PORTRAIT OF A SUCCESSFUL ENTERPRENEUR: Prophet Muhammad as an Excellent Example of Successful Businessman.

Syed Shaffri, Syed Muhammad Effendi; Fazali, Mohd Fiqry; A. Halem, Hadi Aiman; Hashim, Ikhwan Hamdi; Isa, Azeem Azri; Mohd Dali, Nuradli Ridzwan Shah.

Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia

Prophet Muhammad as the Pioneer of Modern Business Management

It is indeed serious that every one must adhere to ethical standards in business. Business and ethics are not separate, rather they are interconnected (Mohd Dali et al., 2008). Allah says in the Qur'an, [For you in the Messenger of Allah, there is a fine example to follow] (Al-Ahzab 33:21). Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was an ideal human being in every respect. He was the best teacher, preacher, and guide; the best statesman, lawgiver, judge, diplomat, negotiator of treaties, and military commander; the best family man, a good husband, a compassionate father and grandfather, a good neighbour, and friend of his people. He was also a very honest and successful businessman.

Caravans from Syria in the north and Yemen in the south used to pass by Makkah. Prophet Muhammad would join in these caravans. It is reported that he travelled to Syria, Yemen, Bahrain, and many other places in Arabia in these caravans. Some historians have also suggested that he probably travelled to Iraq and Ethiopia.

Since his early age, he was involved in commerce. He had a good reputation as a hardworking, honest, truthful, and very successful businessman. It was due to this reputation that Khadijah, a wealthy businesswoman, hired him to work for her business. Many people in Makkah had asked for her hand and worked for her, but they either cheated her or she was not satisfied with their work. Finally, she found Muhammad (he was not a prophet at that time) and she asked him to work for her. He made several business trips on behalf of her and
was very successful. She was impressed with his work as well as his impressive personality, they later got married.

After marrying Khadijah, Prophet Muhammad continued his work and took several business trips throughout parts of Arabia. Ancient Arabia used to have commercial fairs in almost all major towns and regions; it is probable that Prophet Muhammad visited some of these commercial fairs. After becoming a prophet, his business activities decreased, although he would occasionally participate in business transactions. His vast business experience helped him in dealing with people with great care. He often used to mention the names of people and tribes whom he met in his journeys. People were often amazed of his knowledge of people and their regions.

The Prophet emphasized that honesty and kind dealings with customers are the secrets of success in business. He said, "The truthful and honest merchant is associated with the Prophets, the upright and the martyrs" (Shahih Sunan Al-Tirmidhi). "God shows mercy to a person who is kindly when he sells, when he buys and when he makes a claim" (Shahih Al-Bukhari). Prophet Muhammad gave many teachings on business and economic issues, he covered almost every aspect of business and economics. Here are only a few major principles of fair business dealings according to Islam.

1. No fraud or deceit, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) is reported to have said, “When sale is held, say, "There's no cheating" (Shahih Al-Bukhari).

2. Sellers must avoid making too many oaths when selling merchandise. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) is reported to have said, "Be careful of excessive oaths in a sale. Though it finds markets, it reduces abundance" (Shahih Muslim).

3. Mutual consent is necessary. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) is reported to have said, "The sale is complete when the two involved depart with mutual consent" (Shahih Al-Bukhari).
4. Be strict in regard to weights and measures. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) is reported to have said, "When people cheat in weight and measures, their provision is cut off from them" (Al-Muwatta'). He told the owners of measures and weights, "You have been entrusted with affairs over which some nations before you were destroyed" (Shahih Sunan Al-Tirmidhi).

5. The Prophet forbade monopolies. "Whoever monopolizes is a sinner" (Shahih Sunan Abu Daud).

6. Free enterprise, the price of the commodities should not be fixed unless there is a situation of crisis or extreme necessity.

7. Hoarding merchandise in order to increase the prices is forbidden.

8. Transaction of 'haram' (illegal in Islam) items, such as intoxicants, are forbidden.

An-Nauman bin Bashir reported God's Messenger as saying, "What is lawful is clear and what is unlawful is clear, but between them are certain doubtful things which many people do not recognise. He who guards against doubtful things keeps his religion and his honour blameless, but he who falls into doubtful things falls into what is unlawful, just as a shepherd who pastures his animals round a national reserve will soon pasture them in it. Every king has a reserve and God's reserve is the things He has declared unlawful." (Shahih Bukhari and Shahih Muslim). And Abdullah ibn Masud reported God's Messenger as saying, "Trying to earn a lawful livelihood is an obligatory duty in addition to the duties which are obligatory." Rafi ibn Khadij said that God's Messenger was asked what type of earning was best and he replied, "A man's work with his hands and every business transaction which is approved." (Musnad Ahmad). Jabir reported God's
Messenger as saying, "God shows mercy to a man who is kindly when he sells, when he buys and when he makes a claim" (Shahih Bukhari).

Once a small caravan was staying outside Medinah. They had a red camel. By chance, Muhammad passed that way and asked the price of the camel. The people told him the price, which he accepted without argument. Muhammad caught the bridle of the camel and walked towards the city. Afterwards the people regretted that they had given the camel without any acquaintance. There was a woman in the caravan who said, "Be comforted. We have not seen a man with a brighter face than his." In other words, such a man would not deceive. When night fell, Muhammad sent food for them and dates for the price of the camel. Muhammad needed some armaments in the battle of Hunain. He asked Safwan, an unbeliever, to lend him some chain armour. He replied, "Muhammad! You intend to usurp something?" The Holy Prophet said, "No, I am taking it on loan. If some is lost, I will pay the proper compensation." He gave forty sets of chain armour on loan. After the battle, some of the chain armour was found to be missing. The Holy Prophet told Safwan that some of his armour was lost, and he could accept compensation for them. Safwan replied, "O Messenger of God! The condition of my heart is not as it was before. In other words, I have embraced Islam; now I don't need compensation."

Last but not least, Prophet Muhammad is the one of the best example that we must follow and practice the method and ways of how Prophet Muhammad did in business or more precisely, do the business according to Al-Quran and As-Sunnah. The reason to practice Islamic muamalah is not to get profit higher and faster, it is because Islamic muamalah is to ensure the fair competition and encourage the competitive business more efficient and effective and also to improve the life of the society. On top of that, Abu Sa’ed reported Rasullullah as saying, "The truthful and trustworthy merchant is associated with the Prophets, the upright and the martyrs" (Shahih Sunan At Tirmidzi).

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*Terjemahan Al Quran Al Karim –Rasm Uthmani- Dalam Bahasa Melayu,* Al-Hidayah House Of Al-Quran SDN. BHD.