

# Islamic Leadership Models--Lessons from early Islam

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## 1 Introduction

Few events of history are as commonly misunderstood in the West in general, and the US in particular, as are the Muslim Conquests of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Century or the “Crusade Periods” of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Unfortunately, much of what Americans know about early Islam and the Crusades are skewed by post-9/11 politics or obscured by popular culture such as Ridley Scott’s recent movie, “Kingdom of Heaven” (2005). Typically, Islam and its leaders are portrayed as fanatical religious zealots, violently intolerant of other religions or cultures.

Fortunately, these eras are extensively documented by contemporary scholars, Muslim, Christian and Jewish alike (Aslan 2011; Lewis 2008; Housley 1992). While there were certainly some instances of “conversion by the sword,” (Levy-Rubin 2000) as early as the 8<sup>th</sup> Century, cities under Muslim rule (i.e. the “Pax Islamica”) hosted theological debates with invited Christian scholars (Griffith 1992). Jews fleeing brutal persecution within Christendom were promoted to high-level administrative posts under Caliphate rulers (Lewis 1984). During the same period, the “House of Wisdom” in Baghdad (under Al-Ma’mūn ibn Harūn 786-833 CE) was the multicultural intellectual center of the World for the study of humanities as well as sciences including mathematics, engineering, astronomy, medicine, cartography, chemistry, and zoology (Al-Khalili 2012, Lyons 2010).

While to completely discount the sanguinary nature of these periods would be naïve, the overwhelming weight of scholarship suggests the vast majority of peoples who converted to Islam did so willingly, if not even enthusiastically. Antony Adolf (2009) noting that “[T]he rapidity of these vast early territorial gains is no less stunning than the low degree of violence Muslims used to achieve them.” Schuon (2003) writes that “Islam is often reproached as having propagated its faith by the sword; what is overlooked is that persuasion played a much greater role than war in the expansion of Islam.” It should also be noted that typically, Christians and Jews were not actually forced to convert to Islam, although were required to pay the “jizya,” a type of tax or tribute payable to the local authorities (Nyazee 2000; Schacht 1964).

What have not been adequately critiqued, at least in a contemporary leadership/management context, are successful leadership traits of both the Prophet Muhammad and his early civil and military successors, which arguably can be said to have helped Islam spread throughout the known world and allowed it to rule far flung empires for over 500 hundred years. Previous scholarly work has explored how religion influences behavior at both the macro and micro level (Dana 2010). Specific attention has been given to the role Islam plays as a variable in the behavior of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship as experienced within the context of the Islamic faith (Dana 2009, Ramadani et al 2015). Dana (2009) and Ramadani et al (2015) make the case for specific attributes, qualities and characteristics, which provide a context to evaluate effective entrepreneurial behavior.

This article extends the previously mentioned scholars research by drawing on exemplars that would allow further research on what effective leadership within an Islamic context looks like. Meritocracy, honesty, tolerance, personal courage, and compassion for others were essential underpinnings of the expansion of Islam from the borders of China to the Atlantic coast of Spain. A model for a conceptualization and examination of Islamic Leadership has been developed. The model involves a refinement of previously proposed, but not fully conceptualized, frameworks of Islamic Leadership.

## **2 Leadership Explained**

Leadership has been defined in numerous ways, especially in comparison to the normal constructs used to define management. John Kotter (2001) offers a comparison of the two as follows:

## The Difference Between Leadership and Management

	Leadership Is About ... Coping With Change	Management Is About ... Coping With Complexity
What are we setting out to do?	<b>► Establishing Direction</b> Developing a vision and strategies to achieve that vision; setting high but reasonable standards	<b>► Planning and Budgeting</b> Establishing detailed steps and timetables and allocating resources
How do we deliver results?	<b>► Aligning People</b> Communicating direction to influence creation of teams and coalitions that understand vision and strategy	<b>► Organizing and Staffing</b> Establishing a structure to achieve the plan; delegating authority and providing policies and processes
How do we make it happen?	<b>► Motivating, Mentoring, Inspiring</b> Energizing people to develop and overcome barriers to change	<b>► Controlling and Problem Solving</b> Monitoring and organizing
What are the outcomes?	<b>► Producing Change</b> Often to a dramatic degree, such as cultivating new services and new approaches	<b>► Producing Predictability and Order</b> Consistently achieving budgets and targets

Source: Based on materials in John Kotter's "What Leaders Really Do," *Harvard Business Review*, December 2001.

