



SERVING TO LEAD
SPEARHEADING BEYOND 100 DAYS
TO BUILD A NEW MALAYSIA

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Serving to Lead: Spearheading Beyond 100 Days to Build a New Malaysia

SERVING TO LEAD

SPEARHEADING BEYOND 100 DAYS



**TUN DR MAHATHIR'S RETURN JOURNEY TO HELP BUILD
A NEW MALAYSIA**

by
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PUSTAKA PERDANA



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I am further thankful for the many relevant articles and quotable quotes referred to in the mainstream news media, particularly the PMO Website, The Star and the New Straits Times, in the writing of this book.

As a student of history, I have chosen to write this book covering relevant events within the period from May 9, 2018 to March 26, 2019 - tracing the development of Tun Dr Mahathir's leadership in helping to build a New Malaysia (*Malaysia Baru*), which requires a joint effort by all to rectify shortcomings so that things become better: to start something new that's beneficial, to repeat what is good and productive, and to change and get rid of what is harmful or destructive.

To those I've inadvertently left out, I offer my sincerest apologies.

Sincerely,

Author

'How vain it is to sit *down to* write when you have not *stood up to* live.'

- Henry David Thoreau

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PREFACE

As a non-fiction writer with a bias for writing biographies and memoirs, I have always been captivated by the charisma, versatility, astuteness and wisdom of Tun Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad as a world-class leader.

Although I've written more than 30 books, my only writing on him was a book titled, "Passing the Baton - From Dr Mahathir to Abdullah Badawi," which was launched by the then Minister for Trade & Industry, Dato' Sri Rafidah Aziz, in 2004. [She had to deputise the book launch duty to her deputy minister at the last moment because as she was about to leave her office for the event she was summoned to meet the prime minister on an important matter]. I was at the time initially inspired to write that book when coming across Dr Mahathir's quote in his speech naming Abdullah Ahmad Badawi as his successor. He said, "Leadership changes. It's the traditional order....leaders arrive, replacing one another. Fellow delegates and members all. Keep faith together, one for all. When I leave, Pak Lah takes over...UMNO remains steadfast, that's for sure." But as they say, the rest is history. And Tun Dr Mahathir was kind enough then to personally autograph a copy of the book I had written with the signing, "Congratulations".

In my earlier flagship book (2015) marketed by Partridge of Singapore and Amazon.com, titled "**Altruistic Service Leadership**" (ASL) analysing Prophet Muhammad's *p.b.u.h* leadership profile, I have constructed a model on service-oriented leadership that emphasises concern for the welfare of people.

In this current book "Serving to Lead - Stretching Beyond 100 Days," I have attempted to analyse, from a spiritual (not religious) perspective, Tun Dr Mahathir's leadership profile and see whether it fits into the values paradigm of my earlier ASL book.

"It is *better to lead from behind* and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You take the front line when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership". - Nelson Mandela.

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Difference between Spiritual and Religious Leadership

Spiritual Leadership	Religious Leadership
Priority to service (service-oriented)	Priority to authority (authority-oriented)
Focus on callings	Focus on undertakings
Granted by example	Granted by society
Guided by principles	Regulated by an institution
Accepted by free choice	Imposed by law or decree
Sustained by inspiration	Sustained by hierarchy
Driven by individual will	Driven by a superior being

Sorting through what is meant by spiritual as compared to religious leadership has become more complex in our increasingly pluralistic society. The Grand Mufti of Mecca is the Muslim religious leader as much as the Roman Catholic Pope is the Christian religious leader. While a religious leader can manifest spiritual leadership, a spiritual leader may not necessarily have religious leadership in any official capacity. There may be some overlap between these two different perspectives, but the very nature of these two approaches to leadership is noticeably distinct.

Religious leadership may manifest its authenticity in leadership through faithfulness to a more official or organisationally accepted process. Spiritual leadership, on the other hand, receives authentication through a more charismatic and visionary form of governance and guidance where the role of influence exerted through the followers is more evident.

The important thing to remember, though, is spiritual leadership's importance to work and performance results.

While it is not the objective of this writing to examine at length the differences between spiritual and religious leadership, suffice it to say that spiritual leadership is more of a practice of behaviour, rather than a practice of worship. It is the embodiment of wholesome character. It embraces the kind of power that is altruistically-inclined.

