

Ethical leadership based on zoroastrian values ***(Liderazgo ético basado en valores zoroastrianos)***

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Resumen. En el presente ensayo se realiza una descripción y algunas reflexiones sobre tres enfoques del concepto de Liderazgo Ético. Entre las teorías estudiadas están: El Liderazgo Sistémico por Valores, El Liderazgo por Principios, Perspectiva Gathica para Liderazgo Gerencial. En el estudio, el autor resalta la importancia de una nueva propuesta sobre un Liderazgo Basado en Valores Éticos Zoroastrianos. La perspectiva zoroastriana sugiere que la relación entre la percepción de la rectitud y la eficiencia organizacional es bien clara y esta reconociéndose como un componente esencial del éxito. Así, para asegurar que los altos niveles de rectitud sean mantenidos y ampliados, este estilo de liderazgo debe ser la guía para el desarrollo de los futuros líderes. El enfoque zoroastriano hace un líder de cada miembro de la organización y de la comunidad, simplemente promoviendo una buena mente como el principal elemento para soportar una estructura ética para las organizaciones. Este enfoque emerge de un estado mental inmerso en *Serenidad*, promoviendo una infinita cantidad de otros valores éticos que pueden ser fácilmente cultivados y propagados en la organización y proyectados a la sociedad y a la humanidad. Este modelo es la guía para la construcción no solo de una organización ideal, sino también de una sociedad ideal.

Palabras claves: Liderazgo ético, rectitud, buena mente, perspectiva gathica, serenidad, enfoque zoroastriano

Abstract. In this essay a description and some reflections are made on three approaches of the ethical leadership concept. Among the theories studied are: Systemic Leadership by Values, Leadership by Principles and The Gathic Perspective for Leadership. In the study, the author highlights the importance of a new proposal about a Leadership Model Based on Zoroastrian Values. The Zoroastrian Perspective suggests that the relation between the perception of Righteousness and Organizational Efficiency is very clear and it has been progressively recognized as an essential component of success. Thus, to assure that the high levels of Righteousness are kept and increased, this style of leadership must be the guide for the development of future leaders. The Zoroastrian Approach makes a leader of every member of the organization and the community, simply by promoting a good mind, as the main element to support an ethical structure for the organizations. This approach emerges from a mental state immersed in Serenity, promoting an infinite quantity of other ethical values that can be easily cultivated and propagated in the organization and projected to society and humanity in general. This model is the guide for the construction not only of an ideal organization, but also to build the ideal society.

Key words: Ethical leadership, righteousness, good mind, gathic perspective, serenity, zoroastrian approach

Introduction

The formation of leaders is one of the most important dimensions in the organizational field, it gives the basis for development of the intellectual assets of the companies and its competitiveness. The leaders are the creators and sustainers of an organizational culture that should be oriented to Quality, Excellence and Social Justice, among other values. The leaders make the differences in the success of the organizations. In this document are

presented three models for establishing an ethical leadership, from which the Zoroastrian Perspective emerges as the path for the leaders in the new millenium.

1. Systemic leadership by values.

Edgeman, Rick, and Scherer, Franz (1999) proposed this ethical model in a document titled “Systemic leadership via core value deployment”, they presented a balance restoring the leadership core value set, in which value deployment through the reward and recognition system and assessment of leadership pervasiveness are discussed. A leadership is systemic to the extent that an organization’s ability to anticipate and counter threats on the local level renders it immune to unresolved crises demanding central attention.

Business and performance excellence is the overall way of working that balances stakeholder concerns, thus increasing the probability of long-term success as a business through operational, customer-related, financial and market-place excellence. Integration and deployment of competencies and core values to produce systemic leadership and in turn enable Business and performance excellence is a key to organizational challenge.

Systemic leadership promises opportunity for everyone in the organization to experience equal “satisfaction” in the fruit of their maximum contribution – the joy of combining excellent stewardship and servanthood (Edgeman and Williams, 1998), consciously electing service over self-interest.

