personal behavior. By connecting amanah with justice, the verse demonstrates that true trustworthiness cannot exist without fairness. A just society relies on individuals who fulfill their commitments and act equitably.

The final segment of the verse, "إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا" (Indeed, Allah has given you a good advice; indeed, Allah is ever Hearing and Seeing), reminds believers that God is aware of all actions. This divine awareness fosters a sense of accountability among individuals. Understanding that Allah observes their actions encourages believers to uphold the principles of Amanah and justice in every aspect of life. The Prophet clarified that this status is the highest rank, which is excellence, and it is to fulfill your responsibilities as a leader and feel that Allah is watching what you do; he says; the Messenger "Al-Ihsan (excellence in faith) is to worship Allah as if you see Him, for if you do not see Him, He indeed sees you" (Sahih al-Bukhari: 50).

The hadith that highlights al-Ihsan, or excellence in faith, serves as a significant reminder for leaders regarding their responsibilities. When leaders approach their roles with the attitude of worshipping Allah as if they can see Him, they develop a sense of

accountability that goes beyond simple human oversight. This viewpoint motivates leaders to act with integrity, transparency, and a strong awareness of how their actions affect others. By embracing this principle, leaders can foster trust and loyalty within their communities, displaying their commitment to ethical behavior and moral clarity. The recognition that Allah observes all actions reinforces the notion that true leadership is not solely about having authority but about embodying divine values and guiding followers toward righteousness and justice.

The second aspect of the hadith, which states that while one may not see Allah, Allah sees everything, underscores a crucial component of compassionate leadership. This awareness should cultivate humility in leaders, reminding them that both a higher power and the people they lead are constantly observing their choices and behaviors. Such an understanding promotes a culture of accountability, encouraging leaders to prioritize the well-being of their followers and make decisions that serve the common good. It inspires leaders to connect with their communities empathetically, ensuring that their actions genuinely reflect concern for the needs and aspirations of others. Ultimately, this comprehension of al-Ihsan transforms leaders into guardians of trust and champions of justice, steering their communities with wisdom and compassion while remaining aware of their moral responsibilities.

The theme of Amanah has significant implications for society. When individuals practice trustworthiness and justice, it enhances social stability and cohesion. Conversely, breaking trust can lead to conflict and unrest. Therefore, nurturing a culture of Amanah is essential for creating strong communities where individuals feel secure in their relationships and interactions.

Overall, the theme of amanah in the aforementioned Quranic verse embodies crucial values that govern personal conduct and societal interactions. It stresses the importance of fulfilling trusts and

administering justice as divine responsibilities. By following these principles, individuals not only deepen their faith but also contribute to a fair and harmonious society. The Islamic teachings related to amanah serve as a lasting reminder of the moral duties tied to trust, encouraging believers to exemplify integrity and fairness in all areas of life.

In fact, the importance of leadership and its responsibilities is highlighted not only by Quranic verses, but also by the biography of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). That is, the Prophet lifestyle exemplifies true leadership and the burden of responsibilities. This fact is affirmed by the Holy Quran:

"لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا" (الأحزاب: 21)

"Indeed, in the Messenger of Allāh (Muhammad PBUH) you have a good example to follow; for him who hopes for (the Meeting with) Allāh and the Last Day, and remembers Allāh much" (Al-Aḥzāb, 33:21).

This verse illustrates that the true symbol of leadership and bearing responsibility is the noble Prophet. As Al-Suyuti rightly commented on this verse in relation to those who study the esteemed biography of the Prophet, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) exemplified exemplary behavior. This is illustrated particularly during the Battle of the Trench, when the Prophet actively took part along with his companions in digging the trench; he helped his companions carry the dirt and joined in their songs and chants as they worked hard. He also experienced their hunger and sleeplessness alongside them. Truly, he was a decisive and compassionate leader whom his companions relied on when they faced challenges while digging the trench.

In Al-Mu'jam al-Wasit, the term "Uswah" is synonymous with "Qudwah", signifying exemplary noble qualities. It can also be understood as a model for example that is commendable to follow. The characteristics of

uswah are crucial for a leader, as they contribute to effective governance and the maintenance of justice and public welfare. Therefore, the goal of uswah hasanah education is to cultivate a society characterized by high moral standards and values.

