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Justice as a Leadership Quality: An analysis in the Light of Imam Ghazzālī's thought

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Abstract

Moral and ethical teachings always play an important role in organization of institutions and their leaderships. Based on the current times, ethical virtues in context of leadership are very much popular in scholars for discussion. Considering the Justice, leadership and its impact on major institutions, Imam Ghazzālī's Islamic ethical thought has led to an important contribution in Islamic moral systems. In this respect, the present research aims at analyzing the moral value of justice and its importance in building an effective leadership in societies. The present research also focuses on how the distinct feature of Justice, particularly present in Islamic teaching can significantly affect leadership and their principles in current times. Through an analysis of Imam Ghazzālī's thought on ethical values specifically justice, the researcher examines the ways in which the indulgence of unethical activities and practices can be damaging and leads towards the fall and destruction of any society. The study seeks to argue how Imam Ghazzālī detaches secular thought and uphold religious thought while constructing his leadership related approach. The present research also focuses on benefits of combining Justice and leadership in context of worldly and hereafter reward. The paper will conclude by analyzing the important insights to counter biased, corrupt, and unethical activities while limiting themselves into moral values, cultural construction, and religious limitations. The result of the study will be offering valuable critical tools in studying the leadership and moral values underneath the constructive 'Divine Law'.

Keywords: Leadership, Justice, Imam Ghazzālī, Islamic Law

Introduction:

In Islam, the ideological system of political setup has multiple dimensions. Its mission is to examine different ways to lead and contribute to society in such a great just, civilized, and flawlessly progressed nation by influencing people and interconnected entities. The mediaeval era saw the emergence of several significant empires, each of which began to develop their own set of political ideologies as the Muslims' central power crumbled. By the 12th century, a diverse range of "brotherhoods" had begun to define the urban and rural domains of the Islamic trends relating to international commercial. This environment resulted in the development of mediaeval Islamic political ideology, in which enlightenment thinkers contributed to Islamic political affiliations in a huge innovative sense. Thus, it became the foundation of subsequent generations of Muslim rules. 3

The Qur'ānic foundation for justice is that societies do not require a specific theory of justice, but that conformity with norms of behavior given down in the Qur'ān and interpreted by the Prophet ensures the creation of a system of justice as a natural consequence of principled society's practice. If Muslims follow heavenly precepts, fairness and a just social and political structure are vital outcomes of the Islamic system. As a result, in Islam, justice is inherent, but in most Enlightenment ideals, it is separate and is enforced externally, or from outside. Simply said, a society will be just if the rulers and the people follow the rules.⁴

According to a study, social responsibilities and moral justice are important characteristics of a Muslim leader.⁵ Political concepts and institutions are reinterpreted by al-Ghazzālī through a methodology rooted in the juristic account of the Sharī'ah. The Qur'ān, Prophetic reports and magasid al-Sharī'ah (objectives of the Sharī'ah) were authoritatively invoked in the reformist tendency to revise the juristic themes on politics. ⁶ The notion of caliphate in Islamic societies is central to Al- Ghazzālī's understanding of Islam, being the firm supporter of the caliphate system, he claims that if the caliphate did not exist, no judge's decision, relationship, or testamentary would be legitimate. In other words, Qadis and political authorities are nominated by the Caliph. Conceptually, Islamic administration is, completely stable. As a result of the lack of a caliphate, every natural human interaction would be considered a sin, likely to result in chaos and war.⁷ Imam Abü Hamid al- Ghazzālī is perhaps the most renowned Islamic theologian of mediaeval Islam, but his subjective theology has received little attention. This research paper seeks to investigate the relationship between politics and the law of justice in Ghazzālī's writings, with the goal of determining the extent to which this relationship explains Ghazzālī's political theology.

