



The value of quality encompasses all aspects of life, including business and its management, and is strongly emphasised in Islam

Quality and perfection as espoused in Islam

WORK ETHICS: High standard of workmanship and excellence are values exalted by Allah and quality gurus

IN the 19th century, human thought in the West especially began to perceive a special character for management as an independent phenomenon from the conventional business perspective — “total quality” — which refers to those “best practices” that permit highly satisfactory end-products and services from all sides along with every available and variant phase.

However, true quality in Islam differs significantly in that it entails a more complete set of values; a system that goes well beyond the measurement of any deviation from given standards.

The ultimate goal in Islam is to obtain the blessing and pleasure of Allah, both in this world and in the hereafter. Hence, in this expanded context, producing goods and providing services with the best characteristics should not only be done through the elimination or reduction of deviations from established norms, but mainly by targeting moral practices that avoid any sin; including even the offence of involuntarily wastage.

Quality has been incorporated as an essential component of Islamic civilisation for nearly 1,500 years. Excellent workmanship is the road to success and prosperity in this

world as well as in the hereafter. Without perfection, work remains a far cry from the desired and is rejected.

Excellent workmanship is also a primal cause of superiority in this world. How else could Japan have come out from a nuclear holocaust to become a nation with a strong economy and advanced scientific civilisation? So was the case with Germany, and today, Malaysia testifies to the merits of excellent workmanship and overall quality.

Words like *jawda*, *ihsan*, and *itqan*, as used in Islamic literature, refer to quality, perfection and a passion for excellence, benevolence and continual self-evaluation and so forth. *Itqan* means goodness and stands for the level of quality work. It means, “to arrange and dispose of things in a scientific and artistic way in order to obtain the most perfect results”.

Ihsan also connotes several other implications such as *muraqaba* (surveillance), which implies diligent control and inspection. *Ihsan* also means doing “good” for one’s self by abiding or eschewing what Allah

commands or forbids.

The word also means to be nice or perfect in relationships with fellow Muslims and other human beings. In other words, it means an inclination to do kind or charitable acts, or acts which intend or show kindness and goodwill; implying also to perform more than what is required. Above all, it means perfection in any undertaking or sphere of life’s journey.

Islam certainly highlights *itqan* and invites man to ascend the ladder of perfection in several Quranic verses. The concept of quality is, therefore, not a new thing to the Islamic narrative.

We, as Muslims, are encouraged by our religion to perform our duties and undertakings in a most perfect manner and to continually strive for improvement. Accordingly, all verses that speak of *ihsan* are included in the perspective of “quality management”.

Allah also rewards those who work for good as written in Surat Alkhaf, verse 30: “As to those who believe and work with righteousness, verily we shall not suffer to perish the reward of any who do a single righteous deed.”

The Quran also indicates how perfectly Allah has made everything, calling upon all men to perfect their work and further mentions how it is that Allah loves this from His slaves.

Since the Quran emphatically commends quality and excellence in workmanship, and further commands believers to attain unto both, it is no small wonder then that the sayings and doings of the Prophet oblige Muslims to commit themselves to excellence in their crafts, trade, professionalism and in every action taken in every aspect of living.

The Prophet always called upon people to perfect their work. On the authority of Aisha, when he saw a little gap between bricks in a grave, the Prophet immediately ordered his companions to fill it, saying: “Allah loves that whenever any of you does something, you should perfect it”. This matter concerned only a “gap” that caused neither harm nor benefit to the dead, yet the Prophet did not permit it to remain in that condition, and so ordered that it also should get its share of perfection.

In his commentary, Al Manawi said: “Regarding the hadith ‘Allah loves that whenever any of you do something, you should perfect it’, this means perfecting your work. Therefore, every worker has to master his job. Regardless of the amount of recompense, he has to do his work to perfection as prescribed.”

Moreover, Prophet Muhammad (saw) asked us to act with perfection in holding any position, forming our work, and fulfilling our obligations.

In his saying, the Prophet made providers of services responsible to their subordinates (Bukhari and Muslim). He said that we all have responsibilities in society as a whole, and these responsibilities should be held just by attending to our approaches: perfection of Allah, the best state of ethics within, governs society and to ensure task and behaviour.

The meaning implies the organisation to attain the most extension of exclusively emphasised principles and values such as loving, completing it in assessment, accountability, corporation, merit and eternal improvement.

Furthermore, in all aspects of business and its management, strongly emphasised, for example, the Prophet’s follower should be better than tomorrow’s shadow. This enjoins the improvement of quality gurus are present.

In conclusion, only exist quality including ethics, and standards of organisational aspects of life.



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