The Holy Quran emphasizes that the best example of leadership is determined by a leader's ability to guide people towards the right and just path. Effective leadership also involves possessing noble character, which God praises in the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) for exemplifying the significance of this responsibility, as noted in Surah Al-Qalam 4: *وانك لعلى خلق عظيم* ("And indeed, you are of a great moral character.")

This trait is clearly emphasized in Islam to ensure responsible governance for both the state and individuals, as well as to establish a leader who is accepted and respected within society. Furthermore, all Muslims should acknowledge the qualities of Islamic leadership, as they represent the harmony and good character that should be cultivated and cherished at every level of society.

Quran emphasizes the importance of emulating the qualities of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as a model for believers. This concept of Uswah hasanah, or exemplary behavior, is rooted in the belief that following the Prophet's example leads to a more conscientious and faithful community. In Surah An-Nisa (4:80), Allah underscores the significance of obedience to the Messenger, stating, "He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah." This verse highlights the integral relationship between following divine guidance and adhering to the teachings of the Prophet.

For leaders, embodying the qualities of Uswah hasanah is essential, as they are expected to serve as role models for their communities. A leader's character is reflected in both their

words and actions, and the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) exemplifies this ideal. His life serves as a comprehensive guide for Muslims, demonstrating how to navigate various aspects of life with integrity, compassion, and justice. By aspiring to emulate the Prophet's virtues, leaders can inspire their followers and foster a society grounded in strong moral values and ethical conduct.

The noble Prophet has clarified in many hadiths that every person is a "shepherd" and responsible for those they care for. This is reflected in providing food, drink, clothing, and guidance that aligns with Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH). The ruler is responsible for those under their care, the father is responsible for his wife and children, and the wife is also responsible for her husband and children. Likewise, children are responsible for their parents. The Prophet (PBUH) explained these responsibilities in a hadith that states:

وعن ابن عمر رضي الله عنهما قال: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ: كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ، وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، الْإِمَامُ رَاعٍ وَمَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، وَالرَّجُلُ رَاعٍ فِي أَهْلِهِ وَمَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، وَالْمَرْأَةُ رَاعِيَةٌ فِي بَيْتِ زَوْجِهَا وَمَسْئُولَةٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهَا، وَالْخَادِمُ رَاعٍ فِي مَالِ سَيِّدِهِ (صحيح البخاري: 7138).

"Surely! Every one of you is a guardian and is responsible for his charges: The Imam (ruler) of the people is a guardian and is responsible for his subjects: a man is the guardian of his family (household) and is responsible for his subjects; a woman is the guardian of her husband's home and of his children and is responsible for them, and the slave of a man is a guardian of his master's property and is responsible for it. Surely, every one of you is a guardian and responsible for his charges (Sahih al-Bukhari: 7138).

The hadith "كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ، وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ" which translates to "All of you are shepherds, and

each of you is responsible for his flock," serves as a profound reminder of the importance of responsibility within the framework of Islamic teachings. This saying, attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), encapsulates the essence of accountability, emphasizing that every individual has a role to play in their community and must act with integrity and care. Understanding this hadith will explore the multifaceted implications of this hadith, highlighting the themes of universal responsibility, moral accountability, community engagement, and the empowerment of individuals in their respective roles.

The hadith mentioned illustrates that leadership is an inherent aspect of a Muslim's life across all situations, including the most specific contexts, such as a slave being referred to as the leader of their master's possessions. From an Islamic viewpoint, leadership begins with self-leadership—the capacity to guide and manage oneself in alignment with the divine purpose of being "Ibad ar-Rahman" (the servant of God), while upholding values of truth and goodness amidst various personal challenges. This responsibility expands until it encompasses universal leadership, which serves as a blessing for all of creation (rahmatan lil alamin).

At the heart of this hadith lies the concept of universal responsibility. It asserts that people, regardless of their status or position, have a duty to fulfill. This principle transcends social hierarchies, indicating that leaders, parents, and individuals alike are all accountable for their actions and decisions. The hadith serves as a reminder that no one is exempt from this responsibility; rather, it is a shared obligation that binds members of society together. In this context, individuals are encouraged to reflect on their roles and recognize that their actions can significantly influence those around them.

