

'UMAR IBN KHATTAB, AN EPITOME OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP: A SUSTAINABLE LESSON FOR CONTEMPORARY LEADERS

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Received: 05.05.2020

Revised: 02.06.2020

Accepted: 28.06.2020

Abstract

Servant Leadership is believed to have been a new theory coined and inserted into the field of leadership and management by an American Scholar, Robert Greenleaf in early 1970s. Since then, it has been one of the important types of leadership that attract the interest of the Scholars or Researchers. Therefore, the paper intends to portray an icon and epitome of such leadership style from Islamic perspective, 'Umar ibn Khattab (r.a), the second Caliph in Islam. It presents the historical background of the icon. It also discusses the definition and origin of the theory. The paper also enumerates evidences of emulation of the icon from authentic literature. Likewise, it portrays the servant leadership characteristics as it can be seen in 'Umar's personality (r.a). In an attempt to dig into the root of the theory, the paper looks into the Chinese, Christianity and Western perspectives of the style. The study contains no numerical or statistical value in achieving its aims and objectives, that is to say, purely qualitative research methodology is employed. The study re-emphasizes that the theory is one of the theories or styles which have been enshrined in Islam since 14 century ago. It also depicts that 'Umar ibn Khattab (r.a) was an important figure to be emulated in actualizing the theory. It is anticipated that sustainability of a good governance and management in any given community or organization will be achieved by putting the characteristics into practice. Furthermore, it is expected that many contemporary leadership dilemmas will be overcome, if the contemporary leaders follow the Caliph's step.

Keywords-- Caliph, Contemporary leader, Islam, Servant Leadership, Umar Ibn Khatab.

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DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.31838/jcr.07.08.214>

INTRODUCTION

In the field of leadership and management, servant leadership is one of the important types. The idea came to lime light in early 70s when an American Scholar, Robert Greenleaf wrote his article "the servant as leader". After the article's publication, the servant leader guru devoted the rest of his life to the development of the concept. He left many unpublished essays behind which were published into edited books under Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership. Larry Spears headed this center for 17years and served as editor for many of these books (Greenleaf, 1996, 1998; Spears and Lawrence, 2002; Abdul Mutalib & Wan Razali 2012; Ogunbado, 2012; 2014). Since then the concept has been caught the interest of the researches.

Having said that, Ayub (1996) Beekun & Badawi, (1999) and Ogunbado, (2012) and (2019) among others have postulated that the idea has been featured in Islamic leadership since its establishment 14 century ago. It is against this backdrop that this paper tries to portray an important icon of the Islamic leadership in general and servant leadership in particular of the first generation. 'Umar ibn Khattab, the second caliph in Islam.

After the introduction, the paper discusses the problem statement followed by research questions and objectives. It also deliberates the employed methodology followed by brief biography of the Icon. The paper depicts the origin and definition of servant leader.

It also presents the evidences or legality to substantiate emulation of the icon so as to be followed or emulated as a sustainable lesson for contemporary leaders and managers. This is followed by looking into the characteristics of the servant leadership and how it can be found in 'Umar otherwise known as *al-faruq's* personality or character.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Nowadays, there are many flaws in leadership in Muslim nations, from political to organizational leadership. States have been dilapidated due to the lack of good leadership, firms, business; ventures are not in isolated in this manner. It has been indicated that chaos and corruption that are prevailing in human setting in Muslim world in particular and the entire world in general except in few cases, are indication of weak and inept leadership (Ogunbado, 2012; 2019; Khan, 2016). A renowned Egyptian Scholar, Imam Kishk among others realized the dilemma or the problem of leadership in Muslim world and called upon the leaders to serve their nation and not their selfishness. To emulate Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) steps and that of his rightly guided caliphs (a.s) (Ali-Agan, 2016).

