

# **The Charismatic Leadership of the Founders of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) – H.H. Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan and H.H. Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum**

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*Lives of great men all remind us*

*We can make our lives sublime*

*And, departing, leave behind us*

*Footprints on the sand of time.*

**Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**

Founders of the United Arab Emirates. Ahmed, G., Miller, A. and Al-Sayed, R.

## **ABSTRACT**

*Charismatic leadership is an ability to communicate and behave in ways that reach followers in an emotional way, to inspire and motivate them and their personality is endowed with supernatural, superhuman and exceptional powers within a quality-set. This is a case study of the charismatic, historically in the development of welfare, and business, enabling leadership with reference to the founders and promoters or indeed architects of the UAE within its transition into a global business state.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Leadership is a rising management discipline in view of the fact that it is accounting for the successful and satisfactory running of business organizations. If anything, in the highly globalized and competitive commercial atmosphere of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, leadership appears to be becoming an important issue. The new business environment appears to call for quite charismatic leaders who appeal to the global community and ought to be of global reach and concern. Among other things, the leadership factor has been brought to the fore by the financial crisis of 2008, with many calling the crisis a leadership crisis with particularly big bank leadership in the United States of America going astray (Ahmed, 2015). Thus, Leadership appears to be becoming an increasing factor of importance. It is being displayed that the performance of the companies and their public standing can be greatly elucidated in terms of their leadership traits, represented by the CEOs, Presidents/Chairmen and the Boards themselves, and inclusive of the work-force. They are all comrades in-arms- for the company, its welfare and public services. Business leaders as Gates and Buffett are national and international iconic figures not only in respect of business prowess but also in terms of their respective social and human concerns. They have many business, life and social lessons to convey, especially Buffett; not only in wealth creation, but also in its personal non-ostentatious use. According to him, whatever wealth appears to belong to the society at

large. He has immense faith in the US finance system and its community irrespective of the rise of the U-States from the present downturn-D-turn.

However, leadership appears to be a scarce factor. The long exercise indulged in finding a replacement to Steven A Ballmer in (2013) at Microsoft is too well known to be recounted here, and finally the mantle had fallen onto Satya Nadendla, an Indian resident of the USA. Thus, leadership (L-Ship) has no national boundaries. What is needed is creativity of outlook in the age of globalization and borderless on and off-line business. It's also well known that a leadership decision is on at Buffett's Hathaway and one does not know on whom the mantle may fall, and it would be international business leadership news. Interestingly, in India's country of 1.25bn people, at the premier IT Company Infosys in Bangalore -India's equivalent of Silicon Valley, Infosys has a visiting and transient long distance CEO from the USA, named Vishal Sikka.

Here located, -of course, is a compendium of leaders from the mediocre to difference of understanding inclusive of lasting reputation and leadership imprints. A case in point has risen and has greatly increased within the Arab World, is the 20th century's self-created nation of the United Arab Emirates -The UAE-appears to be a special case? The UAE is a rising international Arab star; by 2021, the Golden Jubilee year of the Nation, the nation is expected to attain global golden heights of education per capita for GDP (Ahmed, 2015). Recently, the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during a discovery, appreciative or reconnaissance visit to the Emirates, on the eve of the Independence Day celebrations of India (15<sup>th</sup> August), the premier extolled fulsome praise for the country for its foresighted and progressive nature since its founding unto the present day (Modi, 2015). The credit for the global heights initiative of the nation should go to the visionary founding leadership of the country.

This overview is addressed to the Charismatic leadership of the founding fathers or the architects of the United Arab Emirates and has demonstrated as a lesson in true leadership. It is a modest attempt at presenting an outstanding case of charismatic leadership of lasting value and forever impresses foot-prints in the sands of the OMD-Objective, Methodology & Data.

The objective(s) are to present the case of charismatic or historic leadership of the highest order and draw leadership values and lessons (V & Ls). It is setting the right tone for an organization which is of prime importance. The organizations, of which nations should be considered as organizations of the highest order, which is of supreme importance. Organizations live and work for both their values and subsequent status.

The Data of the study pertains to the area, population, and national per capita income, etc., of the UAE and its transformation in value.