The hadith further emphasizes that while everyone is responsible, the nature of that responsibility varies according to one's role. For instance, leaders are tasked with

governing their subjects justly and fairly, ensuring that their decisions promote the welfare of the community. Similarly, parents bear the responsibility of nurturing and educating their children, shaping their character and values. On an individual level, each person must consider how their behavior affects others, fostering an environment of mutual respect and care. This differentiation in roles underscores the complexity of responsibility within society, where each individual's contribution is vital to the collective well-being.

A significant aspect of this teaching is the notion of moral accountability. The hadith implies that individuals will be held accountable for how they fulfill their responsibilities before God on the Day of Judgment. This belief instills a sense of urgency and seriousness in carrying out one's duties. It encourages individuals to act with integrity and to be mindful of their actions, knowing that they will ultimately answer for them. The idea of accountability serves as a moral compass, guiding individuals to act ethically and justly in their interactions with others.

The hadith also fosters a sense of community by reminding individuals that their actions have repercussions beyond themselves. It encourages people to look out for one another and to contribute positively to society. In an age where individualism often prevails, this teaching calls for a collective mindset that prioritizes the welfare of the community. By recognizing that we are all interconnected, individuals are motivated to engage in acts of kindness, support one another, and work towards common goals that benefit society as a whole.

In addition, this teaching empowers individuals by making them aware that they have a vital role in shaping their environment and community. It promotes active participation rather than passive observation, encouraging individuals to take initiative in addressing issues and contributing to positive change. By understanding that they are

"shepherds" in their own right, individuals can embrace their agency and influence, fostering a culture of responsibility that extends beyond personal interests.

(إن الله سائل كل راع عما استرعاه، أحفظ أم ضيع، حتى يسأل الرجل في أهل بيته) صحيح ابن حبان 4493

"Verily, Allah will question every shepherd about what he has been entrusted with, whether he preserved it or lost it, until a man will be questioned about his family" (Sahih ibn Hban, 345).

The hadith "إن الله سائل كل راع عما استرعاه" which means, "Indeed, Allah will question every shepherd about that which he was responsible for," is a significant saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It highlights the important moral and ethical responsibilities associated with leadership and care in various capacities. Understanding his hadith examines the implications of it, its relevance in today's society, and how it has been interpreted by Islamic scholars.

The word "راعي" (ra'i), or "shepherd," in this context is metaphorical, representing various roles of responsibility. It pertains not only to leaders and to rulers but also to parents, educators, employers, and anyone tasked with the care of others. The core message of the hadith stresses accountability, reminding those in authority that they are responsible for their actions and for the well-being of those they oversee.

The responsibility of a leader goes beyond completing tasks; it involves creating a lasting positive impact. The term "ra'i" (leader) originates from the Arabic word for shepherd, emphasizing the leader's duty to care for, nurture, and protect their people, just as a shepherd tends to their flock. Ultimately, a leader's responsibility is to ensure the well-being of those under their care (Ikhwan, 37).

This hadith is frequently referenced to in order to promote justice, integrity, and ethical conduct among leaders. It underscores the Islamic view that leadership is not just a position of power but a trust (أمانة) that demands fairness and compassion in fulfilling one's duties. Moreover, the importance of having this leader (shepherd) is emphasized by the Prophet's command that even during travel, a responsible person should be chosen to lead the group, bearing the burdens of the journey, its isolation, and its dangers, to embody this responsibility in every way. The Prophet (PBUH) said: "If three people were traveling together, they should appoint a leader"(Hawwa, 1988, p.15).

The hadith stating, "If three people are traveling together, they should appoint a leader," highlights the important concept of leadership as a responsibility that applies to many areas of life. This teaching stresses the importance of having a designated leader to maintain order, coordination, and accountability in any group activity. Whether in a literal journey or a metaphorical one, having a leader facilitates decision-making, improves communication among members, and promotes unity and purpose. Leadership is not just about holding power; it is primarily about addressing the needs of the group, guiding them toward common objectives, and ensuring that everyone's opinions are acknowledged while managing potential challenges effectively.