Edgeman and Scherer warned about a diversity of other approaches that may prevent an ethical issue from being brought to central attention, e.g. use of deception may be effective in this regard, yet few would argue the legitimacy of deception as a leadership core value. Imagine the chaos wrought by a core value of deception: mistrust, guarded communication, and lack of respect. Moreover, a value for deception contradicts one for honesty. Organizations can not have it both ways or else Truth would be regarded as situational and open to manipulation. (Edgeman, 1998) added that “core values” ordinarily function as an abbreviated reference to “principle-centered core values” If these are to drive unity of purpose, they must be consistent internally and with organizational mission and vision.

According to the defenders of this approach, the results given by a recent survey of approximately 200 European organizations and 1,150 key employees, identified six fundamental principles of Business and performance excellence:

1. Continuous improvement;
2. Commitment to creativity;
3. Customer focus;
4. Continuous learning;
5. Focus on facts; and
6. Empowerment and participation of all staff.

Subsequent analysis revealed that a strong strategic orientation distinguished the most mature and successful of these organizations from the remainder (Dahlgaard et al., 1997; 1998). Deployment of a “Systemic leadership via core value deployment” supporting these principles enhances organizational ability to attain Business and performance excellence. As an example of a core value congruent with many of these principles, “relentless pursuit and love of the truth” is consistent with continuous learning and focus on facts. A single core value often maps to many of the principles supporting Business and performance excellence or vice versa, for neither the principles identified nor the core values cited form independent sets.

Edgeman and Conlan (1998) have indicated that business and performance excellence models carried out in organizations from around the world have shown four areas in which leaders and leadership are assessed:

1. Leadership internal to the organization, and related to total quality management, recognition, reward, and resource commitment.
2. Involvement with customers, suppliers and other external elements.
3. Social Responsibility.
4. The leadership system.

Systemic leadership via core value deployment is an enabler of Business and Performance Excellence and concentrates on interhuman empathy with senior leaders regarded as coaches or servants to the organization who are accessible to partners, customers and employees.

For this model of leadership, empowerment is a paramount to fulfill the organization’s mission and vision (Conti, 1997). It is important to recognize and embrace the fact that besides being morally and ethically imperative, diversity also contributes to key Business and Performance Excellence and enables creativity, innovation, and the ability to cross-culturally adapt. With respect to mission and vision, a primary empowerment goal is to forge unity of purpose through creation of a “profoundly conscious” organization where its members operate separately but with one mind, where they are all one unit, but with each fully self-aware.

Systemic empowerment and unity of purpose are acts of reproduction supported by deployment of core values, suggesting that leadership’s key aim is infusion of core values into people so that they may clearly differentiate right from wrong. Fully operationalized, this results in conscious election to do what is right, despite the strength or beauty of attraction any alternate choice may promise. To become fully operational requires profound Trust composed of two critical elements, the first being confidence in the competence of individuals or teams confronted by a collection of alternative actions to differentiate correctly the “right course” from the wrong.

Values of confidence of this sort can be built on personnel recruitment, training, and professional development. More difficult is the second element, for having once identified

alternative courses of action, it is faith that the filtering of alternatives through the deployed LCVS will result in the will and wisdom to select the right choice.

This perspective views empowerment as a gradual and often organizational counter-culture process where leadership promises must be credible and people must be cognizant of these promises. In this respect credibility is a matter of integrity built on historical experience and based on communication. In addition, empowerment is pretty much inclined to forgive honest mistakes.

Performance measures are capable of integrating core values and competencies. On this premise, the reward and recognition system can facilitate deployment of core values, for this reasons, systems and measures for deploying and re-enforcing the Systemic Leadership by core values should be designed. Performance measures strongly influence organizational culture and those used should reflect this type of system. If it is determined that creativity, innovation, learning, and stewardship are necessary to a systemic leadership, then a set of pointedly relevant performance measures should be applied the human resource management unit. It has to be stresses that performance measures must also be externally consistent with an organizational mission and vision that are motivated by organizational concerns. It must be understood that communication is the key shadow behind everything an organization does and opposite conduct diminishes the credibility.

