Organizational Ethics Based on the Islamic Management

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, what matters most is due consideration given to ethics and social obligations on the issues like organization and management. Increasing importance of ethics in the world of organizations denotes crisis in ethics; environmental pollution; betraying propaganda; unfair wages, tax evasion; administrative corruption and crimes committed by the organization are increasingly augmented. This looks as if there might be no end ever envisaged to corruption and bribery in the states, legislatures and judiciary and security forces. Armament and ammunition organizations, wars and military budgets are growing day by day; however, capability of the existing weaponry outpaces the armament required to destroy the globe. Yet, what reasons truly stand behind such illegal and unethical behavior in organizations? What is origin of the problems? How can the organizations prevent from such acts by using the religious teachings? This article has tried to present strategies in response to the above questions through reviewing the current notions and using the religious teachings.

Introduction

Mankind is a strange creature; a bi-pod creature who demolishes the world to satisfy his ambitions and extreme acquisitiveness. He takes countless lives of people under the auspices of democracy by means of the most horrifying weapons of mass destruction to prove he is superior and lord of the world. He is called human being and another being is also called man who cherishes great aspirations of peace, friendship and sublimity of human kind and he devotedly tries to achieve it (Imami, 2013, 4).

"Man is inherently good-natured and of a noble spirit. In his nature, there is nothing bad. This is while a great number of psychologists reject Maslow conceding that human nature contains malice and viciousness. Also, they believe that he should be trained and tamed through education and exercise."(Maslow, 1996, 36-38)

Acquiring all virtues and protracting from all moral vices are recommended and stressed for man because he is a human kind and deserves having it. But as he owns dignity, profession and special status in society, he has to further try to be qualified of parts of virtues and disqualified of parts of moral malice (Watheqi, 2005, 170).

Ethics finds an investigative significance in case ethical values of a society and its institutions are internalized, rules and strategies of the state, tools and mechanisms will become functionally effective (Imami, 2013, 4).

In the years of 1987-1992, theories of the public administration came back to ethics and administrative ethics was defined as being responsive or responsible for citizens and community, meaning that the state institutions have embraced social responsibility. Public CEOs were obligated to put the policies and plans at the discretion of citizens in the shape of moral processes and consequences by means of which public staff, on one hand, and referents and citizens, on the other hand, are provided with feasibly interactive, permanent and increasing communication.

By and large, until before 1930, emphasis was put on administration-politics dichotomy (Rezaiemanesh, 2004). The issue of values and ethics entered into the literature of management after the nature of politics dichotomy from administration had been recognized and administrative ethics was transformed into a movement.

What is ethics?

As ulama of ethics puts it, ethics means "habits of soul". Habits of soul are either virtue-incarnated such as bravery, generosity, chastity, honesty, trusteeship or vice-incarnated such as fear, grudge, envy and stinginess. Ethics in fact is habits (habit: ability to do things as a matter of rehearsal in human nature) that are generated in human soul and affect his manner and demeanor, that directs human actions in life (Kalhor, 2004, 50). Ethics can be defined as theoretical research of "good or bad things" or of "correct or incorrect things" or as a result of research on "must be done or must not be done" (beauchamp, 1982, 3). Ethical behavior refers to real standards and proper behavior among groups under identical conditions (Runes, 1964, 98). Ethics is human lifestyle; ethics is something that proves one job true and the other untrue; it determines our goals (Singer, 1994, 3). A number of scientists maintain that ethics is a term containing behavior and acts that are considered accurate or inaccurate; the rules surrounding the activities; values that are developed and internalized and are pursued behind those acts and behavior (De George, 1986, 22). It is also delineated as: "Research on the nature and level of individual ideology where ethics is assumed as beliefs, standards and rules of ethical behavior" (Taylor, 1975, 36). What is certain is that each action or trait which the more assists man to reach perfection or paves the ground for its achievement, the more it enjoys ethical values. Therefore, conclusion can be made that since human perfection is real and not relative (due to fact that people possess single