Additionally, this hadith emphasizes the ethical aspects of leadership, pointing out that authority comes with significant responsibility. A leader is responsible for the group's well-being and must act with integrity, wisdom, and compassion. Choosing a leader reflects mutual respect and acknowledgment of each member's strengths within the group. It demonstrates that effective leadership is about collaboration and support rather than control. By recognizing that leadership entails caring for others' welfare, this teaching

encourages individuals to consider their roles in any community or team. Ultimately, it reminds us that strong leadership in any gathering or partnership can create an environment where everyone can succeed; reinforcing the notion, that genuine leadership is based on service and dedication to the common good.

Islamic scholars have provided extensive commentary on the hadith that states, "All of you are shepherds, and each of you is responsible for his flock" in different contexts. For example, Ibn Majah, a notable compiler of hadith, includes this narration in his collection, highlighting its importance in Islamic teachings. Scholars such as Al-Ghazali and Ibn Taymiyyah have explored the moral responsibilities of leaders, emphasizing the necessity of prioritizing the welfare of those they serve and acting with justice.

In his writings, Al-Ghazali identifies essential qualities for a leader, including wisdom, justice, and humility. He asserts that a leader must recognize their responsibilities and diligently strive to meet them. This perspective aligns with the hadith's message that accountability before Allah is unavoidable, encouraging leaders to behave ethically.

In contemporary society, the relevance of this hadith spans various areas, including politics, education, and family life. Political leaders are reminded of their obligation to serve their constituents with fairness and transparency. The prevalent issues of corruption and negligence in governance highlight the importance of leaders being aware of their responsibilities as outlined in this hadith.

Similarly, in educational environments, teachers are viewed as guardians of knowledge and character development. Their role goes beyond simply teaching academic subjects; they are also tasked with instilling moral and ethical values in their students. This responsibility is significant, as educators play a crucial role in shaping future generations.

In family settings, parents serve as the primary caregivers for their children. The hadith reminds parents to address not only their children's physical needs but also their emotional and spiritual growth. A nurturing home environment fostered by responsible parenting can greatly influence a child's development and future contributions to society.

The hadith "إن الله سائل كل راع عما استرعاه" acts as a timeless reminder of the serious responsibilities linked to leadership and guardianship. Its implications reach across various aspects of life, urging those in authority to act justly and fulfill their obligations with integrity. As society continues to progress, the lessons derived from this hadith remain vital in promoting ethical leadership and accountability. Ultimately, it reinforces the Islamic belief that everyone will be held accountable for their actions before Allah, fostering a culture of responsibility and care in all areas of life.

Al-Nawawi, another influential scholar, comments that this hadith serves as a warning to leaders who abuse their power and neglect their responsibilities. He emphasizes that leaders must prioritize the welfare and interests of their people, rather than personal gain or self-interest (Sharh Sahih Muslim, 12/222).

Dr. Yusuf al-Qaradawi, a contemporary Islamic scholar, argues that this hadith highlights the importance of accountability and transparency in leadership. He emphasizes that leaders must be honest and trustworthy, prioritizing the interests of their people above personal or partisan interests (Minhaj al-Muslim, 2/357).

In addition, the hadith emphasizes the importance of family responsibility. A man will be questioned about his family, implying that he is accountable for their well-being and upbringing. This hadith emphasizes the importance of leadership accountability in Islam. Scholars have interpreted this hadith as a warning to leaders who neglect their responsibilities, emphasizing the need for

accountability, transparency, and trustworthiness in leadership. Furthermore, the hadith highlights the importance of family responsibility and the role of parents in shaping the next generation.

Nasser is one of the prominent characters in the novel. He is an orphan, and Nasser explains during his childhood how his uncles treated him by neglecting and disregarding him. Nasser even says that his uncles sent him to do hard work at a young age and took his share of the inheritance. Here we find the leniency and neglect in bearing the responsibility towards the orphan Nasser by his uncles, and Islam threatens those who are lazy and forget their duty as a "shepherd."