Furthermore, having realized the leadership quandary in different human settings, Ogunbado (2014) suggests servant leadership as a mechanism to eradicate the malady in our society. Therefore, this paper aims to bring an epitome of servant leadership into a limelight so as to serve as a sustainable manual or guidance to the contemporary leaders.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This paper set to answer the following questions:

- ❖ Who is 'Umar ibn Khattab (r.a)?
- ❖ What is servant leadership and its origin?
- ❖ Are there any divine evidences in emulating 'Umar ibn Khatab (r.a) personality?
- ❖ What are the characteristics of servant leadership and how they can be illustrated from 'Umar ibn Khatab (r.a) personality?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The paper aims to achieve the following objectives:

- ❖ To review the biography of 'Umar ibn Khatab (r.a).
- ❖ To investigate the definition and origin of servant leadership.

- ❖ To explore if there are any divine evidences in emulating 'Umar ibn Khatab (r.a) personality
- ❖ To examine the characteristics of servant leadership and how they can be illustrated from 'Umar ibn Khatab (r.a) personality?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research employed qualitative methodology, where by it uses content analysis procedure which is described as interpretative social sciences (ISS) (Neuman, 1997). This technique contains the hermeneutical study of text extracted from Al-Qur'an or Hadith, which are regarded as the main sources of information in Islam. This is to be supported by other the Islamic literatures as well as western literature on leadership. Relevant magazines, articles and websites were also consulted to extract data.

WHO IS 'UMAR BIN KHATAB (R.A)?

'Umar was a son of Khatab, the son of Nufail, the son of Abdul Uzza, the son of Riza, the son of Ribah, the son of Qurat, the son of Adi, the son of Kaaba. It was from this Kaaba that his pedigree linked with that of the Prophet Muhammed (s.a.w), as a common ancestor of Quraysh tribe. Consensus opinion said that he was born in Makkah around 580 A.D. and 10 years younger than Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w).

His ancestor 'Adi rose to prominence as a diplomat. He used to be an ambassador of Quraysh when there was an issue with non-Quraysh and acted as arbitrator in case of internal dispute among the Quraysh. (Ahmed, 2006) His descendants took their name after him as Bani 'Adi. His mother was Hantamah daughter of Hashim and paternal cousin of Abu Jahl (As-Sallabi, 2007).

Account of his early days was not preserved. However, he spent half of his life in the *jahiliyah*, (period of ignorance). He grew up as a typical Arab like his peers of Quraysh but possessed an advantage over them by virtue of his knowledge, ability to read and write which was scarce during the day. It was recorded that 'Umar (r.a) bore responsibility at an early age and had a very harsh upbringing.

His father's harsh treatment had a negative effect on him which always remembered for the rest of his life (As-Sallabi, 2007). He used to graze the flocks of goat for his father and his maternal aunts who doled out pittance to him in the shape of dates. He says:

Gracious heaven! There was a time when I used to roam about this desert (Grazing ground of Adnan) as a camel-herd wearing a felt jacket and whenever I sat down tired my father beat me. Now the time has changed. There is now none save God as my Superior (Ahmed, 2006, p3).

Tending livestock, undoubtedly, enabled him to acquire good characteristics such as forbearance, patience and toughness. He was blessed with a strong physique. He could travel barefooted for miles. He used both his hands equally well.

He was tall, stout, and very bald. He was a famous wrestler and had a skill of horsemanship. He was also a good orator, interested in history and people's affairs. He was wise, eloquent, well spoken, strong, noble and persuasive. (Khan, 1998; Ahmed, 2006; As-Sallabi, 2007).