Leadership and Justice in Islamic Perspective:

From the perspective of Islam, the act of leadership and leading with wisdom and knowledge is frequently demonstrated act. Following the reform of pre-Islamic Arabs, the Muslim community became associated with the middle country in the early Muslim period. The Qur'ān addressed directly to the Muslim people in Medina promulgating ethical precepts and legal regulations. These were to be used by the Prophet Muḥammad (S.A.A.W) as a recipient of divine revelation and the leader of the rapidly expanding Islamic kingdom centred in Medina. From the very initial stages, the Almighty Allah has revealed laws that directly guided leaders to enjoin good and refrain from doing evil or unjust, Qur'ān says:

 9 وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَنِمَةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا وَأَوْحَيْنَاۤ إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ ٱلْخَيْرُتِ وَإِقَامَ ٱلصَلَّاوَةِ وَإِينَٓأَءَ ٱلرَّكُوٰةِ 9 كَانُواْ لَنَا عَلَيدِينَ 9 "And We made them leaders guiding by Our command. And We inspired to them the doing of good deeds, establishment of prayer, and giving of zakāh; and they were worshippers of Us".

Religious ideology is certainly the fundamental goal for a society defined by Islam, but emphasis must be paid to constructing a just society when it is plagued by degradation or injustices. The Holy Qur'ān does not split justice into separate elements, but rather views it as a basic broader concept that applies to both individuals and societies. The Qur'ān, in instance, makes no mention of "social justice." The Qur'ān refers to "just society," and it is just in all of its characteristic. 11

إِذْ دَخَلُواْ عَلَىٰ دَاوُدَ فَفَرْعَ مِنْهُمْ شَقَالُواْ لَا تَخَفْ خَصْمَانِ بَغَىٰ بَعْضُنَا عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ فَٱحْكُم بَيْنَنَا بِٱلْحَقِّ وَلَا تَشْطِطْ وَٱهْدِنَا إِلَىٰ سَوَأَءِ ٱلصِرِّرَٰطِ12

"When they entered upon David and he was alarmed by them? They said, "Fear not. [We are] two adversaries, one of whom has wronged the other, so judge between us with truth and do not exceed [it] and guide us to the sound path."

The leadership in Islam is a very important responsibility. The ruler has to rule in a way that must be in accordance with the teachings of its creator. The Holy Prophet (*) said;

"All of you are guardians and are responsible for your wards. The ruler is the guardian and the man is the guardian of his family; the lady is a guardian and is responsible for her husband's house and his offspring; and so all of you are guardians and are responsible for your wards.

"And [mention, O Muḥammad], when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority." I They said, "Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we exalt You with praise and declare Your perfection?" He [Allah] said, "Indeed, I know that which you do not know."

It is crucial to emphasize the importance of both men and women in the founding of the Islāmic Caliphate, ¹⁵ as far it concerns about the prosperity of the nation, responding to the words of God Almighty:

— وَلْتَكُن مِّنكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَامُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنكِرِ ۚ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ اللهِ الْمُعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنكِرِ ۚ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ اللهِ الْمُعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنكِرِ ۚ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ اللهِ اللهِ اللهِ اللهِ اللهِ اللهِ اللهُ اللّهُ اللّهُ اللهُ اللهُ اللهُ اللهُ اللهُ اللهُ اللّهُ اللهُ اللهُ اللّهُ الللّهُ اللّهُ اللّهُ اللّهُ اللّهُ اللّهُ اللّهُ اللّهُ الللهُ اللّهُ الللهُ اللّهُ

"And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be successful."

The basic goal of this ayāh is that there should be a group or collective organization of Muslim Ummah leaders who carry out the obligatory responsibility of "enjoining good and prohibiting wrong." It is significant in many ways, as well as the obligation of each individual in accordance with his or her capacity.¹⁷ The foremost demonstration is on ruler being just and sincere with his duties. The Holy Prophet (*) said:

It was narrated from "Abdullâh bin 'Amr that the Messenger of Allah said: "Those who are fair and just will be near to Allah on thrones of light, at the Right Hand of the Most Merciful, Glorified and Exalted is He, and both of His Hands are Right, those who are fair and just in their rulings and towards their families and those who are under their authority. 18

In Islamic society, the leadership in not just a status or power, instead it is a very severe duty that one has to be accountable on the day of judgement if he did not rule or lead justly. It shows that it is not a right, other than a severely questionable responsibility.