nature), actions and traits are ethically valuated and ranked as ethical virtues if there exists a real and innate relationship among them and human perfection (cause-effect relationship)(Imami, 2013, 18). Considering that human perfection is reach divine proximity, so each action or trait that aids man in this way to lead him to divine closeness shall be reckoned as excellence. Thus, in philosophy of Islamic ethics, excellence is referred to as action or feature that directs man to higher proximity or paves the ground for such an ascent. Hence, if an action apparently seems to be righteous but it finally fails to upgrade man to perfection, it lacks ethical value, as Islam puts it (Sadat, 1993, 34).

Ethics in Organization: A Conceptual Framework

Emil Durkim has said of religion and society to be origin of ethics. Religious scholars underline divine origin of ethics. Philosophers say ethics rests upon foundational wisdom rather than religion. Psychological and sociological pre-assumptions underscore ethical performances, believing that among the social and individual functions of ethics are facilitated and enjoyable life, creation of perfection, sense, discipline, stability, security, solidarity, balance and optimism in the individual and society all of which emphasize the sociability process of norms and social values because the actor is prepared to play roles, he has been assigned and stops the society experiencing abnormality and vulnerability (Faqihi and Rezaiemanesh, 2006, 40). Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) makes an attempt to control corruption, maintain and promote ethics and improve undesirable manners in most of the member nations through designing of ethical infrastructure which is in fact regarded as one of the effective models of ethics management (OECD, 2000).

Once an ethical infrastructure functions properly, it creates an atmosphere where support is given to standards and indices of desired personal behavior. Constructive elements of infrastructure strengthen one another interactively and so infrastructure becomes more effective (Imami, 2013, 48).

Maintaining a System of Ethics in the Organization

For system of ethics to survive, a variety of approaches have been applied each of which has its own given limitations and advantages. Given application of a suitable blend of the above approaches by virtue of organizational exigencies, it can be surely predicted that system of ethics remain to be intact and permanent in the longer run. In some countries of the world, an organizational structure is being designed for preservation of system of ethics trying to control and spread culture of ethics. Supposedly, in New Zealand, there are three organizations in charge of maintaining organizational values, training, guidance and ethical modeling. These organizations have taken measures to form ethical culture in the organizations. The subject organizations do not release orders and try to perform duties through making culture and moral modeling. The afore-mentioned organizations give CEOs freedom and help them to succeed in their duties ethically. Through transparency of organization's data, availability of data to citizens, auditioning commissions and for investigating the complaints, they create some kind of dialogue and inter-communication of citizens and organizations. in this way, organization's health is maintained and system of ethics gains strength. Executives and employees of organizations, in a transparent environment of information, well know that moral performance best serves as style of behaving. According to Dayson, nowadays all of us live in the mirror of a house where there are thousands of mirrors hanging over walls around us and clearly reflecting our action in such a way that everybody can see those manners. Therefore, reason rules that, under such circumstances, we act in a way to show pleasant and ethical behavior. In organizational structures for having strengthened system of ethics, advisors in the ministries have been predicted to give necessary guidelines of ethics to directors and staff. In such structures, employees are ethically monitored after employment and any illegal acts are unfolded publically (Alwani, 2002, 8).

Of course, it is attempted to have reduced and direct controls as much as possible, instead they are replaced with some internal control and informal self-control. This is done to keep control mechanisms coordinating with system of ethics.

In New Zealand, organizational structure tries to make ethics be believed, internalized and institutionalized within the organizational system. Management of ethics is placed within different systems of organization and becomes part of organizational systems. Advice and aid to staff shall be kept on and everybody shall face easy and straightforward information spread. Values and administrative functions shall be properly established, perennially upgraded and spread out to everybody. General principles shall be centrally guided, ethical performances shall be accurately appraised and the system shall be continually assessed and optimized. Law of public disclosure is another approach to be made for maintaining ethics in the institutions. In this way, everybody is recommended to report any lawlessness, if observed, to the authorities concerned.