He was very harsh on Islam and Muslims. However, his reverted or conversion to Islam was a blessing in many ways. It was a symbol of Prophet Muhammad's (s.a.w) prayer acceptance. The Prophet had been supplicated to Almighty Allah to strengthen Islam with either of one the Umars, Ibn Khatab or Ibn Hisham. Many people who were unable to proclaim their faith are then free to publicize it. *Adhan* (Call to prayer) and prayer which used

to be observed secretly became publicly observed. He was then nicknamed *al-faruq* i.e the one who makes distinction between the right and the wrong. It was recorded that 'Ali bin Talib (r.a) commented on 'Umar's (r.a) migration to Madinah which was announced and accompanied by some twenty Muslims thus:

I never knew any one migrate unless secretly except 'Umar, for he, when he resolved on migration, grit on his sword and slung over his bow and grasp in his hand its arrows, and went to the Kaabah where in its quadrangle were the chiefs of the Quraysh, and he went around about it seven times, then prayed two rakah at the station of Ibrahim and went to each one by one, in their circle and said "May the face be foul of such as desire that his mother be bereaved of him and his child be left an orphan and his wife a widow, and if there be such a one, let him meet me behind the valley" but no one followed him. (Ahmed, 2006, p.11).

Abdulah ibn Mas'ood (r.a) said "'Umar's (r.a) becoming Muslim was a victory, his migration was help and his caliphate was a mercy" (quoted in As-Sallabi, 2007, p.59). He participated in almost all the big battles, such as Badr, Uhud, Khaibar etc. it was mentioned that he offered half of his wealth during the Tabuk expedition and he was the next to Abu Bakr in sacrifice their belongings for Allah's sake. On 22nd of Jumadi-uth-thaniy, 13 A.H. (23rd August, 634 A.C) 'Umar (r.a) took the leadership of Ummah, that is to say, he became the second caliph after Abu Bakr. Here, this paper attempts to delve into the way he exercised his leadership. The great leader died on 3rd November 644 CE.

DEFINITION AND ORIGIN OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP.

The believed initiator of Servant-leadership, Greenleaf (1991) defines the concept thus:

The servant-leader is servant first- as Leo was portrayed. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. For such it will be a later choice to serve-after leadership is established. (Greenleaf, 1991, p.13).

Furthermore, He also depicts the Servant as the "one who meets the test of higher law whose requirements of both persons and institutions are proportional to their opportunity to serve". (Greenleaf, 1991, p.248). Williams (2002) defines the concept thus: "The servant leader is one who is guided by an overarching, prophetic, transforming vision-carefully conceived and simply articulated."(p.67). Efficiency or deficiency of a servant leadership can simply be tested through observing the served or led group. Is there any difference in them, do they grow as individuals? Do they become wiser, freer independent, healthier and so on while under the leadership?

Servant leader definition is also imbibed in the following definition of Islamic leadership:

Islamic leadership and leadership in Islam is a divine trust (amanah) from Allah, based on the Tauhidic paradigm of oneness of Allah that is focusing to serve HIM as HIS servant, while at the same time be the servant to follower, perform the role of *Khalefah* (vicegerent) of Allah fully adheres to the Sunnah central to Islamic personality, characteristics and *aklaq* (Islamic moral and ethical) that was exemplified by the prophet (s.a.w), leading followers to the organization goals and to the straight path of the success in the Hereafter. (Senam, Abdul Rashid, Sarkawi and Mohd Zaini, 2015, p.94).

As it was mentioned earlier, Servant leadership is believed to be the innovation of Robert Greenleaf with his publication of *The*

Servant as Leader in 1970. The initial idea came from the Author's deep involvement with Colleges and Universities chaos in the late 60s and early 70s and matured by his reading a novel titled *Journey to the East* by Herman Hesse. The novel relates an account of a mythical journey by a group of people on spiritual quest (Greenleaf, 1998; Spears, 2002; Ogunbado, 2012; 2014; 2019). Then He concludes "To me, this story clearly says that the great leader is seen as servant first, and that simple fact is the key to his greatness" (Greenleaf, 1991, p.7).

Prior to the Greenleaf's development, the literature shows that the idea could be found in form of humbleness in ancient China, Tao Te Ching or Dao De Jing which was attributed or linked with Laszi or Lao-Tzu (Old Master) in about 570 B.C. to 490 B.C. The script states:

The highest type of ruler is one of whose existence the people are barely aware. Next comes one whom they love and praise. Next comes one whom they fear. Next comes one whom they despise and defy. When you are lacking in faith, others will be unfaithful to you. The Sage is self-effacing and scanty of words. When his task is accomplished and things have been completed, all the people say, 'We ourselves have achieved it!' (Lao Tzu, 2006, p.35; also quoted in Ogunbado, 2012, p.226; 2019, p.230).