Finally, systemic leadership deploys leadership responsibilities and privileges across an organization's human resource. Business and performance excellence models limit leadership to senior executives, regarding it as competence based. Leadership legacy across history, however, is chiseled with such core values as courage, wisdom, sacrifice, stewardship and servanthood. Supporting corporate nihilism, business and performance excellence models ignore such values. In fact, to restore a semblance of balance this theory suggests a principle-centered leadership that may be deployed through organizational performance measures and reward and recognition systems.

2. Principled leadership

Proposed by Manuel London (1999) at State University of New York, who also introduced the concept of business diplomacy as a way to implement values-based, ethical leadership. Based on the Japanese concept of kyosei, business diplomats take responsibility for themselves and others and treat people with respect and kindness while they simultaneously attempt to be entrepreneurial, add business value, and make a profit. He reviewed the strategies and tactics of business diplomacy and provided case examples of how to be diplomatic and ethical in difficult situations.

This model responds to the call that management theorists and some executives have made for a gentler and kinder management style for the twenty-first century.

This is a call for values-based management which arises from radical changes in the business environment. These changes are mainly produced by the enlargement of business

arena caused mostly by modern communications and easy transportation systems binding national and international boundaries. However, the managers can be inclined to be forceful in accomplishing their business objectives without regard to cultural and individual differences.

Here Principled Leadership is defined as the application of ethical business values, which includes high integrity, Trust, honesty, fairness, mutual respect, kindness, and doing good. These are values ethically right and can be good business practice since they reflect the realities of different cultural expectations and business environments. This line of thought introduces the concept of business diplomacy as a way to make it possible. The values just mentioned represent the key to being good, doing good, and increasing profitability in the companies through the application of diplomacy to business as a way of making principled leadership a beneficial strategy.

This type of leadership promotes the treatment of people within and outside the organization in an ethical manner with values being incorporated in the organization's policies. In this case the managers are expected to work participatively, communicate with others honestly, and do business in an open-minded way. It comes from several concepts embedded in other non-Western cultures. One such concept is *kyosei*, the Japanese belief that people can live and work together for a common good or cause (Kaku, 1995). Another concept in Hebrew is *tikkun olam*, which means to make the world better. Jews believe that this is a responsibility they have to assume. There are also similarities with the Buddhist message of goodness, equality, and getting along.

Principled leaders are the managers that apply these values in their daily business lives and without ignoring the difficult scenarios of business, they have to make tough decisions, deal with conflicts, and make important negotiations.

Kyosei is a concept that applies to individuals and to organizations that take the responsibility for themselves and others and treat employees with respect and kindness. At the same time they attempt to add business and social values, and make a profit. Companies apply *kyosei* by assuming global social responsibility that overcomes local, labor/management frictions, social frictions, and international frictions. These firms value innovation and competitiveness, but they also value fair treatment of individuals and other corporations in their business dealings and being a responsible member of the local, national, and international communities.

The organizations that practice *kyosei* care about the interests of all their employers, employees, suppliers, customers, and the local community, including professions, nationalities, and political regimes. Ryuzaburo Kaku, chairman and CEO of Canon, Inc., a diversified global manufacturer of business machines and optical equipment, recently explained *kyosei* this way:

Because this is a balance sheet, a corporation would have to be innovative, independent, fair, and willing to work together with competitors to balance interests for the common good. This is the key to long-term sustainable success (Kaku, 1995, p. 8).

Kyosei means honest and fair leadership decisions and ethical organizational practices. Principled leaders try to be fair and kind. Whether they do this out of the goodness of their hearts or because they believe that it is good business (or both) does not matter. What is important is that they act in a diplomatic way to make decisions, resolve conflict, and negotiate agreements (Manuel London, 1999).

The main goals for the model of principled leadership have been established as follows:

- ◆ To work together in the spirit of cooperation and, in the process, avoiding coercion, threat, and other negative interactions.
- ◆ To keep communication open.
- ◆ To remaining flexible.
- ◆ To suggest and be open to new ideas.
- ◆ To achieve positive outcomes.
- ◆ To be unanimous or at least arriving at a consensus.
- ◆ To ensure some stability or agreements that last;
- ◆ To improve interpersonal competencies.
- ◆ To establish a team identity (participants feel part of a relationship and can be relied on to pull together in the future);
- ◆ To foster continued positive relationships to deal with future dilemmas, disagreements, and deals.