The law does not encompass administrative corruption and wrongdoing, but it involves improper decisions and poor management. Today, in most countries, particularly in the Euro zone, organizational ethics system protection is given consideration through regulated rules of free streamline of information, transparency and public awareness.

International laws and treaties like declaration of human rights, environmental protection accords affect maintenance of ethics system in the organizations. Concerning the internal mechanisms, assessment plans, bonus payment, promotion and decision-making processes should be formulated in such a way that ethical performance is encouraged and reinforced whereas non-ethical actions are weakened and decried. Promotion systems should be formed in a way to lead people of ethics, even in similar skill conditions, may climb to higher ladder of promotion in the organization. Thus, system of ethics is being made constant and consolidated. A number of institutions claim that training of ethics is the best policy for maintaining system of ethics and they have attempted to promulgate ethics by training ethics in seminars, training sessions and workshops. In these workshops and sessions, effort is made to show ethical decision-makings and measures in practice and so participants learn that how ethics can be effective on recovery of our measures.

Establishing a center for ethics is another strategy to raise ethics issues and spread ethics. The center as a counseling center gives necessary guidelines for ethics to applicants. Another mechanism for strengthening organizational system of ethics and its institutionalization in members of organization is to organize sessions aimed at bringing up ethical principles. Staff conference gives them chances to share ideas and efforts on issues of ethics, with a study of applied methods for their performances. Through such strategy, staff effectively generates ethical mentality (Imami, 2013, 51).

Effective Factors of Weakened Work Ethics

According to Marxist scientists, weakened work ethics results from self-alienated workforce in industrialized societies because worker looks at work externally without self-satisfaction. To them, industrialization of societies triggers replacement of secondary relations with primary ones, leading to reduced attachment to work (Imami, 2013, 64).

Thinkers calling into question the existence and permanence of organizations hold ethical reasons. In their opinion, the organization blocks individuality and liberty of the individual which wipes out productivity; creativity and individual initiativeness; stifles sense of commitment and responsibility; results in self-alienation of people; is inhumane and hurts personality of people and finally restricts his natural demands and growth. They hold that the organization and individual always stand in the face one another and their goals remain at odds. They exhort challenge against the phenomenon of organization believing that elimination of organization is for development, progress, exaltation and evolution of human community (Abrahamson, 1993, 11).

Ethics in the Eyes of Religion and Religious Values

According to Weber, Puritanism or chastity brought about modern doctrines in England thanks to rebellion against the Pope and church, that are typically: wasting time is the most fatal sin and human life is short and precious for salvation; sleeping is being over-condemned; those not diligent at work shall not seek divine proximity; seeking poverty and desiring to be destitute looks like being sick; being poor means humiliation before God the Almighty and seeking wealth is regarded a sin when it is achieved for sinful pleasure (Soroush, 1996, 26).

In the book, "protestant ethics", Weber points out that attitude and performance of a religious protestant sect made European modernity and capitalism emerge. They changed religious obligations into a private affair and so abandoned tradition and subordination to church. Weber finds out that majority of capitalists belong to protestant religion while, for explaining the phenomenon, looks into protestant lifestyle (Nabilu, 1999).

Based on values of protestant religion, work is being viewed as a helpful and valuable affair because it paves the ground for individual flourishing and aptitude. Therefore, protestant religion cherishes its followers such that they can believe usefulness and favorability of work and choose hard work and endeavor. As the German sociologist, Max Weber theories indicate, the newly industrialized capitalist system has developed in nations most of the population of which are protestant followers and this acknowledges the impact of protestant values (Savoji, 1995, 138).

In accordance with western models, developing nations have to develop and pursue the protestant values for removing or lessening work-alienation. But what is favored is that while protestant beliefs lead to people to personal advantages and values, the culture and values existent in developing nations are mostly social and collective, directing people towards public interests and values, egalitarianism and intimacy. Henceforth, people of such communities favor work not because of individual benefits but more for highly ethical and even religious aspirations and goals (Nabilu, 1999).