**Fig. 1** Difference between leadership and management (Source: According to Kotter 2001)

Kotter (2001) captures the essence of the themes offered by other scholars (Depree 1990; Bass 1990). The constructs around leadership continue to evolve and various theories battle for supremacy, including ideas about charismatic (Conger and Kanungo 1987), transactional (Bass 1990), transformational (Bass 1990), and servant leadership (Greenleaf 2002). However, what is common across the leadership spectrum is to *influence others to take a course of action*, especially one they may not have originally considered.

Graen, Rowold and Heinritz (2010) operationalize the conceptualization above by stating: "...leadership is defined as informal emergent influence that can be activated by problem situations demanding leader—member cooperative, extra-role action much beyond the ordinary action feasible from formal supervisor and subordinate or coworker and coworker problem situations..." This operationalization gets us at the heart at what defines leadership and separates it from management. It is the ability to get people to act beyond assigned and defined roles to achieve a common goal. Leadership is activated, not by the title given (e.g. "manager"), but by the ability to move people beyond "problem situations".

Most scholarly works on leadership theory have focused on Implicit Leadership Theory (ILT) and its associated cognitive effect and focus on followers (Rush Thomas

and Lord 1977, Schyns and Schilling 2011). Various topologies have been developed to explain the “type” of leader and leadership behavior being explored. The core theories used to explain leadership are:

- Trait theories (Zaccaro 2007)
- Behavioral theories (Conger and Kanungo 1987)
- Contingency theories (Kerr et al 1974)
- Power and influence theories (Edwin and Hollander 1990)

While these various constructs and operationalization of what is meant by leadership, what has not been fully explored is how religion in general interacts with leadership behavior, specifically those of the Islamic faith.

### **3 Islamic Perspective of Leadership**

Previous scholarly work has explored how religion influences behavior at both the macro and micro level (Dana 2010). Specific attention has been given to the role Islam plays as a variable in the behavior of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship as experienced within the context of the Islamic faith (Dana 2009, Ramadani et al 2015). The same concepts and principles that would allow one to be seen as a successful entrepreneur through an Islamic lens would also apply to leadership.

From an Islamic perspective leadership must be seen through ethical and moral dimensions. Leadership is not for self-aggrandizement, but to help guide people to a proper way (Davis 2013). “Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah...” (Qur’an 3:110). Another verse from the Qur’an that address the Islamic model of leadership within an ethical and moral sense is: “Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: They are the ones to attain felicity” (3:104). At its most fundamental, Islamic leadership is to work for the betterment and wellbeing of the community (ummah) through the propagation of all that is good.

It is the mission of an Islamic leader to create a just, non-exploitative environment with a strong emphasis on moral values (Mir 2010). Mir (2010) asserts the Qur’an and Prophet Muhammad provide the model to be followed by Muslim leaders and includes the following five traits: Piety, Humility, Social Responsibility, Self-Development, and Mutual Consultation.

#### **3.1 Islamic Leadership Model**

The Islamic model of leadership is rooted in the moral dimensions established by the Qur'an and the leader's willingness to submit to God's (Allah's) will as articulated in the revelations received by the Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet Muhammad is the exemplar for the behavior a leader should follow as the Qur'an states: "And indeed you (Muhammad) stand as an exalted standard of behavior" (68:4). It is from the behavior of the Prophet Muhammad, and the early leaders of Islam, that one can begin to delineate the personal attributes and fundamental principles that compose a basis for examining, and guiding, modern leadership in the Islamic world.

Previous research has established that while personal attributes can influence behaviors, it is the fundamental principles and assumptions the leaders have that shape entire cultures (Liden et. al 2014). Kriger and Seng (2005) offer a model showing how the religious traditions of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism shape the worldview, values and implicit leadership models of those who follow those faiths.

Figure 2 provides an overview of implicit leadership models from the viewpoint of each of the five religions in the model.

