

ETHICS of LEADERSHIP

Servant Leadership

As you read the material for our next class, keep the questions below in mind. To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages. Keep in mind that there are two basic kinds of information that you need to look for in the reading:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, *it is information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible conclusion about an issue, rather than another.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting.

Reading

- Greenleaf, R. K. (2002). The Servant as Leader. In L. C. Spears (Ed.), *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (25th Anniversary ed., pp. 21–61). New York: Paulist Press.
- Sarayrah, Y. K. (2004, January). Servant Leadership in the Bedouin-Arab Culture. *Global Virtue Ethics Review*, 5(3), 58–79.

Background

In contrast with the ethical egoism advocated by Ayn Rand, Robert Greenleaf presents a moral theory of leadership based on the idea that the leader ought to, first and foremost, serve his or her followers. The reading from Yasin Sarayrah provides a case study that attempts to illustrate how Islamic/Bedouin/Arab culture reflects significant elements of servant leadership. In the aftermath of the Arab Spring, it is interesting to think how servant leadership could serve as a natural model.

Questions

1. What does Greenleaf mean by servant leadership? What is the difference between how a leader is chosen and how service is chosen? What is the ultimate goal or purpose of a servant leader? How exactly are leaders supposed to lead others when they are “servants first”?
2. In what ways is servant leadership different from the style of leadership advocated by Ayn Rand? Based on what Greenleaf says, is servant leadership best understood as a form of problem solving, altruism, or something else entirely?
3. Who was Sheikh Hajj Ali? Why does Sarayrah believe he was a servant-leader? In what ways is Islamic/Bedouin/Arab culture is compatible with and encouraging for servant leadership?