Servant leadership can also be traced to the teaching of Jesus Christ in the Christianity. He persuaded and advised his disciples that whoever conceived of becoming a leader, he or she must firstly ready to serve his or her church, people, firm, group or what so ever. He accentuated the fact that his existence was to serve the humanity. The Holy Bible claims:

Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Holy Bible, Matthew 20:25-28, Mark 10:42-45).

Literature also indicates that the notion has been enshrined in Islamic civilization since about 1400 years ago (Beekun & Badawi, 1999; Al-Ajlouni, 2001; Ogunbado, 2012; 2014; 2019). "Sayyid al-qāwmi khādimuhum" "the leader of a group is their servant" which otherwise could be "Khādimu al-qāwmi sayyiduhum", "the servant of a group is their leader" is an Islamic well known tradition.

The statement is recorded in the book *Tarjaman Ibrahim bin Adham*. Correspondingly, the statement is also documented by Abdl al-Rahman Al-Sulamiy in his book *Ādāb l-suhaba* (Al-Ajlouni, 2001). In addition, Ibn Duraīd (1980) also cited the statement in his book *Al-mujtanna*. He declares that the statement inspires noble trait, humbleness and cooperation among the group in their journey and the servant becomes the leader.

EVIDENCE OF EMULATION OF SAHABAH (R.A) ESPECIALLY 'UMAR IBN KHATTAB (R.A)

Emulation of *Sahabah* (Prophet's companions) in general is encouraged because they are the best people or generation they all received instructions directly from the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) and his presence among them influenced or had impact on their behaviours. To this, Hadith records:

'A'isha reported that a person asked Allah's Apostle (May peace be upon him) as to who amongst the people were the best. He said: Of the generation to which I belong, then of the second generation (generation adjacent to my generation), then of the

third generation (generation adjacent to the second generation). (*Sahih Muslim*, Book 31, Hadith 6159)

Following the step of this best generation is imperative. It was reported that Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) said.

I order you to have Taqwa of Allah, and to listen and obey, even in the case of a Ethiopian slave. Indeed, whoever among you lives, he will see much difference. Beware of the newly invented matters, for indeed they are astray. Whoever among you sees that, then he must stick to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly guided Khulafa', cling to it with the molars. (*Sunan Tirmidhi*, Vol. 5, Book of Knowledge, Hadith 2676).

'Umar bin khatab (r.a) was among this best generation to which the Prophet himself belongs to, likewise he was the second rightly guided caliphs which the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) admonished to cling to their *Sunnah*. Hadith records that:

Narrated Muhammad bin Al-Hanafiya: I asked my father ('Ali bin Abi Talib), "Who are the best people after Allah's Apostle?" He said, "Abu Bakr." I asked, "Who then?" He said, "Then 'Umar. " I was afraid he would say "Uthman, so I said, "Then you?" He said, "I am only an ordinary person. (*Sahih Bukhari*, Book 5, Volume 57, Hadith 20)

'Umar (r.a) had special characteristics that were known to the Prophet before his conversion to Islam. Because of these, the Prophet used to supplicate to Allah "Oh Allah, strengthen Islam with the more beloved of these two men to you: Abu Jahil Ibn Hisam or 'Umar Ibn Khatab" (*Sunan Tirmidhi*, Hadith 3683)) When the prayer was accepted it was confirmed by the Angel Jubril saying to the Prophet: "O Muhammad (s.a.w) the residents of the heavens are rejoicing in 'Umar's embracing Islam". (*Sunan Ibn Majah*, Hadith 103). 'Umar (r.a) is to be emulated because he was an encyclopedia of knowledge, who always guided with his knowledge and firm in his religion. It was reported that the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) says:

While I was sleeping, I saw myself drinking (i.e. milk), and I was so contented that I saw the milk flowing through my nails. Then I gave (the milk) to 'Umar ibn Khattab" They (i.e. the companions of the Prophet) asked, "How do you interpret it?" He said, "It means Knowledge." (*Sahih Bukhari*, Book 5, Volume 57, Hadith 30).