Imam Ghazzālī's Quest for Moral Values:

Over the last centuries, the Muslim world has experienced significant shifts, influenced powerfully Islamic heritage and history and challenged out the understanding of traditional legacy. The procedure of transmission calls into question the concept of legacy as an immobile monument, and the complicated role that humans play in creating and sustaining traditions is visible in the indigenous mechanisms that exist within Muslim societies. The subject concerning Islam and inherent relationship with justice and civility, is, how a religion's philosophy and practice becomes or is created to drive sociopolitical and geopolitical goals. For a long time, the response was taken for granted since Islam and its political theories are viewed as the modern experience of Islam. This response, while somewhat correct, must be revised. One exception is that Islam is not a political based religion, but rather a religion that significantly discusses politics inside religious doctrine. As a result, Islamic political doctrine is an essential example of Islam's modern political incarnation.¹⁹

Abu Hamid Muhammad bin Muhammad popularly known as imam Ghazzālī was born in 1058 CE at Tabaran in Khurasan and died in 1111 CE. He has been acclaimed as Hujjat al Islam (Convincing Proof of Islam), *Zain al Din* (Ornament of Faith) and *Mujaddid* (Renewer of Religion). He excelled in specific branches of knowledge such as Logic, Tasawwuf, Divinity, Philosophy, Law, and Islamic Political Thought. After death of his father, he remained under the company of prominent scholars for his studies at madrasahs in Tus, Jurjan, and Nishapur, honing his talents in fiqh, tafsir and kalam. He had already begun his teaching and writing careers at this point. When his master, the famous Imam al-Juwaini, died in 478 AH, he reached the second stage of his career. He was becoming more connected in the period's intellectual and political debates, particularly those between philosophy and religion, in which he allied with religious schools and thoughts. Further, between Shi'ites and Sunnites, in which he sided with the orthodox 'Abbasid caliphate against the Isma'ilis.²⁰

Al- Ghazzālī's life was not simple. He was a well-educated man of his period who participated actively in the Caliphate's governmental, spiritual, and religious structures. He was highly flexible, like several talented Muslim intellectuals, being an original yet in many ways "controversial person". He moved to the camp (*al-mu'askar*) of the Seljuk minister *Nizam al-Mulk* (founder of the *Nizamiyya* schools) and stayed for six years as a sort of 'court jurist.' Following that, he was named professor at Baghdad's *Nizamiyya madrasah*, the most famous school of higher learning in the eastern Islamic world ²¹

He received his education from the eminent jurist and theologian of the day, Imam al-Haramayn Al-Juwayni. Immediately after, his competence was acknowledged by the Seljuk Empire's influential and successful minister, Nizam Al-Mulk Tusi, who appointed him as professor of Baghdad's Nizamiyya college, a highly prestigious role at the times. Ghazzālī held that job for many years. The primary sources consist of four important works of al-Ghazzālī which discuss about the ideal leader: al-Iqtiṣad fi al-I'tiqad, at-Tibr al-Masbuk fi Nashihat al-Muluk, Iḥya 'Ulum Din, and Fadha'iḥ al-Batiniyyah wa Fadha'il al-Mustazhiriyyah, also known as al Mustazhiri. History has shown that the ancient Sunni ideology of uniting both power and authority in one person is counterproductive. Al-Ghazzālī discovered another facet of power dynamics and authoritative structures that constituted the foundation of his political theory: "faith and power are twins". He examined the subject of a Muslim state in a somewhat different way than his predecessors. ²³

Role of Justice in leadership in Imam Ghazzālī's thought:

Religious philosophers take disparate approaches to the idea of "religion" mostly at higher level. Islam, for example, three distinct systems have arisen