Ethics and Work in the Eyes of Islam

In Islam, government employees are considered as agents of divine kingdom; therefore, when they measure their actions by Islamic criteria, they may not disavow the responsibility to serve their colleagues and proper function of work in a just manner. At last, they will determine growth and dynamism of society. A Muslim focusing divine pleasure never sacrifices his humanity for anything and never changes his respect with anything else. Self-respect and self-esteem is focused by the Islamic ethics. That point of human spirit Islam touches on is respect and self-esteem (Motahari, 1979).

A number of Components of Work Ethics in Islam

In the Islamic system, the Prophet (s) has set a goal for his mission: "I am selected to perfect the magnitude of ethics". In this statement which is quoted from him, he cited that motives and reasons behind his prophetic mission are because he was to perfect magnitude of ethics (JavadiAmoli, 2003). The Islamic work ethics emphasizes cooperative work and considers consultation as a method to remove hurdles and avoid mistakes. Social relations in work have been encouraged to satisfy needs of people and create a balance in individual and social life. In addition, committed work stands as a source of independence and a device for personal growth (Dawish, A.Yousef, 2000, 283-302).

Proper action and committed work in life of the Prophet has been subjected to specific norms and principles, some of which are: intention, discipline, seriousness, steadfastness and constancy, strength and power and quality (Hosseini, 2001, 8-48).

The Islamic work ethics looks at creative work as a source of prosperity and perfection where hard work is being favored as worship. Those who are diligent will most likely succeed in life. On the contrary, those who are not hard workers seem to have led them to failure in life (Darwish, A.Yousef, 2000, 159-169).

Based on the Islamic doctrines, what goes below can be enumerated as the Islamic behavior in connection with the client:

Familiarity with Norms and Rules

Employee of the Islamic state cannot play a cat-and-mouse game with the client merely because the client may be unfamiliar with the rules. Someone who is referred by the client is essential to know the rules and is not expected to refer to rules in the face of referents. This way of behaving remains not to be ethically accepted on the part of an agent in the religious system (Kalhor, 2004, 55).

Observation of Norms and Moderation

It is far from dignity for a person to prefer someone over someone else or disentitle someone of his right only because of nepotism and favoritism. Law exists for paying service to people. Employee should serve everybody with no exception and observing moderation and performing duties when serving the clients with no confusion on their part are included among basic duties of employee.

Respectful Touch

Ali ('a) says to MalekAshtar: "Malek! The people for whom you want to work are either your religious brother or your fellow-being. Ali ('a)'s statement implies that government employees should not behave the clients basic on the given characteristic of being Muslim or non-Muslim. Dignity of employee in service requires him to show his respectful behavior. The agent's respectful feature associates his great attitude towards the clients (Imami, 2013, 71).

Aversion of Feeling Superior

The fact is that none of us is superior to the other. Government employees are at the service of people. The superior person is one who properly performs his duty, serving

the organization more than what he is expected. Modesty requires him, in his attitude towards the clients, to believe his service and act as he believes with a favorable duty (Kalhor, 2004, 57).

Guidance

If problems are not solved, the Islamic ethics necessitates that the client is concisely guided in a way that his problem is solved. It is our Islamic and human obligation to guide the client while he is unfamiliar with the way of solving his problem (Imami, 2013, 71).

Components of Work Ethics in NahjolBalagha

In his sermons, letters and aphorisms collected in NahjolBalagha, Imam Ali ('a) has explicated characteristics of an ethical person through enumeration of the agent or manager of the Islamic government. These characteristics are:

1. Affection and Good Behavior

Imam Ali has a good number of statements in this respect and in most cases, he recommends his agents to behave people well. By good behavior, it is meant the client should be flexible and self-restrained and lenient in treating people under different conditions.