The Methodology is to view the vision envisioned for the new nation, its principles and their benefits to the nation for both its people and the international community. That is the vision and mission (V&M) and the reality of the nation within the continuance of a leadership tradition. Last and not the least is how it strikes originally and decisively. The UAE was envisioned to stand for its people and nature and Arab and human brotherhood. The UAE founding leadership was moved by the higher human principles and values, which must be guiding principles of the nation today. Is it the case? As the late Sheikh Zayed (the UAE Founding Father) once stated *"Past years have emphasized the importance of unity as a vital necessity for providing a better life to the people, for ensuring stability in the country and for realizing the hopes and aspirations of our people."*

This is the first attempt at unravelling the new forward, and its exemplary Arab leadership deep-rooted in history with tradition and yet visionary and progressive, encompassing an Arab Renaissance. They appear to have established an efficient overall Arab leadership model, for the Arabian Peninsula.

Therefore its aim culminated to rise to a global level of governance. This leadership model is worth exploring and evaluating to gauge the nation's leadership values and its lessons to impart.

In what follows, firstly, a presentation is made in reference to the charismatic leadership category, which is followed by the building of the new nation of the United Arab Emirates, as a new and rising star on the international horizon, with the foresighted leadership behind the founding principles of this new nation commensurate to their lasting legacy to the world in general. The Arab world in particular is giving almost a new connotation to the leadership concept, unitedly, the mantle of which is still being instilled by the UAE leadership. It appears to be one of the most enlightened, and appears to be catalytic to the Arab world and has placed it at the top levels of the world leadership picture.

## **LEADERSHIP & CHARISMATIC HISTORICAL LEADERSHIP**

The word or the concept of leadership, quite understandably, is a wide and complex one; liable to many meanings or definitions and open to interpretations. It can be from the mundane to a high interpretation. There are different grades and leadership, from the ordinary to the sublime then onto the most lasting category or legacy within the leadership. The nation's sublimity and charismatic categorization via history had led to the creation and the founding of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in 1971. This was a subsequent momentous event of history. Obviously as a newly-founded nation, it does not find a place in the leadership Hall of fame, however it is automatically there as the most distinguished leadership for the generations-past, present and the foreseeable future. None of the existing traits of leadership science, appears to cover the historical category, but charismatic leadership values are somewhat coming close to the category, and it seems that the time for leadership science will make its way and define itself in its own original way thus, continuing to move the nation and its great millions of people ahead.

One of the earliest leadership texts gives simple and matter-of-fact definition of leadership as something like the 'direction' and 'coordination' of the work of a 'group of members' (Fielders, 1967).

A 21<sup>st</sup> century definition of L-ship appears to define it something akin to social problem solving' (Mumford et.al, 2000).

Further into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, another definition of leadership as the 'ability' to build teams and get results (Curphy & Hogan, 2012).

These definitions are correct as a premise within their perspectives of leadership. However, leadership as a thesis appears to be wide and greater, a rare quality is not to think of just the self but of others... encompassing the story at large as it evokes complete trust, faith, safety, security and well-being. It is not a common human quality and hence its scarcity. Leadership is to say, one –in-a million of occurrences. It evokes belongingness. Gates, for example, is in tune with millions all over the world because of his qualities of both the utilization of his head-and-heart. Buffett feels that a good part of his wealth should go to the needy. Azim Premji of India representing Wipro, often travels by a common mode of transport and feels himself as one amid the common people of India, Mahatma Gandhi, the father of Indian Nation, 1869-1948, had dwelled in ashrams or hermitage like huts, to feel as one among the millions of poor in India. In the UAE, the political leadership is very close to its people in a similar gaze with the desert as its pathos.

The credit for introducing the game changer in historical and charismatic leadership goes to the noted sociologist Max Weber (1964). Charismatic leaders and charismatic leadership are far reaching in historical consequence. Among these in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were notables as Mahatma Gandhi, as the

founder of colonial free, independent, democratic republic of India, Nelson Mandela of 'color' freedom of new South Africa, and for the US civil rights' movement Dr. Martin Luther King (Hughes et.al., 2015).

In addition to this distinguished leadership list, the founding fathers of the federation of the United Arab Emirates-UAE, which within no time, had made a name-and-fame in the ancient and historical and distinguished Arab World and the world in general-all due to its visionary founders and their outstanding leadership skills, placing the UAE at the forefront of Arab nations' league tables.

The heroic, historic and outstanding founding fathers of the UAE was H.E. Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan (1855 to 1909) the Ruler of Abu Dhabi at the time, and the current ruler of Dubai H.H.Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum. (born 1949 & Current Prime Minister) Their distinguished successors continue preside over the nation of seven federating units with great distinction as President and Vice-President-cum-Prime Minister, respectively. The new nation stands as a forever a great monument of achievement in leadership from its founders representing Arab unity and a renaissance. Marching forward the Arab identity, uniquely, not coming into conflict or confrontation with other equally prominent global identities, culture, language and religion, both East and West. The UAE, in summary, seems, a unique state in gratitude to the great vision envisaged for the new state by its eminent founders. The formation of the United Arab Emirates was an important historical event which was very interesting as a conceptualization to realization in these days of dissensions within many countries of the world and their subsequent breaking up.

## THE NEW STATE

The seven constituents of the UAE ruled by six original families individually and collectively, trace their historical roots to the third millennium BCE and even earlier as cradle trade, voyages, fish-date-pearl farming, with camels, horses etcetera. The seven principalities of the UAE today are greatly transformed entities with high rise buildings, great shopping malls, thriving businesses, buzzing airways and others, as perhaps in no other Arab lands and many non-Arab countries. The new nation UAE, an innovation itself in a country formation, had a simple beginning with quite laudatory objectives, set forth by its founding patriarchs who will go down in leadership history as well as being shining examples among the brightest of charismatic nation builders.

The emirates constituting the UAE-Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ras al-Khaimah, Ajman, Fujairah, and Umm al Qaiwan had each a long history dating back from the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE to the foundation of the composite state in 1971 marked by mutual feuds, rise and fall of dynasties with colonial sway and protection then finally freedom. However, the negatives including a good deal of underdevelopment within its conquest features of poverty, poor literacy, poor social and economic infrastructure. From the former progression of the new 'tiny' state to the first ranks of nations as an international brand and global name, is one of the most fascinating chapters of contemporary history. (Rehman, 2008)

In the 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the constituents of the UAE, like its big 'neighbor' India, were the Portuguese, Dutch, French and English playgrounds for trade and maritime supremacy until the English edged out the other contenders. "By the 1760s, the British had asserted their naval dominance over the region, thereby ensuring the protection of their primary trade route to India, the UAE sheikhdoms signed an agreement with Britain and had become the Trucial States of the British protection. The truce continued till the 1960s when England, as part of decolonization of the post-world war II efforts, to silence the Gulf by the end of 1971. So they had thought; what is next? As a masterstroke, under the gaze of the states' manly leadership of HEs Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan and Sheikh Rashid bin Sayeed

Al Maktoum, it was negotiated and decided that the Trucial States to remain together as a federation to be named as the United Arab Emirates-UAE, and this new Union in result came into being on February 10, 1972: -a great date in Arab History (The Report Dubai, 2015).

Therefore, a new Arab nation was born on due to the eminent charismatic leadership which was deemed worthy of a great leadership case study. The UAE's leadership had conjured a great vision for this new state. *The founding fathers* of the UAE appear to have given an elevated view of leadership, and governance for the common good.

## VISIONARY

The UAE was not envisioned against any state as a form of war state, but fully welfare development and a peace state for its populous. Perhaps, very few states partake this characteristic letter of spirit. The vision and mission of the new state was born-out out in the **ringing words** of senior founder leader H.E. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the supreme ruler of the major federating unit or state or emirate of Abu Dhabi and the First President of the new Union, since when the presidency in deference to the major partnership of Abu Dhabi has been accorded to this first principality, which is no small instance of the cohesiveness of the new state (United Arab Emirates, 2009). *"A country is not measured by the size of its area on the map. A country is truly measured by its heritage and culture."* He reiterated this further by saying: *"On land and in the sea, our forefathers lived and survived in this environment. They were able to do so because they recognized by instinct and because of their sensitivity to issues relating to their land the need to conserve it."*

The UAE is well structured and well constitutionalized state with a supreme council comprised of the Union (CPU, the Council of Ministers or Cabinet, and a 40 member Federal National Council -FNC) or Parliament, President and Vice-President-cum-Prime Minister, with Dubai as the second major constituent of the Union.

The Union was fortunate enough to enjoy the visionary and missionary leadership of the founders for a considerable length of time of 1990 and 2004, respectively, in which this young renaissance state could not only get it self well established but also could launch itself under its charismatic, historical leadership into the higher ranks geopolitically. The UAE's "founders" is a case of foresighted, eminent leadership of modernity, encompassing many leadership values and lessons to be learned. The UAE's founding was a great leadership story. The new union without any dissensions, disturbances, violence, bloodshed, coups, agitations and strikes, terror and so on, could make steady and swift progress on all fronts, to be known as a trail-blazer and pace setter with superb macro and micro economic business and developmental management, not all due to oil (Rehman, 2008 pp. 100-104).

## ADVANCEMENT

The socio-economic advancement of the young union, appears to be nothing short of a development 'miracle', from the bottom-level of underdevelopment to the global heights of development, which, without any exaggeration, appears to put forth a new development model, a new leadership model and hypothesis. It was all accomplished without any socio-economic upheavals and less and almost zero in human cost, which is quite unusual, compared against many tearful developments' (de-developments) narratives. Development, is needed without speaking, however, this must be of the people, by the people and for the people, as this exact principle appears to be well operated by the founding and the present

leadership of the UAE. The evidence is very much available H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Ruler of Dubai, Vice President & Prime Minister of the UAE, authored *Flashes of Thought* (2013). The foreword of H.E. President Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan's embodied this publication.

The result of the V & M (vision & Mission) of the founding and succeeding leadership was the emergence of a 'mighty' but small country called the UAE, overtaking many countries of the world in economic advancement, management and leadership, making leadership emerge as the key factor of development and also providing the golden rules of leadership. The nation moved into the territory of global giants –The United States, China, Japan, Germany, and the United Kingdom. Inclusive of the State of India, it appears to have special and warmer trading relations due to economic migration. Significantly, with India's cooperation, the UAE intends to be on a Mar's mission or voyage, breaking another record (Economic Times, 2015). The UAE may be the first Arab nation to reach the Mars.

#### **The Little Giant UAE – 2014**

Constituents	7
Formation date	December 2, 1971
Area	83,600 Sq. Km
Population (m)	5.87 million
GDP (AED) billion	1401.25
GDP Per Capita (AED)	238596..11
Invest/GDP %	24.36 %
Inflation	1.51%
Export Growth	6.2 %
Import Growth	5.51%
BOT	+
Government Expenditure/ GDP %	21.97 %
Debt/GDP %	18.24 %

*Source: IMF, Vide The Report Dubai 2015, p. 15.*

Thus, the picture that emerges from the UAE's economy, is of high investment, high growth, high per capita income, affluence, export or X-driven, favorable BOT, high government expenditure, low debt and inflation welfare one, which is quite an enlightening and promising picture.

#### **LEADERSHIP, PRINCIPLES & LESSONS**

In the case of Arab nations, whether old/new, oil invariably comes to the fore as the most important factor, pushing the L-ship factor into the background. Oil is the most natural resource in the Emirates; bringing in annually handsome revenues that go into dazzling development infrastructures of the country (BP, 2006). It however, does not rule out the charismatic leadership of the UAE's founder and the unique characteristics. It springs from Royalty/Regality from cited long historical roots, but for the purpose of the common people. It is still the guiding force of the UAE as stated by its President Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan (2013). *"Like brothers, we recognize and honour the teachings of our nation's founding fathers"*.

The leadership is for the nation within its development of its population's welfare is echoed and reechoed by the Prime Minister of the nation.

*"The government's job is to achieve happiness for its people. We see the government as an active part of society - never as something that is different and isolated. Our citizens are the first, second and third priority. This is the path set for our government"* by Sheikh Khalifa (Al Maktoum, 2013, pp. 3-4).

And there is an altogether, a new, novel and elevated and impacting definition of L-ship. “But, today, the concept of leadership is much more far reaching. It is working for ‘hose around’. It is leaving ever lasting memory, contribution (Al Maktoum, 2013, pp. 62-63).

## CONCLUSION

Thus it is a case of royal, historical leadership of a nation’s inception, nation building and the provision of forever direction. Its principles are a service for the good of the people. Its lessons are of human concern.

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