throughout time, "jurisprudent, theological-philosophical, and mystical". Each of these methods is based on a different view of Islam as a "religion". Like many other religions around the world, Islam, appears to have three parts: moral-ritual codes, metaphysical-cosmological ideas, and the feelings that form the basis of "religious experience"; concentrating on each of these specific characteristics leads in a distinct approach to the concept of "religion."²⁴ Change was tacitly acknowledged in Muslim intellectuals' ancient endeavors of renewal prior al-Ghazzālī's idealistic works on political structures. A historical examination of Islamic governance phases uncovers significant alterations that reflect a constant discussion over what it needed to build a more just societal system and over who would be its guide.²⁵ The ethics of reciprocity, sometimes referred as the "golden rule," is a kind of moral principles that urges us to treat others as we would like to be treated. It is important to both doctrinal religious ethics and secular philosophical ethics to be justified by biblical reference or reasoning or might be sometimes both. ²⁶ A society of increasing engagement, from international to domestic, provides an entirely new dimensions for Muslims to navigate diversity within a God-revealed framework. Al- Ghazzālī 's exegesis of Qur'ān was an attempt to portray appropriate ethical political ideology.²⁷ Al- Ghazzālī felt that pursuing justice, truth, and prosperity by one's own efforts may ultimately contribute to societal chaos.²⁸ In his youth and early years in Nizamiyya, Ghazzālī became interested in Islamic jurisprudence and theological approaches. Subsequently in his life, in Baghdad, he went to philosophical ideologies.²⁹ However, after his spiritual self-fashioning and spending many years in Imam Ghazzālī enumerates "Ten Rules of the Conduct of Hukmaran(Ruler) in the matter of justice, which the rulers should bear in mind, like:

1. He must be a JUST Ruler:

The responsibilities associated with conduct reflect al Ghazzālī's vision of a properly Islamic ideal for both administration and politics. First, the imam is obliged to be fair to his people. Whenever he detracts from the road of justice, his subjects may perceive him as an unjust leader. His goal should be to acquire men's favor and love in a law-abiding manner.³¹ It means the foremost duty for a ruler to become a competent and eligible is, that he must be just in his service.

2. Strong Empathy with the suffering of his people:

Therefore, if he is a just ruler, he won't let his people to suffer. In every case he should mentally put himself in the position of the competing groups. This will help him to decide according to the rule of law and to prevail the justice in the society.

3. No Luxuries life:

Only when the monarch abstains from lavish food and apparel is justice possible way. He is encouraged to forego ease, extravagance, and luxuries cuisines and attire.³² This way he becomes able to get closer to the one who are poor.

4. Practice kindness and Leniency:

The main predominant feature of the imam must be kindness than harshness. The Holy said:

"O Allah, whoever attains any position of authority among my Ummah and is harsh towards them, be harsh towards him, and whoever attains any position of authority among my Ummah and is kind towards them, be kind towards him."³³

The ruler should practice leniency, not harshness in his dealings. As it is recommended by our Islamic teachings.

5. His subjects must content with the rule of law:

A leader is supposed to fight for the people, build and bring progress to their nation. However, he is not allowed to violate religious regulations just to make his people happy and prosperous. If a leader only seeks human sympathy, then he will never find it. Obedience to him is incumbent only when he has brought men into conformity with the law. ³⁴ It is the law that can create harshness, inequality and in justice. The ruler must assure this to his subject that the law that would prevail will only be the Law of Allah.

6. No attempt of appearement at the cost of the law

The ruler should take care that not to compromise the basics i-e., the code of Shariat to keep his people appeared. Personal glory or praise should not lay down the principles of Shari'āh.

7. Commitment in people's affairs:

He must manage the activities of the individuals in a manner the way he likes controlling his own home concerns, and he should interact equally with the mighty, the sick and disabled. The ruler must realize that Allah SWT has conferred upon him an important role for which he will undoubtedly be rewarded.

8. Meeting 'Ulamā' often:

Moreover, he should seek guidance from the counsel of the 'Ulamā'. Here one thing is very interesting to note that 'Ulamā' those are meant here are those who are close to the Allah Almighty and only practice His true religion. Those who are learned and faithful. The 'Ulamā' who usually paise rulers and are very much close to highly profile government officers are not meant here to meet them.

9. Monitoring Officers and Servants:

He must ensure that his employees, judges, and officials personals carry out their responsibilities carefully and quite well.³⁵ It is must for just Hukmaran to monitor them in context of their duties. He should have knowledge about them either they are sincerely working or not.

10. Staying away from pride

He should not be overpowered by any false sense of pride. ³⁶ He must be down to earth and do not feel himself something empowered or strong. The status he has gained, it is the severe responsibility. He has to be answerable Infront of Allah. When a person feels proud, he loses all the beauty and sincerity.

In Islam, fairness flourishes when everything is put in its proper position, which is accomplished by merely obeying the heavenly precepts. To promote serious discussion inside Muslim cultures and so be efficient and productive in effecting necessary transformation, critiques of their processes and regulations must be articulated from around contradictions and inconsistencies of these regimes' actions in relation to the framework they espouse. By building the Islamic framework for a just society first, and then comparing policies and behaviors to this framework, any flaws or shortcomings may be easily discovered and ascribed.³⁷ Without a question, the jurisprudent may facilitate the ruler in keeping people from engaging in

unsuitable or corrupted conduct; however, the underlying formality of jurisprudence causes individuals to execute their religious ceremonies and rituals without regard for their larger systemic implications.³⁸

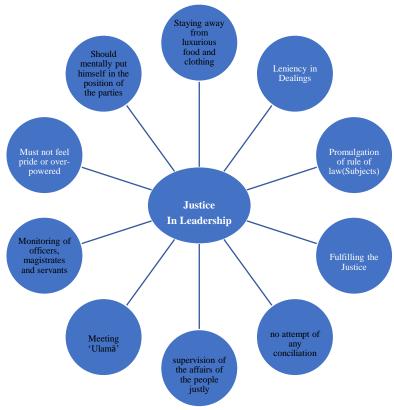


Figure 1 The Role of Justice in Leadership (author's figure)

Jurisprudence provided insight and expertise in interpreting Islamic history, present, and beyond. The credibility of leaders and state's political systems were based on the demographic cohesiveness of the Muslim population and the implementation of Islamic law inside its bounds. Religious requirements demanded the ruler, as imam or khalifah, to apply Islamic law. As a result, the legitimacy to govern was mainly dependent on this religious need. The ruler's legitimacy in ensuring the survival and stability of Muslim society was also influenced by social necessity. Understanding the efforts of previous sages and luminaries in the world's great religious traditions may help us find more commonalities and may provide insights for the present in this context. One such Muslim philosopher who relied heavily on the golden rule was Al-Ghazzālī, one of the most prominent Islamic intellectuals of all time. He was most renowned for his intellectual disputes and publications as a lawyer, theologian, spiritual thinker, and reformer. Al-Ghazzālī's teaching on the state, i.e. the theory of Imamate, settled upon three key provisions:

- The necessary power to maintain order in the state.
- The Caliphate represents the Muslim society's solidarity and historical interpretation, with the Sultanate as an important aspect of the Islamic state.
- Islamic law is the "institutional authority" of the Islamic state.

Politics, in the sight of al-Ghazzālī, was an integral part of religion and morals. It was supposed to be an art of conduct based on the unique conditions of a life of the individual, who should compare his or her own behaviors to the existing state order. Governance or political setups, like scientific knowledge, was founded on theological doctrines, Islamic jurisprudence, and the conception of man as a "social animal." The eschatological notion of human destiny is at the heart of these disciplines: the outer world is only seen as a pillar for the otherworld and the topic of politics, training a person for the maximum satisfaction in the future life. 42 Al Ghazzālī had chosen the path of Sufism, which was centred on "tasting" the Holy and obtaining motivation and perceiving the heavenly kingdom. Even though Ghazzālī focused on the spiritual aspect of Islam, he did not ignore the behavioral and intellectual aspects in religious parameters. He instead endeavored to combine them into a cohesive framework. He never discredited his jurisprudential or theologicalphilosophical articles as a result of his Baghdad life and spiritual attitude. He, on the other hand, assimilated their essence into his later Sufi pieces. In actuality, Ghazzālī endeavored to modify what he had learned and observed in the past following his internal conversion in order to give a distinct perspective of Sufism. 43

Quest for Justice in context of Leadership: An Analysis

The concept of a just society in context of Islamic framework have not changed throughout time since they are based on the Qur'ān, which Muslims believe represents Allah's (SWT) sacred words and is hence temporally immutable. The Qur'ān was passed down millennia ago as the cornerstone of the Islamic political, social, and economic system, and it was comprehended and momentarily implemented by the Prophet Muḥammad (*) at Medina, with the Medina Constitution acting as its textual base and evidence of implementation. 44