Imam Ali says: "so the serf is not feeling well unless the ruler behaves well" (NahjolBalaghaFeydul-Islam, sermon 207). Elsewhere, he says: "Mix roughness and hardness with a little softness and smoothness and behave in kindness when good behavior is more suitable and turn to roughness when you are expected to be stern (NahjolBalaghaFeydul-Islam-letter No. 46).

Commander of the Faithful while underscoring good behavior again places it beside companionship and honesty towards people, saying that the agent should seek cheerfulness, companionship and honesty when facing the client(NahjolBalaghaFeydul-Islam-letter No. 76). This statement of Imam Ali can be interpreted as that good behavior with the inferior is that the agent should not reject companionship of others, sit where he is available to everybody and not compel someone to do something beyond his capability. Finally, prevention from behaving improperly with the inferior is included within testament of MalekAshtar, where Imam Ali says: "Lest you might treat them (the inferior) like the wild animal and be satisfied with eating them (NahjolBalaghaFeydul-Islam-letter No.53).

2. Fulfillment of Pledge

One of the important ethical features is keeping promise and making unified promise and action of officials and employees of the organization. Imam Ali in his testament says to MalekAshtar: "In case you made allegiance to your enemy and he feels safe and relieved, you shall be faithful to your promise"(NahjolBalaghaFeydul-Islam-letter No.53). Keeping promise even to enemies shows how important this is in the Islamic ethics. In fact, in the Alawiyyeh model of Islam, even enemies enjoy advantages of the Islamic government; much less the friends.

"Breach of promise results in wrath of God and people", Imam Ali says in another part of his letter and in scolding promise break (NahjolBalaghaFeydul-Islam-letter No. 53).

3. Tolerance

Level of the ethical agent's tolerance in different conditions is another feature of importance; otherwise, an intolerant manager is crushed in the face of environmental and organizational strains. Tool of management, he says, is being broad-minded (NahjolBalaghaShahidi-aphorisms 176).

4. Modesty

Modesty in man is regarded as ethical excellences which have been recommended in all religions, not to mention Islam. "If God permitted one of His bondsmen to seek selfishness and self-pride, He would let His Prophets be like that. But He stopped them being arrogant and recommended them to be modest and humble", says Imam Ali about importance of modesty before God (NahjolBalaghaFeydul-Islam, sermon 234).

"Keep your feathers down and for serf, land down your feathers"(NahjolBalaghaFeydul-Islam-letter No.27). He recommends his managers to be modest to people (NahjolBalaghaFeydul-Islam-letter No. 46).

5. Sacrifice and Remission

Another great human value is sacrifice and remission which seems necessary to managers and employees of organization. Manager who cannot accept apology of others or can overlook trivial errors of his staff can never absorb the inferior and remain reliable to them.

"So forgive them with your remission as much as you like God to bless you with His munificence and forgiveness……and never be remorseful of remission and never be happy with punishment", Imam Ali says in his testament to MalekAshtar (NahjolBalaghaFeydul-Islam, letter No. 53).

6.Endeavor and Perseverance

Endeavor and effort is one of the necessities of every job. Nowadays, scholars have discovered that aptitude and intelligence quotient form success of a less percentage. It is endeavor and perseverance that mainly contributes to gain of desirable results. In the Alawiyyeh model of Islam, effort has been emphasized as one the ethical and human virtues and everyone is rewarded as to his efforts.

"No right is gained unless effort is made", says Imam Ali (NahjolBalaghaFeydul-Islam-sermon 29).

He also says: "Whoever pursues something, he shall find some part or all of it"(NahjolBalaghaFeydul-Islam-aphorisms 379).

7.Moderation

Moderation necessitates success and triumph. Moderation should be observed for all situations. Going to extremes makes problems in the organization which will be hard to remove. In his testament to MalekAshtar, Imam Ali calls him on exertion of moderate right, saying: "Something you should care most is moderate right" (NahjolBalaghaFeydul-Islam-letter No. 53).