We know some leaders just seem to be able to radiate hope and courage. These are the leaders we love to have and to be around with because they have a

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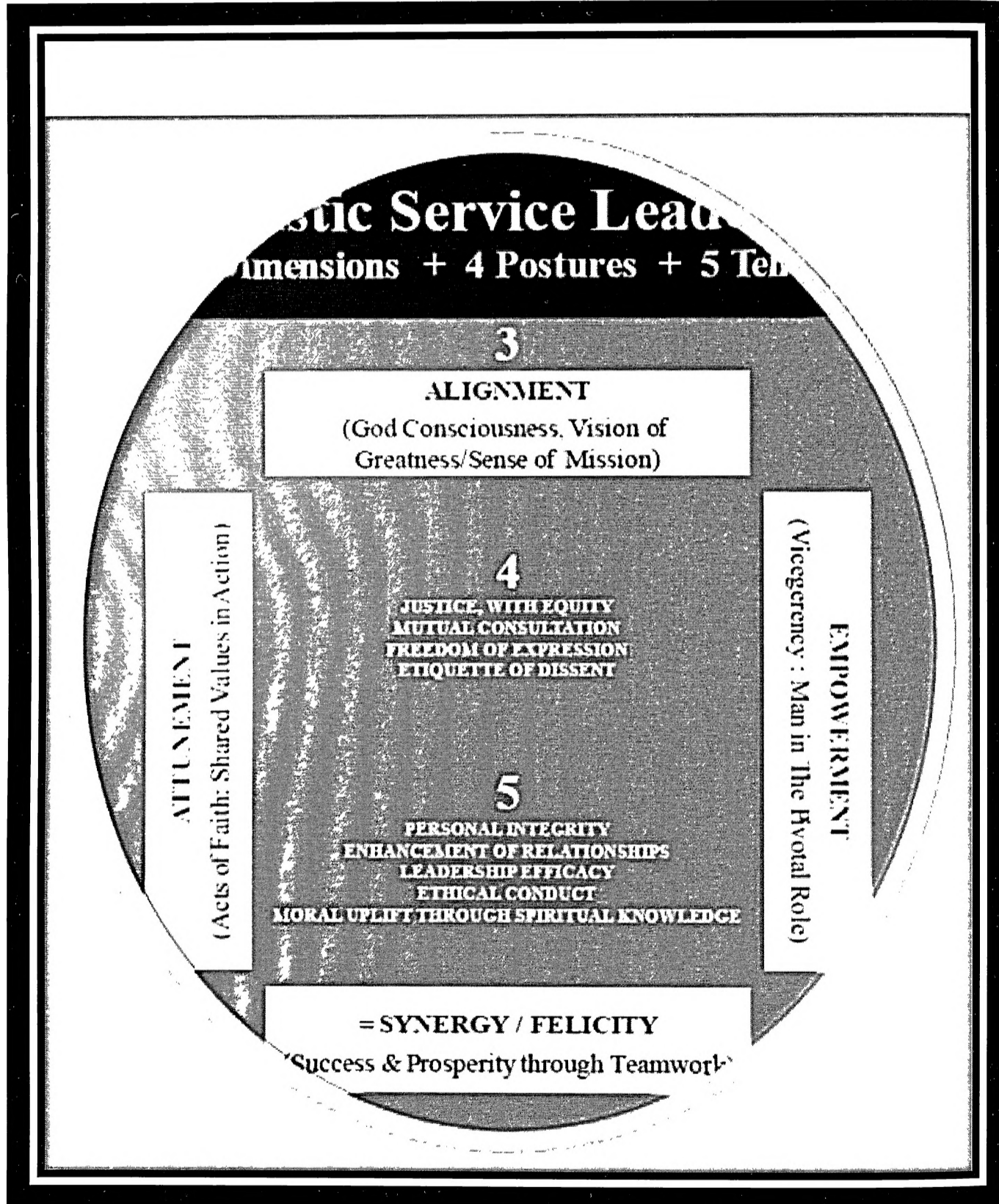
calming presence, an aura of peace and tolerance about them, for the benefit of just about everyone they engage with and every situation they address. The spiritual leader reminds us that we are not separate, that there are no borders, no races, and no structured cultural divides. Spiritualism is the law of attraction. All that is true is that we are all one and the only constant is love, amity and respect for each other.

This time Tun Dr Mahathir is representing the Pakatan Harapan coalition as the 7th Prime Minister of Malaysia, for the second time around since his previous lengthy stint as the 4th Prime Minister from 1981-2003. His role is now extended to leading the nation in the building of a New Malaysia.

The template I use for this relatively brief analysis is the Prophet's *p.b.u.h* Altruistic Service Leadership (ASL) model, embracing the critical 3 Dimensions, 4 Postures and 5 Tenets (3+4+5 model). This book is now published by Partridge of Singapore and distributed globally *via* Amazon.com. In Turkey, it has been said to be translated into the local medium and distributed for reading, understanding and practising among some government officials. In a Bangladesh university, it is a topic discussed at post-graduate university level.

"Our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power. We have *guided* missiles and misguided men." - Martin Luther King, Jr.

THE ALTRUISTIC SERVICE LEADERSHIP (ASL) MODEL



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I must emphasise that as a humble author, my writings, including this one, are meant to be read or perused mainly by the man-on-the-street, the practical observer, rather than by the inquiring academic.

After some personal research, I have fathomed that Tun Dr Mahathir as a leader of distinction fits into the profile of the Prophet's *p.b.u.h* ASL model. Which means that his character, personality and values fit into the 3 Dimensions, 4 Postures and 5 Tenets of this leadership model.

At the outset, I beg to differ from the research think-tank Invoke Malaysia's contention that it was not the Mahathir effect that led to the Pakatan Harapan (PH) in the main winning the GE14 general election, at both federal and state levels. From my random post-GE14 verbal survey, I have discovered that 8 out of 10 respondents replied that it was the Tun Dr Mahathir effect, more than any other factor, that really won PH the GE14.

[The question that I posed: was it because of the Tun Dr Mahathir effect or unhappiness with the GST-related high cost of living factor that caused people to vote for PH?].

Tun Dr Mahathir, by the very aura of his leadership, astuteness and relentless pursuit of the 1MDB sovereign wealth fund scandal, to rid the country of pervasive corruption, was the *raison-d'etre* for the stunning toppling of the BN government. Other reasons appear secondary.

Veteran journalist and author M. Krishnamoorthy in his book, "May 9: People Power Saves Malaysia," is the first writing on GE14 that narrates how Tun Dr Mahathir played a key role in bringing Malaysians together to exact a change in the government.

He wrote Malaysians were determined to be resilient, resourceful, and open-minded to face the challenges and realities of the 21st century. Malaysia was engulfed in darkness and Malaysians finally saw the light on May 9, 2018. The tsunami of voters saved Malaysia from widespread corruption and greed, wrote Krishnamoorthy.

The people themselves saved Malaysia by taking on the responsibility to vote for a brighter future for our children and a better tomorrow for the country. The author said those of us, the older ones, who grew up knowing only Tun Dr

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Mahathir as the prime minister may still have doubts and questions about him, but at 93 he really doesn't need power and wealth. He just wants to help put things right. So he urged let's all just support him in his quest to save the country, and in the process create the dawn for a New Malaysia.

To be fair though, Invoke Malaysia's survey findings that the people's economic hardships (especially attributed to the GST), had contributed to being the main reason why people voted for PH to seek a change in the government's economic policies, could still be noted as an academic exercise that should not just be cast aside. However, the contention that the Mahathir effect was not the key cause for PH winning the GEM seems inconsistent with the pragmatic outcome on the ground.

Towards the end of 2018, Rafizi Ismail, the founder of the data analytics firm Invoke Malaysia, said on his blog that Tun Dr Mahathir's approval rating had dropped some 20% to 53 per cent from what it was six months ago. He said the figure was reflective of the decreasing popularity of the PH government.

The Merdeka Centre for Opinion Research survey conducted in August 2018 had put the prime minister's approval rating at 71 per cent. The opinion poll had expressed concerns about ethnic and religious issues, with Rafizi placing the economic concern as the main grouse factor stated by the voting populace. A total of 55% of voters polled said they were dissatisfied with measures to address the cost of living pressures, with only 48% saying they were satisfied with the government's effort to grow the economy. Tun Dr Mahathir obtained positive responses from 93% of Indians, 83% of Chinese, 75% of non-Muslim Bumiputeras, 64% of Muslim Bumiputeras, and 62% of Malay voters, nationwide. Young voters under 40 years old gave the prime minister a resounding 73% rating.

Tun Daim Zainuddin, in a New Straits Times (NST) exclusive interview, had earlier said the PH coalition leaders agreed that it was a *sine qua non* they needed and got Tun Dr Mahathir to lead the charge against the BN coalition that was led by UMNO. This was considering the belief pre-GE14 that the Malays in the urban areas were receptive to him to lead the country. Tactically, PH decided to focus on areas in which they could handsomely win, most strategically in the Malay majority FELDA settlement constituencies, which purportedly constituted

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UMNO's fixed deposit claim. The BN alliance was over-confident about its chances of winning in the Felda constituencies. Yet come the May 9 election day, the PH coalition managed to break its fixed deposit account to almost nothing.

Tun Dr Mahathir's objective is clearly altruistic (although he himself may not think so), to serve the nation and its people first; and in doing this, he has to lead the way to obtain maximum impact. He said being prime minister the second time around was tougher than his previous tenure as he was not the leader of the most dominant party in the current PH ruling coalition.

Subsequently, the Mahathir effect once again played a crucial role in the Port Dickson by-election of October 13, 2018. Universiti Utara Malaysia's political analyst Professor Dr Mohd Azizuddin Mohd Sani said the prime minister's campaign promoting Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as the eighth prime minister-in-waiting boosted the local voters' confidence, adding that it created a huge impact in attracting voters. To begin with, it was very rare for a sitting prime minister to go down on the spot and campaign in a by-election.

Voters became more convinced when it was repeatedly said that Anwar would be the prime-minister-in-waiting by both Tun Dr Mahathir and Tun Daim Zainuddin during the by-election campaign. Dr Mohd Azizuddin said that Anwar's huge win showed that there was no challenger to PH other than BN, which boycotted the by-election. It cannot be denied that BN's withdrawal from the polls could have contributed to the relatively low 58.25% voter turnout. But despite this, Anwar still won big (by a 23,560-vote majority). With the signed, sealed and delivered victory, Anwar is just a step away from becoming the successor to Tun Dr Mahathir as the country's eighth prime minister, a plan that was agreed upon by PH's four coalition parties prior to GE14.

The people, especially the young voting millennials (aged 21-39 years), who form some 40% of the eligible voting population deserved the change they badly wanted. And their immediate saviour on the scene happened to be the elder statesman candidate Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who affirmed during an interview with *Investvine*, the Hong Kong-based business news portal covering mainly Southeast Asia, that the New Malaysia should be "certainly better" than the previous administration ruling the country as it would mean the new

About the Author



Ismail Noor first learned about leadership and followership when he studied for several years at the Royal Military College (RMC), Malaysia's version of the British Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst. After attaining his basic degree in history at the country's premier University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur in 1967, he further undertook post-graduate studies in the United States. He also has a Diploma in Company Directorship. Ismail had a stint working in the Malaysian Administrative & Diplomatic Service (PTD) as a senior government officer before joining executive search firm Korn-Ferry International as its first country director. He then set up his own management training and consultancy firm, Norconsult KL Sdn Bhd, specialising in team corporate and total quality management programmes, with clients throughout the country and the region. He is now a full-time author focusing on the writing of biographies and memoirs. His flagship book is titled *Altruistic Service Leadership (ASL)*, which analyses the leadership profile and character attributes of the Prophet of Islam. Globally, it is marketed by Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble. This writing, titled "Serving to Lead," analyses the spiritual leadership aspect of Tun Dr Mahathir. This is Ismail's 32nd book. Ismail Noor is currently the chairman of the "Ar-Rashidin Leadership and Followership Centre, Kuala Lumpur" (Pakkar: Pusat Kepimpinan & Kepengikutan Ar-Rashidin, Kuala Lumpur).