Justice or 'adl literally means placing things in their rightful place and also affording equal treatment to others. 45 In Islam, 'Adl is defined broadly as including the principles of honesty, impartiality, and righteousness in one's thoughts and actions. An Islamic leader must practice justice, especially while pronouncing judgement, conducting official or familial tasks, dealing with community members including close relatives, and so on. In reality, Islam requires a leadership that take care of their followers by providing them with basic necessities such as food, housing, and clothes.⁴⁶ Social justice, the foundational principle of equality between men and women, and the unconditional correspondence in terms of obligations and rights between Muslims and non-Muslims are based on Islam's equitable spirit and the base of universal interests primarily consisting of religion, life, honour, intellect and wealth.⁴⁷ Certainly, Islam provides a clear framework for a great quality leader with a functional system that reflects fairness, dignity, decency, and informed agreement. As a result, it is not incorrect to claim that justice is a highly necessary characteristic for an Islamic leader and that a leader must be just in all of his or her interactions, whether private or public. 48 At the core of Islam is found a cardinal concern with justice.⁴⁹ Undoubtedly one of the most essential, if not the fundamental, aims of a Muslim community is the establishment of fair communities. Possibly the most important duty of the prophets in Islam was to bring justice to social groups, beyond something that no society could be regarded Islamic. ⁵⁰ Spirituality is founded on Iman (faith) and may be achieved by the practice of Islamic rituals such as prayer, fasting,

pilgrimage, and zakah/ sadaqaat. These religiously prescribed rituals assist a ruler in developing a deep bond with his creator and the creation. As a result, it may be deduced that a Muslim leader must be spiritual since it draws him/her closer to Allah.⁵¹

Religion of Islam is a complete, holistic, and integrated religious system that governs all aspects of human life. The Qur'ān and the teachings of the Prophet Muḥammad (*) are the principal sources from which a follower seeks direction. The Qur'ān gives guidance and principles for living one's private and public lives effectively. Furthermore, the Qur'ān exhaustively discusses the abilities, attributes, and significant challenges while becoming a committed believer as well as effective ruler. Leadership in Islamic tradition, specifically, is indeed a duty, trust and entrusted responsibility. Is Islamic tradition, for a just society, there must be two things consisting of;

- The rightful position of pacing the things and
- The rightful due must be given to everyone

The first and second can be combined. Compliance with the regulations ensures that the rightful spot and dues are paid. According to the Qur'ānic teachings and Ḥadīth, the presence of poverty in a community indicates that it is an unfair society, and that poverty is caused by the affluent breaking the laws. Following an examination of the Islamic moral system and Imam Ghazzālī's perspective, it seems obvious that in Islam, the first step toward establishing a positive environment is to strengthen the judiciary system and its easy access for every individual beyond any discrimination. It is true that postponing justice is the same as denying justice. If all sectors labor justly and focus on Islam's essential moral foundation, their wealth and success will skyrocket. This also shows that some moral beliefs interlink with entire social, political and economic sectors which further needs religious influence and Justice is one of the most essential elements of the entire setups which interconnects each and every scheme of individuals and community's matters.

Conclusion:

In context of leadership, the role of Justice is predominantly clear. It clearly portraits that the basis of Islamic society depends upon the just behavior of its leaders. If leaders are unjust, loiterer, fraudulent and groundless to this seat how could they run an Islamic state. The ways in which the indulgence of unethical activities and practices can be damaging and leads towards the fall and destruction of any society are unacceptable in Muslim societies.

The present research demonstrated in the light of Imam Ghazzālī's ethical thought and concluded that the just ruler does not abuse his position and makes sure his officers too. He restricts himself to Shariah, beware of all flattery, avoids overspending, and surrounds himself with devout Ulama. This way the justice works well. This is why Imam Ghazzālī detaches secular thought and uphold religious thought while constructing his ideal leadership related approach. The present research shows that the benefits of combining Justice and leadership in context of worldly and hereafter reward are outstanding. By analyzing the important insights to counter biased, corrupt, and unethical activities while limiting themselves into moral values, cultural construction, and religious limitations is need of the time to build an accurate strong leadership in Islamic state. Indeed, moral traits helps a leader to strengthen his/her main purpose of life by acting as Allah's Khalifah

(vicegerent) and servant on earth. The spiritual bonding of the servant leads towards success of this world and hereafter.

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