8. Respecting the Creatures

Among the other ethical excellences that should be observed in workplace is to take equal look at all creatures and pay them a tribute. Regretfully, these days, people in different countries are commonly looked down on because of their race, skin color and religion. Such things happen as a result of paying no respect to all beings as divine creatures.

He is ordered, Imam Ali says, not to annoy people as they are your partners and brothers in religion (Nahjol Balagha Feydul-Islam-letter No. 26).

9. Optimism and Certainty

Pessimism and suspicion are among the unpleasant features of man. Basically, whoever suffers from such mannerism, he shall be beneficial neither for himself nor for others. In the Alawiyyeh model of Islam, optimism and lack of suspicion rendered by agents towards the inferior have been underlined. This goes so far as Imam Ali tells MalekAshtar in his testament: "Nothing seems better and stronger than extending goodness to the serf, reducing their expenses and abandoning the imposition

over him. So one should do in this way to obtain his optimism" (NahjolBalaghaFeydul-Islam-letter No. 53).

He also explains privileges of optimism in this way: "Verily, optimism keeps away from you suffering a lot" (NahjolBalaghaFeydul-Islam-letter No.53).

Developing the Organizational Ethics

Institutionalization across the board is a way to upgrade quality and quantity of products, safety and security of staff and society, battle against moral and financial corruption of staff, pay attention to dignity of staff, fairly observe the rules and regulations have a dynamic state of organization and indiscriminate employment and appointment of people. It is in general a way to have increased quality work life as well as a quality society in which the organization functions.

When pursuing the moral criteria, economic function and ethical function in the organization should be balanced. Through such balance, ethical behavior of the organization will become practicable (Arabi, 1998, 58).

Norms for ethics act as formal and legal doctrines, violation of which may be followed by punishment of people. Yet, attention is to be paid that, as seen earlier, observation of ethical criteria predominantly depends upon individual and social factors (Imami, 2013, 89).

Conclusion

Presently, ethics has entered into organizations in the shape of ethical charters and professional behavior rules. In recent decade, the subject-matter has been increasingly given consideration, causes of which can be seen in the events of recent decades like: Globalization, expanded de-centralization, administration tendency, increased job-trade relations of GOs or private sector, expanded social demands and growing demand for social responsibility and responsiveness on the part of political and legal authorities. Administrative ethics has now been changed into a reformist movement in public administration which deals with study and recognition of administrative human behavior norms and rules and issues like: Establishment of ethics charter, behavior rules, ethics training, ethics management, ethical decision-making, ethical climate and culture and ethical infrastructure.

To constitute a society created by good ethics, professional ethics dimensions should be considered as pragmatic charter rather than being merely dummy. Careful attention given to global standards of professional ethics can reveal newly valuable dimensions. Of course, consideration given to criteria on which there is more or less a general agreement can provide world-embracing principles to lay the cornerstones of modern ethics-oriented organization. Of course, it should not be imagined that legal and moral standards always stand in harmony. That is to say moral behavior can always be gauged as a rule, observation of which amounts to observation of ethical cases. In some cases, there might be no law levied, but it is regarded moral or immoral behavior. For example, there might be no law levied for helping a person whose car is broken down on the road or a person who is on the verge of being drown in the sea, but it is a moral behavior to help both. Employees who slander behind their boss or colleagues commit an immoral manner but law has kept silent in this regard. Of course, in cases like robbery, murder, abortion, law and ethics act in coordination (Hazer, 1992, 94-95).

The organization assessment system should be designed in such a way that immoral behavior is barred while moral behavior is encouraged. Also, reward and bonus system of the organization should stand by those who favor moral rules more than others (Imami, 2013, 90). Rules and regulations of the organization should be rational, clear-cut and far from ambiguity. Such rules and regulations pave the grounds for moral behavior (Mamizadeh, 1994, 82-83).

To this aim, if religious and value-oriented principles of the Islamic community overfilled with plenty of models and instructions for applying professional ethics in the institutions can be specifically taken into account in all levels of the organization, particularly at high-level management.

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