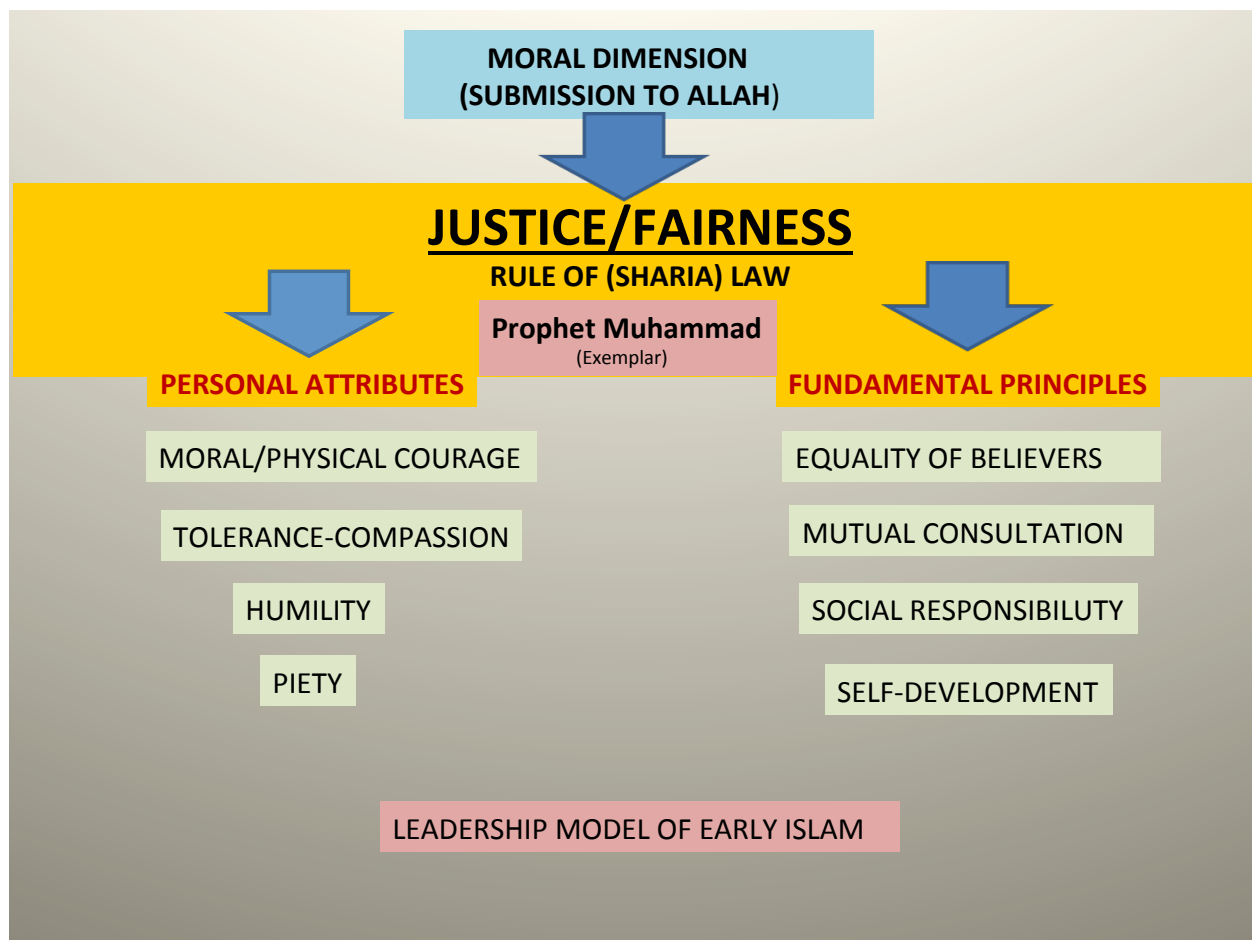
	Judaism	Christianity	Islam	Buddhism	Hinduism
1. Leader as:	Teacher & question- asker	Role model	Servant of God and His creations	Teacher and role model	Role model of the "gods"
2. Exemplars	Abraham	Jesus	Mohammed	The Buddha	Rama/Krishna
3. Leadership through:	Meaning-making	Love & peace	Embodying the 99 names of God	Being and example	Example and stories
4. Validity primarily	Testing & Perseverance	Faith	Belief	Meditation & investigation of awareness	Awareness & perception
5. Core vision:	Oneness	Love	Surrendering to God	Wisdom & compassion	Liberation from duality
6. Revelation through:	Ten commandments & the words of the prophets	Example & life of Jesus	The <i>Qur'an</i> through God's messenger, Mohammed	Direct experience	Self- inquiry and practice
7. Core statement	"Hear, oh Israel, the Lord, our God, is One."	The Lord's prayer	"There is no God, but God."	Taking refuge in the <i>Buddha</i> , <i>dharma</i> , & <i>sangha</i>	"Thou art that"
8. Source of wisdom for leaders	The Torah ( <i>Tanakh</i> )	The Old and New Testaments	The <i>Qur'an</i>	Investigation of inner self; Pali Canon & <i>Abhidharma</i>	<i>Upanashads</i> & <i>Bhagavad Gita</i>

9. Manifestation of the divine or spirit via:	The “Lightning Flash”	The Trinity	The 99 Attributes or Names of God	Direct awareness	Divine play (lila)
10. Basis for moral leadership	The <i>Mishnah</i> (610 rules for correct behavior)	Moral virtues	<i>Shari’ah</i> (the Law) <i>adab</i> ; remembrance	<i>Cila</i> ; the 10 precepts; mindfulness	4 goals of life ( <i>purusharthas</i> ): meditation, pleasure, worldly success, liberation from rebirth

Fig 2 Faith based implicit leadership model (Source Krieger and Seng 2005)

Hence, it is reasonable to conclude that the success of the leaders identified in this article came not only from personal characteristics they possessed, but also from the value system that influenced their underlying principles.

Figure 3 provides a framework to examine the personal attributes and fundamental principles held by the leaders profiled in this article.



**Fig 3** Islamic leadership model (Source: Authors)

Islamic leadership must be examined through the prism of submission to Allah (God) as based within the Qur'an and the sayings (hadiths) of the Prophet Muhammad. The mission of the leader is to propagate all that is good and defeat all that is evil (Qurab 3:110). The Islamic leader must work towards a vision of creating a just society, where rule of law is enforced among all believers and non-believers. It does not matter if the Islamic leader is operating at the micro (family), meso (community) or macro (nation) level; the principles outlined in Figure 2 are still applicable. The leader always is encouraged to consult with others, have a sense of how decisions impact the larger environment and engage in continuous development.

The attributes of the Muslim leader are to serve as a model for others to model. The courage to stand up for what is right is enshrined in both the Qur'an and hadiths.

“O you who believe! Be custodians of justice (as) witnesses to Allah, even if (it is) against yourselves or the parents and the relatives. if he be rich or poor, for Allah (is) nearer to both of them. So (do) not follow the desire lest you deviate. And if you distort or refrain, then indeed, Allah is of what you do All-Aware.” (Qur'an 4:135).

“Whosoever of you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then [let him change it] with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart — and that is the weakest of faith.” (Shahih Muslim)

As are the other attributes an Islamic leader is expected to have: tolerance and compassion (See Quran 2:256, 60:8 and 49:13), humility (See Quran 25:63, 7:55 and Shahih Bukari 4634), piety (See Quran 2:44, 3:125 and 5:2). It is through the leader serving as exemplar for others that the Islamic Leadership Model takes on components of transformational leadership theory (Bass 1990). Transformational leaders serve as role models; engendering trust, admiration and respect. Burns (1978) argues that transformational leadership causes change in individuals and social systems and when enacted in its authentic form, transformational leadership enhances the motivation, morale and performance of followers. This transformation of the individual and his or her followers is the desired end state of Muslim leaders.

According to Greenleaf (2002) true leadership emerges from the desire to serve others. It is at the point of service that Greenleaf's articulation of “servant leadership” intersects with Burns (1978) conceptualization of the transformational leader. The transformational leader serves as a role model of service, providing an example for others to follow. The leader serves the followers and both are transformed; becoming both followers and leaders.

The following leaders, from early Islamic history, provide examples of the constructs discussed above.

### **3 Umar I (577 CE – 644 CE) (Umar ibn Al-Khattāb)**

Although Sunni and Shia Muslims differ significantly regarding historical claims to the “caliphate” (i.e. temporal and spiritual authority over all Muslims), following the death of the Prophet Muhammad's immediate successor, Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, Umar ibn Al-Khattāb was recognized as “Caliph” by the Ummah (i.e. Nation or Community of Islam) in 634 CE. Sunni scholarship holds that, as “Protector of the Faith,” the caliph must be a male member of the Qurayshi tribe, be knowledgeable in the law, and a competent civil administrator (Bennett 1988).

Based on this criteria Umar ibn Al-Khattāb (577CE – 644CE) became the second caliph (i.e. “successor”) of the Rashidun period. Subsequently, he conquered two-thirds of the Byzantine Empire, Persia, North Africa and all of the Middle East. Umar I (often referred to in Arabic as Umar “Al-Farooq” -- ‘one who distinguishes between right and wrong’-- was responsible for collating the Quran, created the Muslim calendar, and establishing a great deal of Islamic jurisprudence. History records numerous examples of his truly remarkable and contextually unexpected “servant leadership” (Spears 1996). In 637 (CE), following the peaceful surrender of Jerusalem, the delegation sent by the Christian Bishop Sophronius to meet him at the city gates, did not recognize Umar because he walked into the city in common cotton clothes actually leading a camel ridden by his servant (Gold 2009). According to the Byzantine chronicler, Theophanes, Umar ordered and supervised the cleanup of the location of the Temple of Solomon which had been used as a dung-heap by the Christian rulers to offend the Jews. He also forbade Muslims from expropriating Christian churches and authorized Jewish families to return to live in the city after their expulsion (which had been prohibited by death under the Byzantine authorities) (Montefiore 2011). Several sources recount how Bishop Sophronius presented Umar with the keys to the (Christian) Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which are still safeguarded by a Muslim family to this day (Bahat 1986).

Perhaps Umar is best known for the treaty (or “pact”) that bears his name. Although there are some doubts about the authenticity of the actual treaty (al-Uhda al-‘Umariyya), there is greater authority supporting the fact that Umar’s written assurances (al-‘Uhda al-‘Umariyya) guaranteed the inhabitants of Jerusalem specific rights under Muslim rule. (Brill 2001). These rights specifically included the rights to personal safety, property rights, worship, and display of the cross, as well as freedom from forcible conversion. While life for religious minorities was clearly circumscribed in many ways, communities of Christians and Jews continued to largely govern themselves,



albeit under the higher-level supervision of an “emir” (general or prince) and a taxation official called an “amil” (Wieruszowski 1971). Measured by contemporary standards, Umar’s policies regarding conquered cities were extraordinarily progressive, if not magnanimous. The general expectation of most conquered cities for millennia had always been varying degrees of pillage, rape, enslavement, and massacre.

This “Golden” period of Muslim history, known as the “Rashidun” (i.e. “rightly guided”), established a new paradigm for leadership. Umar was keenly aware that his actions must be compatible with both the letter and the spirit of Islam. First and foremost was the concept of equality of all believers and equality before the law. Within these constraints, whatever actions taken must be recognized as “fair,” even among subject populations. For Muslims, the term “conquests” is somewhat misleading if not inaccurate. Umar believed that his actions were actually of an altruistic nature. In Arabic, the word used is “futih” (“openings”) meaning that nations were “opened” to allow Islam to be shared with all peoples. Under these motivations, acts of extreme violence against those who have laid down their arms and surrendered were not merely counter-productive, such conduct was morally and spiritually wrong, thus forbidden (i.e. “Haraam”) (Muhammad 1961). Additionally, Umar’s personalization of leadership is imbedded in the fact that he forbade the chopping off of hands as punishment for theft (a common practice of the time) because he assumed the personal responsibility for failing to provide adequate employment for his subjects thus negating the need for theft (Mohtsham 2007).

The following speech is attributed to Umar and clearly articulates his model for leadership within an Islamic context:

*Allah has for the time being made me your ruler. But I am one of you. No special privileges belong to ruler. I have some responsibilities to discharge, and in this I seek your cooperation. Government is a sacred trust, and it is my endeavor not to betray the trust in any way. For the fulfillment of the trust I have to be a watchman. I have to be strict. I have to enforce discipline. I have to run the administration not on the basis of personal idiosyncrasies; I have to run it in public interest and for promoting the public good (Makaya 2001).*

Umar’s short speech encapsulates the five Islamic servant-leader attributes (i.e. Piety, Humility, Social Responsibility, Self-Development, and Mutual Consultation). In other words, Umar declares that his position of authority is transient in nature and may only be justified by his obedience and conformity to well-recognized religious, legal, and fiduciary responsibilities. He portrays himself as nothing more than a servant of Allah and of the other members of the community, both of Muslim and non-Muslims alike. Umar’s leadership example becomes the precedent for all of his successors and the standard by they are judged (Hart 2000).

Given the above it is not hard to understand why Sir William Muir, a 19<sup>th</sup> Century Scottish historian (usually a harsh critic of Islam), was unstinting in his appraisal of Umar:

*The choice of his captains and governors was free from favouritism, and [with only a few exceptions singularly fortunate. The various tribes and bodies in the empire, representing interests the most diverse, reposed in his integrity implicit confidence, and his strong arm maintained the discipline of law and empire . . . The more distinguished of the Companions he kept by him at Medina, partly, no doubt, to strengthen his counsels, and partly (as he would say) from unwillingness to lower their dignity by placing them in office subordinate to himself. Whip in hand, he would perambulate the streets and markets of Medina, ready to punish offenders on the spot; and so the proverb,—'"Omar's whip is more terrible than another's sword." But with all this he was tender-hearted, and numberless acts of kindness are recorded of him, such as relieving the wants of the widow and the fatherless (Muir 2013).*

#### **4 Muawiya ibn Abu Sufyan (602 CE – 680 CE)**

Accompanying Umar in Jerusalem, as one of his generals, was Muawiya ibn Abu Sufyan. Muawiya I, the founder of the Umayyad dynasty, was born into a clan that fiercely resisted the Prophet Muhammed (Muawiya's mother actually ate the liver of Mohammed's uncle) (Ishaq 1955). Yet, when Mecca surrendered to Muhammad in 630, Muawiya was appointed as the Prophet's personal secretary and then married Muawiya's sister (Ramla bint Abi Sufyan).

Umar in turn appointed Muawiya as the Governor of the Province of Syria in 639. At the time, the Muslim armies engaged in nearly continuous warfare with the Byzantines. When his armies became depleted by the plague, Muawiya gained the allegiance of Jacobite forces by marrying the daughter of local Jacobite clan leader and allowed her to remain a Christian (Rahman 1999). Muawiya, who had grown up with Jewish-Arabs, employed Christians and Jews in his court. Muawiya modernized his armies, established Islam's first Navy, created perhaps the first "police" force in history, and opened the military postal system ("Barid") to merchants and to the public. Despite the theological controversies (and schisms) of this period, Muawiya is given credit for expanding and stabilizing the Caliphate during a time of constant threats, both internal and from Byzantium (Bewley 2002).

Muawiyah also understood the leadership value of "hilm" ("Al-Hileem") which in Arabic means modest, forbearing, and lenient. When he addressed the people of Damascus from the minbar (pulpit) in the Mosque in Damascus, he was often seen

wearing a patched garment. When he travelled in the marketplaces, he most often rode on a donkey (an expression of peace) without any escort or bodyguards (Bewley 2002). He is quoted as stating “ I apply not the lash where my tongue suffices, nor my sword where my whip is enough. But if there be one hair binding me to my fellow men I let it not break. If they pull I loosen, and if they loosen I pull” (Montefiore 2012). Additionally, Muawiyah is noted for maintaining and strengthening the concept of reciprocity between ruler and subjects. Mu'awiya, speaking in Medina said that while he wished to follow in the footsteps of Abu Bakr and Umar, he was “unable to follow it, and so I have followed a course with you which contains fortune and benefits for you despite some bias, so be pleased with what comes to you from me even if it is little” (Bewley 2002).

Theophanus, the Greek historian described Muawiyah as 'primus inter pares' (first among equals). Under Muawiyah, political appointments were more often made on the basis of merit or loyalty. This included leadership appointments from the military who were not from his own tribe (Qurayshi) or even Ummayyad (Arabic). Especially in Syria and Armenia, former Byzantine officials retained their positions within the relatively unchanged governmental infrastructure.

More than mere “tolerance,” the utilization of Christians and Jews solidified Muslim rule within significantly larger populations of Christian (and Jewish) subjects. The Catholic Saint, John of Damascus, a Syrian scholar monk and mathematician served as “protosymbullus” (chief councilor) to Muawiyah (Walsh 1991). It is not hard to imagine that non-Orthodox Christian minorities, including Arians and Nestorians, would have preferred a tolerant Islamic regime to their harsh treatment under Byzantine rule.

## **5 Saladin (Sultan Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb) (1137/1138 CE – 1193 CE)**

Saladin is noted for being the founder of the Ayyubid Dynasty, a Muslim dynastic period centered upon Egypt, but including Mesopotamia, the Hejaz, Yemen, and much of North Africa. Saladin himself was a Sunni Muslim from Kurdish Armenia yet served with distinction as a general under the Shi'a Fatimid Caliph, al-Adid (al-ʿĀḍid li-Dīn Allāh) in Cairo (then “al-Qāhirah”). In 1169, Saladin’s military prowess led to his promotion to a vice-regency (“vizier”) to the Caliph. The Hollywood Saladin is summarized as the Muslim leader who battles the combined English, French, and German forces, while befriending as his “noble enemy,” Richard the Lionheart (Richard I) of England. While there is some truth in this synopsis, Richard and Saladin never actually met, although did exchange gifts and messages. Montefiore (2012) notes “Saladin was never quite the liberal gentleman, superior in manners to the brutish Franks, portrayed by Western writers in the nineteenth century. But by the standards of medieval empire-builders, he deserves his attractive reputation.”

Upon re-capturing Jerusalem in 1187, and emulating Umar, Saladin liberally allowed ransoming, and even amnesties (as opposed to enslavement and slaughter) to most of the residents. Next he invited exiled Jewish communities from as far as Yemen and Morocco to return to live in the holy city. When his generals urged him to destroy the Christian Church of the Holy Sepulchre, he instead turned it over to the Greek Orthodox Church instead. Saladin pointing out there was no advancement in this type of destruction "when the object of their veneration is the place of the Cross and not the outward building? Let us imitate the first Moslem conquerors who respected these churches " (Ezzati 2002). Soon after, Saladin also granted Queen Tamar of Georgia (i.e. "Tamar the Great") request to restore Georgian Orthodox property in the city and free passage, "with unfurled banners" for Georgian pilgrims (Ciggaar and Teule 2000).

In a unique turn of events, despite Saladin's restoration of the Dome of the Rock and defeat of Richard the Lionheart, his legacy was largely discounted, if not forgotten among Muslims for the millennium that followed. Andrew Larson notes that Saladin never made a Haj, nor was he known for his piety or fasting. Larson also stated that Saladin was eclipsed by "Mamluk Sultan Baibars, who successfully defeated the Mongol threat in 1260 at the battle of Ain Jalut. As a consequence of this, he became a major Muslim folk-hero and remained such down into the 19th century, overshadowing Saladin as a great Muslim warrior" (Smith 2008).

## **7 Conclusion**

The leadership model for early Islamic leaders was based upon a truly revolutionary egalitarian model in which no member was placed above the other with regard to their relationship to the Creator. Leaders within that system were expected to lead other members towards an idealized "societistic" government that stressed the social life of humanity and the ethics and mechanics of human society (Ezzati 2002). The leaders from this early period in Islam, specifically those referenced by the authors, achieved and maintained their authority almost exclusively by serving as living moral examples (Shahid) to others.

By serving as examples to others, Muslim and non-Muslim, the leaders highlighted here set the foundation for an empire that would cover over 10% of the total land mass of the planet and encompass almost 30% of the world's population (Blankinship 1994). An empire built not by the sword, but leadership attributes and foundational beliefs that populations sought to embrace and emulate. The Prophet Muhammad in an articulation of what now would be called "servant leadership" is reported to have said: "Verily, each of you is a shepherd, and each of you is responsible for the well being of his flock" (Sahih Bukhari 6719).

There are implications in this article for present leaders in the Muslim world. While radical organizations like the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS, ISIL, Daesh, Daish) claim to want to establish an Islamic Caliphate it is evidenced by past history that Islam, and Islamic leaders, did not seek such a State based on violence or the desire to subdue and subjugate populations. The early Islamic leaders profiled here took seriously the Qur'anic proclamations: "Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah..." (3:110) and "Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: They are the ones to attain felicity." (3:104).

The attributes and foundational principles demonstrated by the Rashidun and Saladin represent a model of leadership for transforming, as well as serving the world, as they did just that and are worthy of further study to provide insights into what are the qualities embodied in transformational and servant leadership. Additionally, the foregoing Islamic leadership model may serve as a guide to Muslim leaders and managers seeking religious context, it should be equally beneficial to non-Muslims seeking to work effectively across multi-cultural boundaries.

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