

Lord rama as a leader in ramayana



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

LORD RAMA AS *MARYADA PURSHOTTAM*- A LEADER IN WAR AND PEACE, AS NARRATED IN RAMAYANA

Israelmore Ayivor has said, “ True leaders are like statues, whether it rains or it shines, they never bend their necks to look backwards! They never run away from challenges!”[1] Lord Rama is one such leader who is also known to be the avatar, incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Swami Vivekananda has described the immortal character of Lord Rama in these words, “ Rama, the ancient idol of the heroic ages, the embodiment of truth, of morality, the ideal son, the ideal husband, and above all, the ideal king, this Rama has been presented by the great sage, Valmiki”.[2] Shri Ramchandra exhibits exceptional qualities of religious behaviour and therefore is fondly termed as ‘ *maryada purushottam*’ . *Maryada* meaning the inner moral principles, ethics, customs or rules and *Purushottam* relates to being the best amongst all men. He personifies the highest of human values, never deviating from the virtuous path in thought, or action, even in the most critical situations. He has shown many qualities of a righteous king and a noble human being. His model behaviour and conduct made him a leader par excellence and that is why he is popularly termed as Maryada Purushottam (perfect man).

Transformational leadership and Lord Rama. The transformational leadership has been long demonstrated by Lord Rama thousands of years ago before the introduction of this concept and model by Burns (1978)[3] and latter by Bass and Avolio (1994)[4]. Burns emphasized on the mutual process between a leader and a follower, wherein each one makes an effort to increase the other’s level of motivation. In the first book (Bala Kand) itself, the qualities and characteristics of Rama as a true leader have been dealt

with in detail, which resulted in acquiring love, admiration, respect, and trust of all the people of Ayodhya. He as a transformational leader inspired his followers to imbibe his values and connect with his ideologies. There can be quite a few other valuable leadership lessons from the 'ideal' man and the warrior prince - Lord Rama, which can be imbibed by the military leaders of all the three wings of any defence organisation.

Lord Rama as a leader was exceptional and led the way. The best way to create a positive work atmosphere is by leading through example and by ensuring that the team is highly motivated. This is exactly what Rama did with his three brothers. As the eldest, he set an example for the younger ones by always being fair and courteous yet stern when required. The whole of Ramayana is full of such examples, especially during the last leg of the Ramayana battle, Rama inspired his army to inculcate virtues like intelligence, skill, commitment, strategy to succeed.

Lord Rama as leader was a participative leader and didn't force his decisions upon others. Rama being a participative leader knew how to tackle situations with a cool-headed attitude and listen to others to encourage frank and open discussion on every aspect. Rama gives a patient hearing to advice from his allies while preparing for war against Ravana and thus, managed to extract valuable clues of Sita's whereabouts. It is evident in Ramayana that Lord Rama inspired his army to fight an epic battle and be jubilant! He never forced his decision of leaving the palace for exile, not even on his own wife Sita and brother Laxman. Instead, he dissuaded both of them to stay in Ayodhya and let him proceed.

Rama was a humble leader and followed ethics and a code of conduct. Lord Rama was a solicitous and a humble man. In fact, Rama declared his dedication to dharma when he offered Ravana a final chance to make peace on the battleground.[5]When Ravana walked to battle on the first day due to inadequate preparations and was rendered weaponless, Rama being a leader by ethics followed the code of chivalry during war and stipulated that an unarmed enemy should not be attacked. Humility was Rama's most outstanding virtue, which made him so popular. He had no hesitation in eating the tasted fruits offered by Shabri during his exile. When Lord Rama finally reached Lanka, he welcomed Vibishana, the brother of his own enemy King Ravana to his side and embraced him like a brother. In spite of knowing that Vibishana was the brother of the demon King Ravana, he identified true and pure devotion and love. He welcomed him warmly and made him his best friend instantly in spite of some differences and arguments against this in his camp. Lord Rama being a humble leader, smiled and helped everyone to show genuine concern, and managed to fight a war on his own terms and conditions and finally win it.

Rama was an unbiased leader. A leader has a personalised point of view which is exhibited in his own unique way. In Ramayana, Lord Rama shared his views and thought processes and opinions with Lakshmana, Hanumana, Sugriva and Vibheeshana. But that doesn't do any harm to anyone else. There was no prejudice against anyone as far as the king-subject relationship was concerned. It is a well-known fact that the *Vanara sena* (monkey army), proved to be one of the most essential links to win the epic battle. A leader also creates more leaders. Rama as a true leader in war believed in his

army's abilities and hence strengthened them as per the overall objective.

Lord Rama helped Sugriva and Vibheeshana to establish their own kingdoms, similarly able military leaders should create and inspire effective potential leaders for the future.

Rama was a leader having a clear vision. The mission of the army led by Lord Rama had a clear vision to rescue his wife Sita from the clutches of the Lanka king Ravana. This clarity of thoughts enabled the army to put their best to win the battle and finally achieve the positive desired outcome.

Rama was a leader full of integrity. Lord Rama, despite his immense hardships and misfortune, never stepped aside from his chosen path. He always maintained a certain yardstick for himself and his team, thereby gaining big dividends in terms of achieving his ultimate goal.

Rama was a learning leader. Rama kept himself under the guidance of the learned sages and ascetics, and frequently learned much about the nature of life. Significantly, he also learnt advanced techniques of archery and other techniques of warfare, which served him well during his final battle with the evil king Ravana.

Rama was a role model and inspired everyone. Lakshmana, Rama's younger brother, constantly looked up to his elder brother, and thus was willing to help him through all the challenges life threw at him. So all the military leaders should motivate their teams and continuously reward success and initiative.

Rama was an understanding leader. It is evident in Ramayana that Rama was a true leader, as he understood the problems faced by his team members and thereby helped them in whichever ways he could. Like for instance, during his time spent in the forest he met Sugreeva who was abandoned by his own brother Bali. He then went ahead and helped Sugreeva in regaining his throne. In addition, he was instrumental in killing the demons that used to often regularly trouble the sages in the forest.

APPLICATION OF LEADERSHIP TRAITS OF LORD RAMA

IN A MILITARY ORGANISATION

The above-mentioned leadership lessons as exhibited by Lord Rama in the epic Ramayana, if applied and implemented properly can form the basis of success of all types of organizations especially the military organization (Army, Air Force, Navy). Leadership in military is not just restricted to some handful of seniors with high-sounding titles, but permeates all across organizational levels managing personnel. It has been evident that a good leadership example like Lord Rama can enhance the overall motivational level and productivity in any military set-up. In the military scenario, one can succeed and many a battles can be won, if there is relevant knowledge for the same. Like Rama, military leaders have to be confident and show no signs of desperation. Military leaders have to be on top and keep a track of what is happening and gain full control of the war scenario. They should look confident and behave as one too, so that they are able to communicate to their subordinates that they are determined to extract positive outcomes for the benefit of their nation and their territory. The impact of an alert, agile

and action-oriented leadership cannot be underestimated. A good military leader should ensure that his men give him a patient hearing and conduct themselves on the battleground to win the hardest of battles. This would allow his team to find a proper base ground and explore its full potential. Military Leadership believes in bearing the brunt most of the time and led the way through model behavior.

Military leaders in particular are leaders with a vision, and have the ability to see and put into perspective what others cannot. Communicating this vision to their followers and motivating them to work towards fulfilling it, is an extended challenge for a military leader. The chief ingredients of good leadership as portrayed by Rama in Ramayana primarily are character, courage and competence, which undoubtedly form the essence of success for any military organization. Character, in military context, is understood as self-discipline, loyalty, readiness to accept responsibility, and willingness to sacrifice whenever required. These qualities of Lord Rama can help in minimizing fear and maximizing sound judgement in any critical military situation thereby bringing success from a seemingly hopeless situation. For a military leader humility is one of the most difficult trait to exhibit, especially during war time. However, there is no denying the fact that it is also one of the most fruitful traits if used in the correct direction. Moreover, a foreseen vision will always be a motivating factor to focus on the goal and not be deviated. Every military leader needs to have a clear vision of what he is aiming for and what will it bear him in the future.[6]He also must be in sync with his followers or team members in order to attain his goals. A military leader should avoid cutting corners and everything, which makes him

uncomfortable. This will ensure long-term organizational sincerity and loyalty. Today's world is all about dynamism and keeping pace with new developments, which surely is a tough challenge. In the current information age where knowledge is wealth, an informed modern military leader should constantly strive to learn, and explore new subjects, deepen the understanding of old ones, and continuously upgrade him. Keeping abreast of the latest developments and advancements in modern means of warfare is the need of the hour and is expected of all contemporary military leaders.

Contemporary military environment requires leaders who can perceive what is right and know how to mobilize people and resources to accomplish mutual goals.[7] