

## Customer Relationship Management from the Viewpoint of the Qur'ān and Nahj al-Balāgha

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### Abstract

One of the right demands of the Iranian society 42 years after the glorious victory of the Islamic Revolution is the establishment of the pure Islamic values in all spheres of the society, especially in the economic and business decision making arena. The purpose of this study is to identify and explain the factors and principles of customer-orientedness and customer relationship from the viewpoint of the Qur'ān and Nahj al-balāgha. Therefore, this descriptive survey is an applied research project in terms of purpose, and uses library research for data collection. The obtained results led to the identification of 15 factors, which were classified into theoretical and practical principles. The theoretical principles involve right-centeredness, the attainment of the divine satisfaction, the consideration of the customer's desires, sincerity in transactions, and the agreement of the transaction with the Islamic orders. The practical principles include reasonable profits, observing equity, rational trust in the customer, staying away from underselling, staying away from hoarding, patience, amiability with the customers, providing good services, timely meeting of the customer's needs, and praying God to grant the grace of serving people.

**Keywords:** Practical principles, Theoretical principles, Qur'ān, Customer relationship management, Nahj al-balāgha

### Introduction

In the common management view, the reason behind the attention paid to the customer's satisfaction is the attainment of profits. In this stance, the customers' satisfaction with the quality of the products and the way they receive them has an outstanding role in the continuation of the seller's economic activity, and causes the customers' to make less negative reactions to price increase and to be more inclined to accept higher prices. This finally leads to the increased profits for the seller (Drummond et al., 2012).

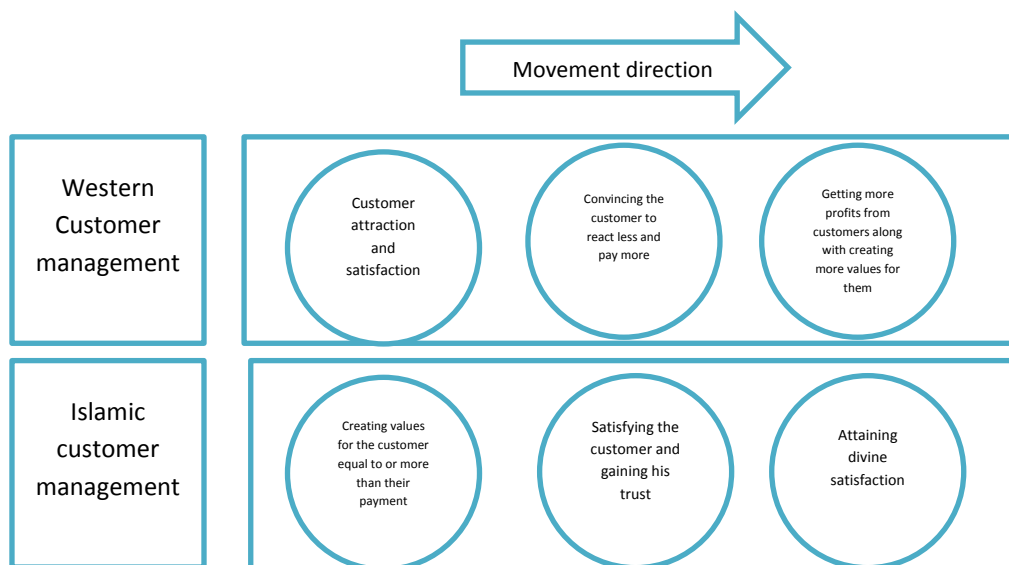
However, the reason behind the efforts to satisfy the customer in the divine and Islamic viewpoints is different from the materialistic viewpoints of the Western economic schools (Hashim, 2014: 155–159). In the Islamic worldview, the path to God's vicinity goes through serving His Servants (Amīrshāhī, 2011: 221-273). Therefore, there is a consistent relationship between His and their satisfaction, in a way that in the human interactions – especially in the legal deals – the attainment of God's satisfaction is not possible without satisfying His Servants (Ḥusaynī, 2012: 91-110). Of course, satisfying them per se is not sufficient, as it is not always the desirable and favorable case, and the attainment of the Sublime God's

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satisfaction is not limited to the attainment of His Servants' satisfaction (Nahj al-balāgha, 2009, letter 53: 403). Nonetheless, it is one of the most appropriate and valuable ways that has been greatly recommended in the Islamic narrations. Therefore, we might consider the attainment of the customers' satisfaction in line with the attainment of the divine satisfaction (Panāhī Burūjirdī, 2011: 157). On the other hand, the Islamic teachings introduce the ultimate goal of all deeds and actions to be the attainment of the divine satisfaction and nearness to God (Thawāqib, 2012: 1-25). The noble Prophet (s) tells Abūdhar Ghaffārī about the importance of correcting one's motivations and the necessity of having the intention of nearness to God in any deed, "It is apt to have divine motivation in doing any deed, even sleeping and eating" (Ṭabrisī, 1991: 46).

Therefore, in the light of the foregoing points, we might illustrate the customer management philosophy from the viewpoint of Islam and the West as follows.



**Figure 1.** Comparison of the Islamic and Western customer management viewpoints (developed by the authors)

On the other hand, one of the right demands of our society after 42 years of the glorious victory of the Islamic Revolution is the establishment of the pure Islamic values in all spheres of the society, especially the economic and business decision making arenas (Ma‘šūmīmihr, 2011: 103-137). Therefore, since the review of the related literature shows that no study had covered this topic, the present study was carried out to fill this scientific and practical gap. In fact, this study wants to answer the foundational question, "What factors constitute customer relationship management in Islam?"

### *Literature review*

The review of the related literature indicated that there exists a limited research on the customer relationship management in Islam, which shows the importance of the present study. One of the studies in this regard is that of Tawallā’ī et al. (2008). After explaining the concept of customer, his needs, and his satisfaction, they examined the verses and narrations related to this topic in three general levels. The first level focuses on the principles of customer-orientedness in Islam, including the cases that form the basis of all transactions; if they are violated, the deals will face problems. The second level emphasizes the methods of transaction and the rules about the way to treat the customers, including the obligations and

prohibitions as well as the orders related to transactions. The third level regards the way the customer should be treated.

Since customer management is considered as one of the principles of Islamic management and marketing management, a review of the following studies is helpful.

**Table 1.** A summary of the studies done on management as viewed by Islam and Imām ‘Alī (a)

Researcher(s)	Results
1 Wilson (2006)	In Islam, the transaction should be agreed upon by both parties and should be done with complete freedom. The faith of the Muslim person directs all his actions. All business transactions should agree with Islamic laws. The Islamic ethics makes it necessary to provide correct and timely information about the product.
2 Adnan (2013)	In Islam, the axis of everything is God. Customer-oriented marketing leads to the improvement of marketing factors. Marketing and providing licit products is necessary.
3 Makārim Shīrāzī (1992)	The root of Islamic management is the Oneness of God. The Islamic management models and principles include the principle of kindness, the principle of punishment, the principle of ambitiousness, the principle of organization, and the principle of realism. The main motivation of Islamic management is spiritual.
4 Ṭayyib (2010)	The management method based on the commands of Imām ‘Alī (a) in the book Nahj al-balāgha is as follows. Preparation: being responsible and working with devotion The ethical virtues of the manager: piety, obedience to God, self-control, simplicity of life, staying away from arrogance, etc. Decision making: agreement with the right, justness, people’s satisfaction, consultation, etc. Orders and activities: well-thought, timely, definitive.
5 Tawakkulī Muḥammadī (2012)	The managerial principles recommended by Imām ‘Alī (a) are as follows. Human principles Order and organization Self-control and suppression of anger Patience Treating people well Personal development Justice-orientedness Openness to criticism Involving people Lawfulness Being responsible Staying away from materialism Not misusing the public treasury of Muslims Fighting against bribery Apologizing for one’s mistakes
6 Dalwī et al. (2013)	The principles of management from the viewpoint of Imām ‘Alī (a) are as follows. Right-centeredness Trusting God Faith Justice-orientedness Self-control Serving people Sticking to one’s words Openhandedness Generosity Optimism Goal-orientedness Correct planning Supervision Patience etc.

Resource: developed by the authors

*The principles of customer relationship management from the viewpoint of the Qur'ān and Nahj al-balāgha*

Based on the review of the literature review, the principles of customer management relationships in Islam can be classified as theoretical and practical principles. These are explained in detail in the following lines.

### **The theoretical principles of customer relationship management**

#### *Attainment of divine satisfaction*

In Islam, all human deeds should be based on the divine orders in order to satisfy God. Numerous verses in the noble Qur'ān refer to this point directly or indirectly. Some of these are presented here.

- Wherewith Allāh guideth all who seek His good pleasure to ways of peace and safety, and leadeth them out of darkness, by His will, unto the light, guideth them to a path that is straight. (Qur'ān 5:16)
- ... Allāh will be well pleased with them [those who act for His satisfaction], and they with Him. They are the Party of Allāh. Truly it is the Party of Allāh that will achieve Felicity. (Qur'ān 58: 22)
- ... Well-pleased is Allāh with them, as are they with Him: for them hath He prepared gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein forever: that is the supreme felicity (Qur'ān 9:100)
- If only they had been content with what Allāh and His Messenger gave them, and had said, "Sufficient unto us is Allāh! Allāh and His Messenger will soon give us of His bounty: to Allāh do we turn our hopes!" (that would have been the right course) (Qur'ān 9:59)
- Allāh will say: "This is a day on which the truthful will profit from their truth: theirs are gardens, with rivers flowing beneath,- their eternal Home: Allāh well-pleased with them, and they with Allāh: That is the great salvation (Qur'ān 5:119)
- Their reward is with Allāh: Gardens of Eternity, beneath which rivers flow; they will dwell therein forever; Allāh well pleased with them, and they with Him: all this for such as fear their Lord and Cherisher (Qur'ān 98:8)

Therefore, considering the general address of the aforementioned verses, we might maintain that trying to attain the Divine satisfaction when dealing with customers influences the performance of the organization as well. In addition to the noble Qur'ān, Nahj al-balāgha is also full of commands that indicate the necessity of the consideration of God's orders in every matter. Some of these are referred to here.

"Obey Allāh in all your affairs because Allāh's obedience has precedence over all other things" (Nahj al-balāgha, 2009, letter 69: 435).

"I advise you to fear Allāh, O my child, abide by His commands, fill your heart with remembrance of Him and cling to hope from Him. No connection is more reliable than the connection between you and Allāh provided you take hold of it" (ibid, letter 31: 371).

"And the insults of a reviler should not stop you in matters of Allāh" (ibid).

"Your worship should be for Him, your eagerness should be towards Him, and your fear should be of Him" (ibid: 375).

"He has ordered him ... to help Allāh the Glorified, with his heart, hand and tongue, because Allāh whose name is Sublime takes the responsibility for helping him who helps Him, and for protecting him who gives Him support" (ibid, letter 53: 403).

“Allow rights to whomsoever it is due, whether near you or far from you. In this matter, you should be enduring and watchful even though it may involve your relations and favorites, and keep in view the reward of that which appears burdensome on you because its reward is handsome” (ibid: 417).

### *Right-centeredness and justice*

In all Islamic discussions, right-centeredness and justice have a high position. It is noted in the Qur’ān 2:42, “And cover not Truth with falsehood, nor conceal the Truth when ye know (what it is).” Although this verse does not directly address customer-orientedness, we might take it as expressing one of the principles of customer-orientedness due to its general address.

### *Justice-orientedness*

Another principle of Islamic marketing is justice-orientedness (Tawallā’ī, 2008: 53-115). The Sublime God says in the Qur’ān, “Allāh commands justice, the doing of good ...” (Qur’ān 16:90).

Due to the importance of justice-orientedness, this issue has not been ignored by the Commander of the Faithful (a). He says, “Act on justice and keep aloof from violence and injustice” (Nahj al-balāgha, 2009, saying 476: 531), and “... to us, all men are equal in the matter of right” (ibid, letter 64: 437).

This shows that organizations should observe justice in all arenas to attract customers.

### *Controlling the whims of soul*

One of the ethical vices that ruin the worldly and otherworldly lives of people is following the whims of soul. People will move toward blissfulness up to the extent they stay away from this vice. Likewise, if organizations act without greed and stay away from unjustified ways in their efforts to attract customers, they will both attract and maintain them. The sublime God says, “... nor follow thou the vain desires of such as treat our signs as falsehoods” (Qur’ān 6:150) and “... nor obey any whose heart We have permitted to neglect the remembrance of Us, one who follows his own desires, whose case has gone beyond all bounds” (Qur’ān 18:28).

The Commander of the Faithful (a) says in this regard “He also orders him to break his heart off from passions, and to restrain it at the time of their increase, because the heart leads towards evil unless Allāh has mercy” (Nahj al-balāgha, 2009, letter 53: 403) and “... control your passions and check your heart from doing what is not lawful for you, because checking the heart means detaining it just half way between what it likes and dislikes.” (ibid).

### *Customer desire and consent*

In the Qur’ān 4:29, the sublime God introduces the consent of both parties of a business deal as one of the conditions for the correctness of the transaction, “O ye who believe! Eat not up your property among yourselves in vanities: But let there be amongst you Traffic and trade by mutual good-will.”

On the other hand, the Commander of the Faithful (a) says in his letter to Mālik Ashtar (letter 53 of Nahj al-balāgha) about the importance of the customers’ (people’s) satisfaction, “The way most coveted by you should be that which is the most equitable for the right, the most universal by way of justice, and the most comprehensive with regard to the agreement among those under you.” There are other points in this letter, as follows.

“It is not for you to be oppressive towards the ruled” (Nahj al-balāgha, letter 5: 345)

“The sale should be smooth, with correct weights and prices, not harmful to either party, the seller or the purchaser” (ibid, letter 53: 415).

“Habituate your heart to mercy for the subjects and to affection and kindness for them. Do not stand over them like greedy beasts who feel it is enough to devour them” (ibid: 403).

“Do not say: ‘I have been given authority, I should be obeyed when I order [rather, pay attention to their wants]’” (ibid: 405).

“... the disagreement of the common people sweeps away the arguments of the chiefs while the disagreement of the chiefs can be disregarded when compared with the agreement of the common people” (ibid: 405).

“It is the common people of the community who are the pillars of the religion, the power of the Muslims and the defense against the enemies. Your leanings should therefore be towards them and your inclination with them” (ibid).

“You should know that the most conducive thing for the good impression of the ruler on his subjects is that he should extend good behavior towards them, lighten their hardships, and avoid putting them to unbearable troubles” (ibid: 407).

### *Sincerity in transaction*

The more the customer believes that the seller is sincere in his promises and advertisement, the more his loyalty will be. The sublime God says about the prohibition of telling lies and untrue statements, “O ye who believe! Why say ye that which ye do not?” (Qur’ān 61:2).

This implies that any untrue statement or advertisement or false attribution of advantages to a product is an instance of lying and is prohibited by the sublime God. Contrarily, fulfilling contracts and sticking to one’s words (which here can be translated into the promises that the seller makes about the product) are the issues frequently noted by the Qur’ānic verses and Islamic narrations. Some of these are mentioned here.

“And those who respect their trusts and covenants” (Qur’ān 70:32; 23:8).

“... and fulfill the covenant of Allāh: thus doth He command you, that ye may remember” (Qur’ān 6:152).

“Most of them We found not men (true) to their covenant: but most of them We found rebellious and disobedient” (Qur’ān 7:102).

“...and fulfill (every) engagement, for (every) engagement will be enquired into (on the Day of Reckoning).” (Qur’ān 17:34).

“... fulfill your agreement and discharge your pledge faithfully” (Nahj al-balāgha, 2009, letter 53: 419).

“The responsibility for what I say is guaranteed and I am answerable for it” (ibid, sermon 16: 39).

“... among the obligations of Allāh there is nothing on which people are more strongly united despite the difference of their ideas and variation of their views than respect for fulfilling pledges” (ibid, letter 53: 419).

### *The agreement of the transaction with Islamic orders*

One of the recommendations highly emphasized by the Qur’ān and the Infallibles (a) is paying attention to the licit and illicit in business. Therefore, the more the sellers are familiar with the divine orders and prohibitions in business and customers’ rights, the more God’s and customers’ satisfaction will be. Praising people who observe His satisfaction, orders, and prohibitions in every affair, the sublime God says,

... men whom neither traffic nor merchandise can divert from the Remembrance of Allāh, nor from regular Prayer, nor from the practice of regular Charity: Their (only) fear is for the Day when hearts and eyes will be transformed (in a world wholly new) (Qur'ān 24:37).

Concerning the necessity of teaching Islamic orders and the agreement of the transactions with them, the Commander of the Faithful (a) says, "Whoever trades without knowing the rules of religious law will be involved in usury" (Nahj al-balāgha, 2009, saying 447: 527).

### *The practical principles of customer relationship management*

The practical principles of the relationship with the customer mainly regards those issues that happen in the direct interaction of the seller and the customer, and involve matters such as profit, hoarding, credit transaction, etc. Some of these are mentioned in the following lines.

### *Reasonable profits*

The observation of equity and contentment in attaining profits is one of the basic principles of customer relationship management from the viewpoint of the Qur'ān. The sublime God introduces the illicit obtaining of people's property by the People of the Book as an instance of prohibited transaction and says, "O ye who believe! There are indeed many among the priests and anchorites, who in Falsehood devour the substance of men and hinder (them) from the way of Allāh" (Qur'ān 10:34).

Concerning the unjust pricing, the Commander of the Faithful (a) says, "The sale should be smooth, with correct weights and prices, not harmful to either party, the seller or the purchaser" (Nahj al-balāgha, 2009, letter 53: 415) and "[Hoarding businessmen who] fix high prices for goods" (ibid).

Therefore, in the light of the proscription of an act by an Infallible, we can know its detestability in God's view. Therefore, we might infer that the more the organizations set reasonable prices, the closer they go to the attraction of customers.

### *Prohibition of hoarding*

One of the definitive principles of transactions in Islam is the prohibition of hoarding (Tawallā'ī, 2008: 83-115). The book Nahj al-balāgha is full of orders that prohibit hoarding. Some examples are given in the following lines.

"Know, along with this, that most of them [the businessmen] are very narrow-minded, and awfully avaricious. They hoard goods for profiteering and fix high prices for goods. This is a source of harm to the people and a blot on the officers in charge" (Nahj al-balāgha, 2009, letter 53: 415)

"Stop people from hoarding, because the Messenger of Allāh (S) has prohibited it" (ibid)

"Whoever commits hoarding after you prohibit it, give him exemplary but not excessive punishment" (ibid).

It is clear that the avoidance of hoarding by individual or organizational producers or sellers will both attract the public opinion and will increase their profits through the attraction of funds.

### *Rational trust in the customer*

The largest verse of the Qur'ān points out the rational trust in the other transaction party and says,

Disdain not to reduce to writing (your contract) for a future period, whether it be small or big: it is juster in the sight of Allāh, More suitable as evidence, and more convenient to prevent doubts among yourselves but if it be a transaction which ye carry out on the spot among yourselves, there is no blame on you if ye reduce it not to writing. But take witness whenever ye make a commercial contract; and let neither scribe nor witness suffer harm. If ye do (such harm), it would be wickedness in you. So fear Allāh; For it is Good that teaches you. And Allāh is well acquainted with all things. (Qur'ān 2:282)

The Commander of the Faithful (a) expresses the manners of interaction with people and prohibits his son from naivety and excessive trust,

Bear yourself towards your brother in such a way that if he disregards kinship you keep to it; when he turns away be kind to him and draw near to him; when he withholds spend for him; when he goes away approach him; when he is harsh be lenient; when he commits wrong think of (his) excuse for it, so much so as though you are a slave of him and he is the benevolent master over you. But take care that this should not be done inappropriately, and that you should not behave so with an undeserving person (Nahj al-balāgha, 2009, letter 31: 381).

### *Staying away from underselling*

Some sellers imagine that if they manipulate the weight or quality of a product, they will obtain more profits. However, they ignore that the lesser the quality or weight of a product gets, the lesser the customer's trust will be. This will severely damage the profits in the long term. The sublime God prohibits underselling several times and says,

“... give measure and weight with (full) justice” (Qur'ān 6:152).

“Woe to those that deal in fraud. Those who, when they have to receive by measure from men, exact full measure, but when they have to give by measure or weight to men, give less than due” (Qur'ān 83:1-3).

“... Give just measure and weight, nor withhold from the people the things that are their due ...” (Qur'ān 7:85)

“And give not short measure or weight” (Qur'ān 11:84).

“And O my people! Give just measure and weight, nor withhold from the people the things that are their due: commit not evil in the land with intent to do mischief” (Qur'ān 11:85).

“So establish weight with justice and fall not short in the balance” (Qur'ān 55:9).

### *Patience in the face of difficulties*

The noble Qur'ān is full of promises to people who patiently tolerate the difficulties and interact with people amiably. The sublime God says in this regard,

“... but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere” (Qur'ān 2:155).

“... for Allāh is with those who patiently persevere” (Qur'ān 8:66).

“Therefore do thou hold Patience, a Patience of beautiful (contentment)” (Qur'ān 70:5).

“Not so do those who show patience and constancy, and work righteousness; for them is forgiveness (of sins) and a great reward” (Qur'ān 11:11).

“(They are) those who persevere in patience, and put their trust on their Lord” (Qur'ān 16:42).

“Those are the ones who will be rewarded with the highest place in heaven, because of their patient constancy...” (Qur'ān 25:75).



“O ye who believe! Persevere in patience and constancy; vie in such perseverance; strengthen each other; and fear Allāh; that ye may prosper” (Qur’ān 3:200).

Praising suchlike people, the Commander of the Faithful (a) says,

“... you should practice endurance, because endurance is for belief what the head is for the body, so that just as there is no good in a body without the head there is no good in belief without endurance” (Nahj al-balāgha, 2009, saying 82: 457).

“... and may He grant us and you endurance” (ibid, sermon 205: 305).

“... and if you are put in trouble endure it, because surely ‘... (good) result is for the God-fearing’ [Qur’ān 7:128]” (ibid, sermon 98: 129).

“... keep patient in trials ...” (ibid, sermon 190: 267).

### *Amiability with the customer*

Concerning the necessity of being amiable towards the customer, Imām ‘Alī (a) says,

“... meet them [people] large-heartedly” (Nahj al-balāgha, letter 27: 363).

“The hearts of the people are like wild beasts. Whoever tames them, they would pounce upon him” (ibid, saying 50: 453).

“Meet them with your face broad” (ibid, letter 46: 379).

“Treat people kindly, receive them in audience, do not be very harsh in issuing and enforcing

orders” (ibid, letter 76: 439).

“He should not be harsh on them” (ibid, letter 26: 361).

“A believer has a cheerful face” (ibid, saying 333: 507).

“Cheerfulness is the bond of friendship” (ibid, saying 6: 445).

“Contentment is as good as estate” (ibid, saying 229: 483).

“No companion is like the goodness of moral character” (ibid, saying 113: 463).

### *Providing good service*

One of the biggest honors of the Infallibles (a) has been serving people. This is clearly reflected in all their words. Imām ‘Alī (a) says in Nahj al-balāgha,

“Keep the people of this place pleased with good treatment and remove the knots of fear from their hearts” (Nahj al-balāgha, letter 18: 355).

“Avoid showing (the existence of) obligation on your subjects for having done good to them or praising your own actions ... because showing (the existence of) obligation destroys good, [and] self-praise takes away the light of truth” (ibid, letter 53: 419).

“You should know that the most conducive thing for the good impression of the ruler on his subjects is that he should extend good behavior towards them, lighten their hardships, and avoid putting them to unbearable troubles. You should therefore, in this way follow a course by which you will leave a good impression with your subjects, because such good ideas will relieve you of great worries. Certainly, the one most entitled to have a favorable impression of you is he whom you have treated well, and the one most entitled to have a bad opinion of you is he whom you have treated badly” (ibid: 407).

“Their good wishes prove correct only when they surround their commanders (to protect them). Do not regard their positions to be a burden over them and do not keep watching for the end of their tenure” (ibid: 409).

“Habituate your heart to mercy for the subjects and to affection and kindness for them. Do not stand over them like greedy beasts who feel it is enough to devour them, since they are of two kinds, either your brother in religion or one like you in creation” (Ibid: 403).

### *Observing equity in treating people*

In the interaction of the sellers with the customers, one of the principles that has a deep influence on the loyalty and long-term maintenance of the customers is observing equal treatment of them. It might be said that the most beautiful meaning of equity has been given by the Commander of the Faithful (a) in Letter 31 of Nahj al-balāgha, “You should desire for others what you desire for yourself and hate for others what you hate for yourself.” In the light of this statement, we can consider the observation of equity as one of the principles that bring about people’s trust and lead to the attraction of their attention. The Commander of the Faithful (a) explains the importance of equal treating of people as follows.

“Behave humbly with the people, keep yourself lenient, meet them large-heartedly, accord them equal treatment so that the big should not expect injustice from you in their favor and the low should not be despondent of your justice to them” (Nahj al-balāgha, letter 27: 363).

“Treat them equally in looking at them with half eyes or full eyes, in signaling and in greeting so that the great should not expect transgression on your part and the weak should not lose hope in your justice” (ibid, letter 46: 397).

“All the people should be equal in right before you, because injustice cannot be a substitute for justice. Avoid that thing the like of which you would not like for yourself” (ibid, letter 59: 425).

“O my child, make yourself the measure (for dealings) between you and others. Thus, you should desire for others what you desire for yourself and hate for others what you hate for yourself. Do not oppress as you do not like to be oppressed. Do good to others as you would like good to be done to you. Regard bad for yourself whatever you regard bad for others. Accept that (treatment) from others which you would like others to accept from you.” (ibid, letter 31: 377).

### *Praying God to grant the grace of serving people*

The stronger the relationship between the human and the sublime God is, the more just and self-controlled people will be in their interactions with others. The problems facing people are such that overcoming them without God’s will is very difficult. It is evident that asking the sublime, almighty God is one of the ways that makes it easier to go through difficulties. This has been clearly stated in the qur’ānic verses and Islamic narrations.

“And your Lord says: ‘Call on Me; I will answer your (Prayer): but those who are too arrogant to serve Me will surely find themselves in Hell - in humiliation!’” (Qur’ān 40:60).

“So We listened to him: and We granted him Yaḥya: We cured his wife's (Barrenness) for him. These (three) were ever quick in emulation in good works; they used to call on Us with love and reverence, and humble themselves before Us” (Qur’ān 21:90).

“I ask Allāh through the vastness of His mercy and the greatness of His power of giving a good inclination that He may prompt me and you to advance a clear plea before Him and His creatures in a manner that may attract His pleasure along with handsome praise among the people, good effect in the country, an increase in prosperity and a heightening of honor; and that He may allow me and you to die a death of virtue and martyrdom. Surely, we have to return to Him” (Nahj al-balāgha, 2009, letter 53: 421).

“... I entrust you to the Lord. He will help, guide, and protect you in this world and the Hereafter. I beseech Him to take you under His protection in both the worlds” (ibid, letter 31: 383).

“Know that He Who owns the treasures of the heavens and of the earth has permitted you to pray to Him and has promised you acceptance of the prayer. He has commanded you to beg from Him in order that He may give you and to seek His mercy in order that He may have

mercy on you. He has not placed anything between you and Him that may veil Him from you. He has not required you to get a mediator for you to Him ... whenever you call Him He hears your call, and whenever you whisper to Him He knows the whisper. You place before Him your needs, unveil yourself before Him, complain to Him of your worries, beseech Him to remove your troubles, seek His help in your affairs” (ibid: 377).

“The person who is afflicted with hardship is not in greater need of praying than the one who has been spared affliction but is not immune from it” (ibid, saying 302: 501).

#### *Timely meeting of the customer's needs*

The Commander of the Faithful (a) addresses Mālik Ashtar in Letter 53 of Nahj al-balāgha and says,

“You must finish a day's work on that day only [and do not postpone it to the next day]” (Nahj al-balāgha, letter 53: 415). Another statement by him can be used to justify this, “Fulfillment of (others') needs becomes a lasting virtue in three ways: regarding it small so that it attains bigness, concealing it so that it may manifest itself, and doing it quickly so that it becomes pleasant” (ibid, saying 101: 461).

Relying on the words of his majesty, we might say that the more the sellers and organizations try to solve the problems and meet the needs of their customers, the more they satisfy them and the stronger bonds they make with them.

#### **Conclusion**

Based on our discussion of customer management in Islam, we might say that from the viewpoint of Islam, the Islamic values and divine criteria as well as the scientific and managerial frameworks and structures dominate the customer-orientedness process. That is to say, if organizations use Islamic orders, solutions, and values in their transactions, they will attain true success. In fact, it seems that customer-orientedness based on the divine values of Islam sets the grounds for the excellence and flourishing of people and organizations.

Likewise, the study of the conduct of the Prophet (s) and the infallible Imāms (a) indicates that if the pure Islamic values are implemented in businesses, they will bring about salvation for today's societies and will guarantee the worldly and otherworldly lives of the human. The Islamic Republic's approach to growth and prosperity as well as the attention paid to content enrichment in recent decades has made the examination and explanation of the business factors such as customer-orientedness and the extraction of Islamic values based on the decisions of that approach an indispensable necessity. Since the Islamic system has a special regard for business, we can find the discussions on commercial and marketing activities in the noble Qur'ān and the conduct of the noble Prophet of Islam (s) – as a prophet who took part in business activities – and the infallible Imāms (a).

On the other hand, the Prophet of Islam (s) promised in Ghadīr Khum to all Muslims that if they stick to the two Weights – i.e., the Qur'ān and Ahl al-Bayt (a) – they will never get misguided. Since this statement has been made by the most honest person, we can be sure that we undoubtedly can find the factors of customer-orientedness – like other phenomena – under the guidance of these two valuable legacies and prove the richness of Islam to everyone more than ever.

This study was done to achieve its stated purposes, and brought about the following results.

**Table 2.** A summary of the study results

	<b>Factor</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Subcategory</b>
		right-centeredness	Justice-orientedness
1	Theoretical principles of customer relationship management	attainment of divine satisfaction consideration of the customer's demands sincerity in deals agreement of the deal with the Islamic orders	Controlling the whims of soul
		reasonable profits observing equity rational trust in the customer staying away from underselling staying away from hoarding patience amiability with the customers providing good services timely meeting of the customer's needs praying God to grant the grace of serving people	
2	practical principles		

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