The Prophet (PBUH) clarified that whoever does not fulfill this duty and responsibility in the best possible manner, as commanded by Allah, will be deprived of Paradise or its perfection. The Prophet (PBUH) said, emphasizing the greatness of this divine task:

أخبرنا احمد بن علي بن المثنى قال: حدثنا شيبان بن ابي شيبة قال: حدثنا أبو الاشهب جعفر بن حيان العطاردى قال: حدثنا الحسن قال: عاد عبيد الله بن زياد معقل بن يسار في مرضه الذي مات فيه فقال معقل: أنى محدثك بحديث سمعته من رسول الله صل الله عليه وسلم لو علمت لي حياة ما حدثتك به سمعت الرسول صل الله على وسلم يقول: ما من عبد يسترعيه الله رعيه ويوم يموت يموت وهو غاش لرعيته الا حرم الله عليه الجنة (صحيح بن حبان: 347)

"We were informed by Ahmad bin Ali bin al-Muthanna, who said: We were told by Shiaban bin Abi Shiaba, who said: We were told by Abu al-Ashhab Ja'far bin Hayyan al-Attar, who said: We were told by al-Hasan, who said: Ma'qil bin Yasar visited Ubaydullah bin Ziyad during his illness, and Ma'qil said: "I am telling you a hadith that I heard from the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). If I knew I had a long life, I would not tell you this hadith. I heard the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) say,

'No servant whom Allah has entrusted with a flock will die on a day while he is dishonest to his flock, except that Allah will forbid him from entering Paradise" (Sahih ibn Hibban: 347).

Ibn Hibban says, this hadith can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, it could mean that the leader's dishonesty to his people makes him deserving of punishment, thereby forbidding him from entering Paradise and condemning him to eternal hellfire.

Secondly, it could mean that the leader's dishonesty does not necessarily make him deserving of punishment, but rather prevents him from entering Paradise alongside the righteous, at least initially. This is in line with the Prophet's statement in another narration: "He will not enter Paradise with them," meaning, not at the same time as the righteous. Instead, he will be delayed, facing punishment, whether in hellfire, during the reckoning, or otherwise.

This hadith highlights the serious obligations associated with leadership and the duty of care for others. It points out those individuals in positions of authority- whether in families, communities, or organizations- are responsible for the welfare of those they lead. The term "غاش" (ghash) suggests deceit or neglect, emphasizing that leaders must conduct themselves with honesty and integrity.

Furthermore, the hadith acts as a strong warning regarding the repercussions of failing to fulfill one's responsibilities. The phrase "حرم الله عليه الجنة" (Allah has forbidden him Paradise) stresses the seriousness of the consequences for those who are unfaithful in their roles. It makes it clear that leaders who neglect the needs of those they are responsible for not only endanger their well-being but also face spiritual consequences in the afterlife. This reinforces the notion that leadership is not just a privilege but also a

significant duty that demands vigilance, compassion, and accountability.

The ethical aspect of leadership is crucial in this hadith. It urges leaders to be conscious of their actions and decisions, ensuring they are guided by principles of justice and care. A leader's role goes beyond mere authority; it involves serving the community with genuine commitment. This teaching prompts leaders to examine their intentions and behaviors, creating an atmosphere of trust and respect. By recognizing that their actions have lasting effects on both their followers and their own spiritual destinies, leaders are encouraged to prioritize the well-being of those they oversee. In addition, this hadith reminds us that authentic leadership is founded on selflessness and accountability, motivating individuals to approach their roles with strong sense of moral duty.

Neglecting or abandoning the responsibility for those one supports can lead to many consequences for society and individuals. Abandoning responsibility within a family can lead to deep emotional scars and fractured relationships. When a parent neglects their role in a child's life—whether through emotional unavailability, lack of support, or physical absence—the child may experience feelings of worthlessness and insecurity. For example, a child who does not receive the attention and guidance they need may struggle with self-esteem issues, leading to difficulties in forming healthy relationships, as they grow older. The ripple effect of this neglect can extend to future generations, as children raised in such environments may replicate these patterns of abandonment in their own families, perpetuating a cycle of emotional distress.

In friendships, the abandonment of responsibility can erode trust and create rifts that are difficult to mend. Friends rely on one another for support, understanding, and accountability. When one friend consistently neglects their responsibilities—such as being there during times of need or failing to keep promises—the other may feel betrayed and undervalued. For instance, if a friend

frequently cancels plans or does not provide emotional support during crises, the hurt party may withdraw from the friendship altogether. This abandonment can lead to feelings of isolation for both individuals, diminishing the sense of community and connection that friendships are meant to provide.

On a broader scale, abandoning responsibility towards community members can have significant societal implications. When individuals in positions of authority—such as leaders or elected officials—fail to advocate for the needs of their constituents, it can result in widespread disenfranchisement and suffering. For example, if local leaders ignore the need for affordable housing or accessible healthcare, vulnerable populations may find themselves without essential resources, leading to increased poverty and social unrest. This neglect not only harms those directly affected but also undermines the community's overall well-being, fostering an environment of distrust and disengagement among residents.

On an individual level, abandoning personal responsibilities can stifle growth and self-improvement. When people fail to hold themselves accountable for their actions—be it in their careers, relationships, or personal development—they may miss valuable opportunities for learning and growth. For instance, an employee who neglects their work responsibilities may face consequences such as poor performance reviews or job loss, which can lead to feelings of inadequacy and frustration. In contrast, embracing responsibility fosters resilience and encourages individuals to develop skills necessary for overcoming challenges. By taking ownership of their actions, individuals not only contribute positively to their own lives but also set a precedent for those around them.

The consequences of abandoning responsibility extend far beyond the individual; they affect families, friendships, communities, and personal growth. Recognizing our responsibilities towards

those we care for is essential in nurturing healthy relationships and fostering a supportive environment. By embracing our roles and holding ourselves accountable, we can create a positive impact on the lives of others, cultivate a sense of belonging, and trust in our interactions.

The researcher sees that highlighting the importance of feeling like caretakers and being responsible for those we support resonates deeply with the fundamental values of empathy and community. When individuals recognize their role as caretakers, it fosters a sense of interconnectedness and shared responsibility, which can significantly enhance social cohesion. This mindset encourages people to look beyond their own needs and consider the well-being of others, leading to a more compassionate society.

Moreover, when caretaking becomes a collective value, it can inspire collaborative efforts to address social issues, promote equity, and support vulnerable populations. This sense of responsibility can lead to increased volunteerism, community engagement, and a stronger social safety net. Ultimately, societies that prioritize caretaking tend to cultivate environments where individuals feel valued and supported, which can result in improved mental health outcomes and overall societal resilience. In essence, embracing the role of caretaker not only benefits those who receive support but also enriches the lives of those who give it, creating a virtuous cycle of care that strengthens the fabric of society as a whole.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the comparison of the characters' actions to the Islamic principles of leadership reveals a striking disparity that underscores the essential qualities expected from leaders in Islam. While true leadership is characterized by responsibility, compassion, and ethical conduct, the characters often

exhibit self-centered and exploitative actions and behaviors that contradict these principles. For instance, Saleh Omar's father's indifference to his son's well-being and education exemplifies a neglect of the responsibilities inherent in leadership, which should prioritize the welfare of those being guided. Moreover, the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) serves as a benchmark for exemplary leadership, highlighting qualities such as justice, accountability, and a genuine commitment to community needs—traits that are significantly lacking in the characters' actions. This analysis emphasizes that effective leadership is not merely about authority but requires nurturing and guiding individuals towards a common ethical path, thereby highlighting a critical gap between their behaviors and the Islamic ideals of leadership founded on integrity and selflessness. The Quranic principles underscore that efficient leadership is inclusive, acknowledging that anyone can take on the role, irrespective of status or background. Ultimately, the essence of leadership in Islam revolves around serving others, fostering trust, and inspiring individuals towards collective success and ethical governance. By adhering to these principles, leaders can cultivate environments where justice prevails, and communities thrive, aligning their actions with divine guidance and moral responsibility. Therefore, the lessons drawn from Islamic teachings on leadership remain relevant today, offering a robust framework for addressing contemporary challenges in a diverse and ever-evolving world. The characters in the novel who are in charge of some job or another fail to realize this fact and act in a counter fashion to the essential qualities of leaders ordained by the Holy Quran and the traditions of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH).

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