And

While I was sleeping, the people were presented to me (in a dream). They were wearing shirts, some of which were merely covering their (chests). And some were a bit longer. 'Umar was presented before me and his shirt was so long that he was dragging it." They asked, "How have you interpreted it, O Allah's Apostle?" He said, "Religion" (*Sahih Bukhari*, Book 5, Volume 57, Hadith 40).

'Umar bin Khatab (r.a) is worthy to be emulated in his action and deeds because the evil (syatan) feared him and never led him to the wrong path. It was narrated by Sad bin Abi Waqqas that: Umar bin Al-Khattab asked the permission of Allah's Apostle to see him while some Quraishi women were sitting with him, talking to him and asking him for more expenses, raising their voices above the voice of Allah's Apostle.

When 'Umar asked for the permission to enter, the women quickly put on their veils. Allah' Apostle allowed him to enter and 'Umar came in while Allah's Apostle was smiling, 'Umar said "O Allah's Apostle! May Allah always keep you smiling?" The Prophet said, "These women who have been here, roused my wonder, for as soon as they heard your voice, they quickly put on their veils.

"Umar said, "O Allah's Apostle! You have more right to be feared by them than I." Then 'Umar addressed the women saying, "O enemies of yourselves! You fear me more than you do Allah's Apostle?" They said, "Yes, for you are harsher and sterner than Allah's Apostle." Then Allah's Apostle said, "O Ibn Al-Khattab! By Him in Whose Hands My life is! Never does Satan find you going on a way, but he takes another way other than yours." (*Sahih Bukhari*, Book 5, Volume 57, Hadith 32)

He is worthy to be imitated or copied because he used to be inspired by Almighty Allah, to this effect, the Prophet said: "Among the nations before you there used to be people who were inspired (though they were not prophets). And if there is any of such a person amongst my followers, it is 'Umar." (*Sahih Bukhari*, Book 5, Volume 57, Hadith 38). It was mentioned that scholars differed in their opinion concerning the mean of *muhaddith* in the Arabic text of the hadith which is translated as "inspired". Some of them said, it means one who is inspired or one who spontaneously speaks the truth. Some of them opined that, it means one who angels speak to without being a Prophet. While others advocated that it means "intuition".

Beside the authentic traditions or evidences enumerated, Hart (1993) includes 'Umar ibn Khattab (r.a) among the 100 most influential individual in the world. This also is evidence that emulation of 'Umar (r.a) is not by accident.

As an exemplary leader, he encouraged "to be a leader" to emulate him and gave a long list of advice of which he said:

I have chosen advice for you that I would offer to myself or my son. If you do as I have advised you and follow my instruction you will have gained a great deal. If you do not accept it pay attention to it and do not handle your affairs in the way that pleased Allah that will be shortcoming on your part and you will have failed to be sincere. (As-Salsabi, 2007, vol.2 p.390).

CHARACTERISTICS OF A SERVANT LEADER

Spear (2002) emphasizes that after many years of his carefully considering of Greenleaf's initial writing, he came up with ten (10) characteristics which are so essential and central to the development of the servant leader. He accentuates that the characteristics by no means exhaustive. Having gone through these characteristics as well, the researchers also find out that they are all features of 'Umar bin Khatab (r.a), they are hereby discussed:

1. Listening: is the first listed characteristics of a servant leader, the act of hearing attentively, which implies paying close attention to someone or something in order to hear them. It is an ability to listen to what is said, and what is not said (non-verbal). It was mentioned that leaders have traditionally been valued for their communication and decision-making skill (Spear, 2002). Nonetheless, listening is unequivocally important. The act of listening "encompasses getting in touch with one's own inner voice", understanding of body language, and what mind and spirit are communicating. Servant leader, according to Ogunbado (2014) should be dedicated to the act of listening effectively. He or she in any filed should be an excellent listener in order to easily comprehend what is being said and to know what are the necessary measures to be taken. One of the key successes of 'Umar ibn Khattab's (r.a) leadership was his ability to listen and listening to criticisms. He used to listen or pay attention to the grudges of his followers whether against himself or against any of his appointed governors. He always advised his governors or any other appointed or elected leader to emulate him in this vital act. He says:

Being accessible to the people by listen to their complaints, judging among them and settling scores, otherwise relation will be adversely affected and there will be instability in society. Do not close your door to the people or allow the strong to oppress the weak. (As-Sallabi, 2007, vol 2, p.394)

2. Empathy: - it is defined as "the ability to share someone else's feelings or experiences by imagining what it would be like to be in their situation" (Cambridge advanced learner's dictionary, 2008). It is an important characteristics of a servant leader to assume him or herself in others position that is to say to put him or herself in other person's shoes. He or she should comprehend and empathize with others. Every single person in a group or community has uniqueness and special spirit, thus, these have to be acknowledged (Spear, 2002). Empathy or understanding and entering into another's feelings can be seen from 'Umar's (r.a) character especially during the year of Ashes (Ar-Ramadah) when the famine, drought and hunger struck Madinah. People could not find food to eat, and he vowed not to eat ghee and yogurt as usual. He laments "How can I be concerned for the people, if I do not suffer what they suffer" (As-Sallabi, 2007, vol 1, p.193). Because he put himself in the position of Iraqi widows, he vowed not leave them in need of anybody after him. That is to say, he would satisfy or provide them with all their needs. 'Umar's empathy or feeling for others can also be seen one of the stories. It is recorded that one day on his usual patrol the city, he saw a distance fire in the desert then he told his slave "Aslam". "There seems to be a camp. Perhaps, it is a caravan that could not enter the town due to light fall. Let's go and look after them and arrange for their protection during night". (Kaandhlawi, 2005, p.41)

3. Healing: Ability or potential to heal one's self and one's relationship with others is one of the most commendable strengths of servant-leadership. Offering help or healing difficult situations is an influential force for transformation and integration. It is a primary characteristic of a servant leadership to heal the followers with broken spirits and those who are suffering from emotional hurt in one way or the other. He or she should "help make whole" those with he or she gets in touch with, i.e his or her followers or subordinates. From the story of the year of ashes mentioned earlier, Bedouins came from desert to Madinah seeking refuge. As such, there were refugee camps. 'Umar (r.a) set up an institution to help the refugee and divided works among his workers. He fed the refugees from *Dar-Daqeeq*, which was established to distribute food for those who came to Madinah. It was also recorded that 'Umar (r.a) solicited remedy (healing) for Mu'ayyeb, *bayt al-mal* (public treasury) keeper form his illness. Besides practicing heling the subordinates by himself, he advised his appointed governors to see that they build the strong bond between them and their attendants. He strongly admonished them to heal their followers' spiritual, moral, emotional and physical ailments. (As-Sallabi, 2007).

4. Awareness :- is synonymous to 'cognizance', it is a noun derived from 'aware' which means "knowing that something exists, or having knowledge or experience of a particular thing" or "having special interest in or experience of something and so being well informed of what is happening in that subject at the present time."(Cambridge advanced learner's dictionary, 2008). Be it a general or self-awareness are characteristics of servant leader. Nonetheless, the latter strengthens servant leader more. Awareness is one of 'Umar's (r.a) secret to the successfulness of his tenure. History records him to be one of the foremost Prophet's companions in regards to knowledge and awareness (Ahmed, 2006). Many instances can be cited to prove this. As-Sallabi, (2007, vol2 p.46) says, 'Umar Ibn Kattab (r.a) appointed some people and did not appoint others who were of greater virtue than them, because the former knew how to do things".

5. Persuasion: this is also one of the most important characteristics of servant leadership. "It is the act of persuading, communication intended to induce belief or action" (www.wordwebonline.com). Ogunbado, (2014) states that an effective Servant leader depends mostly on persuasions rather than exhibits or employs one's positional authority in decision making within the society, firm, organization or establishment. That is to say he or she employs persuasion instead of coercion in making things done. 'Umar (r.a) used to persuade whoever he sees to be the best in doing things. He persuaded many of his agents (governors and army leader) to take charge and wrote letters to remind them. It was recorded in one of his letter saying: "I advise you to treat your people justly, and to devote yourself to looking after them and protect them against their enemy. Do not show any favour to the rich over the poor. That will be better for your spiritual well-being and will help to reduce your burden of sin, and it will be better for your Hereafter...I instruct you to be strict with regard to the commands of Allah." [As-Sallabi, 2007, vol.2 p.389).

6. Conceptualization: - This means inventing or contriving an idea or explanation and formulating it mentally (www.wordwebonline.com). Spear, (2002) says that Servant leader must seek to nurture his or her ability to "dream great dreams". He also suggests that the leader must possess the ability to gaze things (organizational problems) from conceptualizing perception. It is a vital characteristic of an effective servant leader to think "beyond day-to-day- realities". It was said that this particular characteristic demands practice and discipline. 'Umar (r.a) had this characteristic to his credit. He enlarged the public treasury and established it in all provinces with appointment of their keeper(s). He conceptualized that justice is a must in a given society. Therefore, he established court of justice and appointed judges for the first time in history. He also established army department and assigned regular salaries for the soldiers. He also started revenue department. He established schools in the provinces and allocated salaries to their teachers. There are many things which he conceptualized and tried to actualize as a leader.

7. Foresight: - is one of the essential characteristics of Servant leadership. Spear, (2002) states that it is closely related to conceptualization. It is somehow tough to define it but one can easily identify it when it is manifested. However, Cambridge advanced learner's dictionary, (2008) defines it as "the ability to judge correctly what is going to happen in the future and plan one's actions based on this knowledge." It is a characteristic that allows a servant leader to grasp the lessons from the past, the reality of the present, and the possible outcome of a decision for the future. It is also assumed to be deeply rooted within the intuitive mind. It is said that foresight is the lead that the leader has. When a leader losses it things will start to fall apart and the centre will no longer be held. The major problem of the leadership is inability to foresee what could have been foreseen. (Greenleaf, 1991). As-Sallabi (2007) unequivocally declares foresight as one of the characteristics of 'Umar's (r.a) leadership. Al-Qur'an also testifies to the 'Umar (r.a) foresight where in many instances confirm what He had earlier predicted, for instance, taking the station of Prophet Ibrahim (a.s) as a place of prayer, the issues of veil for the prophet's wives, prohibition of alcoholic drinking, issue of funeral prayer for the hypocrites and many others.

8. Stewardship: - it is defined as "someone who manages property or other affairs for someone else" (www.wordwebonline.com). It is one of the characteristics of the servant leader, which is more glaring in practice and character of 'Umar (r.a). He always claimed that he was nobody than just a steward managing the affairs of the Ummah. It was narrated that a delegate came from Iraq one day and al-Ahnaf ibn Qays was one

of them. They find 'Umar (r.a) daubing the zakah camel with pitch. Then 'Umar (r.a) called al-Ahanf to join him. Then a man among the delegate proposed to call one of the slaves who are in charge of Zakah to take care of it. To this 'Umar (r.a) replied:

What slave can be more of a slave than me and al-Ahnaf? The one who has been appointed in charge of Muslim affairs owes them the same duties of sincerity and fulfillment of the trust as a slave owes to his master (Quoted in As-Sallabi, 2007, vol 1, p.242).

It is equally worthy to mention that in 'Umar's (r.a) servant leadership philosophy, a leader should be somebody when he is not a leader, one will think as if he is a leader and when he is a leader one will think as if he is not. 'Umar (r.a) always used this as one of criteria to select his agent. (As-Sallabi, 2007).

9. Commitment to the Growth of People: - Human beings are endowed with dignity, nobility and honour. They have intrinsic value which is above being workers of a company, a firm or an institution. Therefore, they need to grow as people. It is one of the paramount characteristics of the servant leader to see that the people who he or she led grow. The leader does everything in his or her disposal to care for personal, professional and spiritual growth of the subordinates in the firm or followers in a given society (Spear, 2002). According to Ogunbado, (2014), in Islamic leadership, "commitment to the growth of the people" is not only restricted to mundane or profane, but also includes spiritual (religious) growth. 'Umar (r.a) committed himself to the growth of his subordinates; he established schools in the provinces and paid the workers stipend. He decreed that an army should not spend beyond a certain period of time waging war without going back to his family. He told the Syrian people after the conquest that he did not send the governors to beat them but to teach them the religion and Sunnah of the Prophet. He also used to tell the governors that "We have not appointed you to shave the hair of the Muslims and to beat them; rather, we have appointed you to established regular prayer and teach them al-Quran" (Quoted in As-Sallabi, 2007, vol 2, p.66). As such, one can see how 'Umar ibn Khattab was committed or dedicated himself to the growth of his followers so as to prosper in this world and in the hereafter. Remarkably, the ultimate goal of human being is to prosper in both worlds.(Alfalah fi duniyah wal akhirah).

10. Building Community: - It has been identified that much has been lost due to the drastic shifting to large institution from local communities. Such awareness is a characteristic of a servant leader. He or she should find a way to build community with the workers, staffs or subordinate within a given environment or institution. (Spenser 2002; Ogunbado, 2014). Building community was one of 'Umar's (r.a) primary targets as soon as he became the caliph. His community building includes physical and spiritual building. He solicited for cooperation and obedience, fulfilling covenants and sincerity in one's work within the then micro community. He also built the community by expansion, which includes Bahrain, Iraq, Persia, Syria, Egypt and so on. It was recorded that:

He ('Umar, r.a) was concern with the protection and development of the institutions of the state serving the financial, judicial, and military fields as well as matters pertaining to the appointment of governors. He strove to make the people adhere to the command of Allah and the commands of His Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) . He strove to make people avoid that which has been forbidden by Allah and his prophet using his position as caliph of the Muslim and through the governors of the provinces. (As-Sallabi, 2007, vol 1, p.293).

CONCLUSION

It has been established that most of the problems faced by many firms, organizations, and countries as well as Muslim nations at large emanate from lack of good leadership or suitable and sustainable governance. Most leaders think that 'to lead' is their birthright and find any possible and impossible means to reach the leadership stool. Attaining the post they misuse the position, satisfying their selfishness and ego. At a point, things would start falling apart, the built institutions, organizations or firms which have such a leader would start to dilapidate.

In other to overcome such occurrences, servant leadership is proposed. It was mentioned that the theory was introduced by Robert Greenleaf almost five (5) decades ago. However, the research outcome re-emphasizes that the theory has been enshrined in the Islamic civilization since fourteen (14) century ago. Therefore, this paper portrays an important icon of such theory from Islamic point of view, to serve as a sustainable point of reverence to the contemporary leaders as well as managers.

'Umar Ibn Khattab (r.a) the second caliph of Islam (based on Suuni doctrine) was an epitome of servant leadership which is to be emulated. The paper even digs out the legality of following his footsteps. There are many indications from authentic hadith confirm his emulation. Spear (2002) enumerates ten (10) characteristics as essential to the theory after carefully studied the theory from the Greenleaf initial write-ups. The research finds out that all these characteristics could be found in Ibn Khattab's personalities and deeds. As a result, it firmly proposes the icon as a manual and guide for the contemporary leaders, be it a political, organization, firm or institution leader.

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