The performance of this ethical leadership actions can be measured using the above parameters. In addition, It can be stated that Principled Leadership in organizational management is particularly valuable in making difficult and delicate decisions, resolving conflicts, and for the negotiation of critical issues.

3. Gathic or zoroastrian perspective for management leadership

This type of leadership is based on an attribute that stems from a concept defined by the gathic word Vohumanah which means Good Mind. So for our academic purpose it can be rooted in the Good Mind of the leaders, in our case represented by the organizational managers.

Dr. Jafarey (1989) conceptualized Vohumanah as the first of the "Primal Principles of Life". It stands for the "wisdom" and clear thinking required for leading a righteous life. Literally according to him it means "Good Mind or good Thinking". In addition Dr. Farhang Mehr (1991) referred to Good Mind as Sublime Mind ,the first attribute in creation and the essence of wisdom and intelligence.

In an interesting article wrote by Dr. Jehan Bagli titled "Vohu Manah: The Precious Gift of Mazda", He presents that in a Vedic and Avestan vocabulary context, mind and spirit are varying interpretations of related words, philologically they come from the same basic root: Man, which means "to think." In addition, the concepts Manah, Mainyu, and Manthran are conceptualized as mind, mentality, and a thinker or thought-provoker. Holy Manthra. Other terms used in Zoroastrian scripture such as Mainyava, Menog and Minoi, are linguistic variations of what we understand as the Spiritual World. It is, according to him, very clear that Mind and Spirit are interchangeable expressions. He adds that the human Mind and its attributes such as consciousness, will, imagination and thought, are mystical entities that cannot be apprehended by the senses. They are beyond the bounds of the physical sciences. They clearly fall into the spiritual domain of abstractions and in the gray area between the physical and the spiritual.

Ethical leaders in management and in any other field must base their actions in a Good Mind. In the organizations the leader is officially represented by the manager's position. He is the organizational agent in charge of developing an ethical leadership that takes the organization toward an ethical way of life. A Good Mind provides the starting point to build and maintain a solid and stable ethical leadership.

The Zoroastrian perspective considers that a Good Mind invokes the managerial and individual principles of righteousness, wisdom and serenity. The leader embarked on this approach realizes the Truth and drives the organization to a prosperous and successful situation.

This type of leadership is devoted to fulfill the organizational duties in a frame of Justice. It grants guidance to all members of the organization in order to accomplish their goals in the straight paths of progress. This thought is a true opponent of the wrongful and a strong supporter of the righteous and is encircled by a Good Mind. By this methodology, a good leader manages the organization with actions of good understanding and serenity. Moreover, a peaceful organizational environment is caused by the satisfaction of a Good Mind and actions made through Righteousness.

Truth is a very important value taken into consideration by the Zoroastrian Perspective. In this matter about Truth, Professor Insler, Stanley (1990) thinks that "Truth plays a dominant role in the life of man. It is Truth which prospers the creatures and makes the plants and waters increase, It is through the quest for Truth that good understanding arises in the spirit of man, an understanding that teaches him to further the principles of god in good thoughts, in good words and in good actions. It is Truth which also teaches man to discern between what is right and wrong. It is man's adherence to Truth that gives full meaning to the existence of god and grants strength and enduring life to him as well. Can the ethical principles god created have any life of their own if they find no support in the world of mankind?... Herein lies one of the great contributions of the prophet Zarathushtra. By placing Truth at the center of existence of both god and man, he taught us that a

meaningful life is not possible without Truth, because Truth is the ultimate source of all good insight, all good action, all good discernment and all good achievement."

In the field of decision making the manager has to confront his own responsibility. In this respect a reflection made in his excellent article by Dr. Mehrborzin Soroushian (2000) can be applied. This article, which is appropriately called " The Freedom to Choose and the Moral Responsibility to Make the Right Choice", states some pertinent elements for discussion that can be summarized and inferred as follows:

1) The assertion that doing good for the sake of good and for no other reason is

Central to understanding this ethical issue. The Zoroastrian Model indicates, that leaders, individual, organizations and the entire society are asked to champion Righteousness, Truthfulness and all other outward manifestations of goodness, not because of the reward we may get, or because it will reflect well on us, but to do so for the sake of goodness itself and for no other reason.

2) Making choices at every step of life is not considered a privilege but a duty to be exercised in our daily lives. The ideal is to bring about enlightenment and harmony. In our lives, we are constantly reminded of the need to choose and to make the right choice.

3)The ability to be considerate of the welfare of others, and to distance oneself from mere self-interest when it comes to making moral decisions. The use of the term "love" is considered to accentuate the need to promote welfare, harmony and happiness for all by choosing the righteous path.

4)Moral and ethical situations are complex. Many factors and considerations come into play. The ideal is harmony and happiness for humankind, and the cause is Truth.

For Dr. Jafarey (1989) the term Righteousness, like Truth, Order and Precision, comes from the Avestan word Asha and it is constructive, beneficial and unselfish precision par excellence.

Righteousness should be recognized as an essential component of successful organizations. Ethically managed organizations can have the possibility of an increased effectiveness due to a strengthened organizational culture, lower turnover levels, and increased employee effort. In this way, Righteousness as an ethical value is indispensable to an excellent leadership. One way Righteousness and ethical leadership benefit organizations is through the building of trusting relationships.

Researchers have identified Trust within and between organizations as a core contributor to effective organizational practices. Moreover, Righteousness can be identified as a core determinant of trust. Also, because leader Righteousness aids the development of Trust it also creates relationships of Respect and increased reciprocity between leaders and followers.

However, although Righteousness and ethical leadership seem to be important in their relationship to accomplish organizational success, this interaction remains poorly

understood and without research expertise until now. It is recommended to academic researchers to direct some of their work on the manager's perception of Righteousness.

To be a righteous leader is not only about not doing the wrong thing, but it is also about doing the right thing. Experience has shown that, at the very least, perceived Righteousness is about being seen to be doing something positive, active, proactive; not necessarily only doing 'ethical' things. Not righteous leadership involves being absent, uninvolved, not taking appropriate responsibility, and not dealing with problems until they are too late. Under those conditions, co-workers can not confide on a given leadership and in consequence lose trust in their managers to fulfil key responsibilities.

In relation to satisfaction, it can be found as the most strongly correlated element with perceived Righteousness, suggesting that leaders who demonstrate a high level of Righteousness will be involved in a type of leadership that is highly satisfying for their colleagues. Similarly, as leaders display more Righteousness, they are likely to generate extra motivation and work effort from their colleagues, and have a general beneficial effect on the entire organization.

It appears that perceptions of low Righteousness can come from doing the wrong thing (unethical conduct) and from not doing what is expected and valued by followers. Also, perceptions of Righteousness (and development of trust) may be based upon a critical threshold of active and positive leadership being present (doing the right thing), whereas a lack of such leadership (not being seen doing the right thing) may be sufficient to support assumptions of immoral and unethical intentions. Thus, in the case of passive/avoiding behaviors, where there is a lack of leadership, followers, regardless of the presence or absence of actual unethical conduct may assume low Righteousness.

The Zoroastrian perspective suggests that the relation between perceived Righteousness and organizational effectiveness is quite clear and it is rather becoming recognized as an essential component of success. Thus, to ensure that high levels of Righteousness are maintained and enhanced, this leadership style (Zoroastrian) should become a focus of future leader development. Moreover, given the finding that significant number of managers seem to lack this value, the need is even more apparent. Similarly, the use of leadership criteria in HRM decisions might help to ensure that Righteousness is fostered within one's organization. This is because we know that where we find ethical leadership, we invariably also find Righteousness. It can be properly said that a righteous behavior of the leaders motivates and inspires followers, team spirit is aroused, enthusiasm and optimism is displayed and both leaders and followers create positive visions of the future.

For academic studies, Righteousness can be hypothetically classified in Personal Righteousness and Organizational Righteousness. The personal righteousness involves standing up for one's most fundamental beliefs and commitments even at the face of obstacles. Organizational righteousness requires the strengths of all the employees in the company. Thus, the Zoroastrian model proposes that a program for promoting the value of Righteousness has to be designed. The personal elements of Righteousness are the foundation for the other types of this same value. For the program, four steps are considered:

- 1) The organizational leaders must act with Righteousness.
- 2) The top management should reward Righteousness in the employees.
- 3) Be alert when warning signs of wrong behaviors appear. Establish a good communication with the employees.
- 4) Guidance before punishment. When somebody is with problems, the organization should look for benevolent ways to solve the situation.

The Good Mind cultivates the value of Tolerance that is needed in management as well as in daily life. The following words were written in the first treatise of ethic, "The Gathas" (Jafarey translation, song 13, 7): "Put down fury, check violence, you who wish to strengthen the promotion of Good Mind through Righteousness, because a progressive man is associated with this..."

Right there, it is strongly perceived a teaching of Tolerance that encourages people to approach with love the diversity of the world we share, and to admit others with the sensibility of a Good Thinking that respects their traditions and cultures. The value of Tolerance is a part of a set of the ethical values contained in the Zoroastrian gathic thought designed for guiding a practical life.

The feeling of the Tolerance value installed in our mind is an expression of inner unity of our soul but also a possibility of convergence with the outer world, it transmits a way of integration with the community of diverse people, in which we have discovered the spring of some needs and general satisfaction, leading to a sense of acceptance and endurance with the outer world.

Tolerance is the result of wisdom and deep thinking, which takes into account the existence of ethical principles. Moreover, a tolerant leader could face successfully in the present or the future any situation serving Righteousness, Truth and Justice, which configure an ethical trinity that illuminates human being life. It has been told that Tolerance is the most useful virtue in the social existence. The Tolerance value is related to practical behavior and actions because it is determined by reason not by the instincts. Tolerance generally speaking establishes conditions for the possibility of good actions and is a new paradigm for organizational behavior.

Aiftinca (2000) from the Romanian Academy in Bucharest (Romania) in his detailed studies about The Axiological Dimension of Tolerance, said:

“I contend that Tolerance is not the expression of a simple attitude, but constitutes a moral value which penetrates all spheres of social life. My argument assumes that globalization is a fundamental tendency of the contemporary world and that the ideal of such a world cannot be enacted without Tolerance. After identifying the constituent elements of this value and its conditions of functioning, we conclude that any reconstruction of human society from the globalization point of view presumes Tolerance as a fundamental factor. Functional Tolerance assumes that everyone enjoys similar education in the spirit of Tolerance at any age and any level. The future of humanity depends upon such a solution in the face of current woes”.

It should be acknowledged that in the moment when the generating impulses of a Good Mind would disappear, immediately as a result, the existence of Tolerance as a value ceases. Because a Good Thinking protects us against the potentiality of caprices, it finds the discernment, the right criteria and it orientates the action to ensure the stability and the universality of the Tolerance and the values in general.

A good state of mind integrates human actions and behaviors under a spiritual government in order to proclaim that reason and the spirit defeat hate and Intolerance, and keep away the human ignorance. An action is tolerant to when it has a sense of value and it can be considered intolerant when it is diverging with respect to that sense.

“We could say that: well-used freedom brings satisfaction and joy; badly used liberty brings suffering and misfortune”. Therefore, although it bears the mark of liberty, not any will is in the service of the Tolerance but only that which is determined by the clear representation of the supreme moral value. (Leibniz, 1997).

Vianu, (1979) assures that just like any other value, Tolerance is irreducible. This means that it cannot be defined by another value, because it possesses a series of appropriations conferring on its autonomy and unicity. That is why the Tolerance can not be subordinated by any other value such as kindness, austerity, love, charity, frankness

The Zoroastrian approach makes a leader out of every member of the organization and community, by simply promoting a Good Mind as the main element to support an ethical structure for the organizations. And from that point which emerges from a state of mind immerse in Serenity, an infinite amount of other ethical values can be easily cultivated and propagated in the organization and projected to society and humankind. This model is the guide for building the ideal organization.

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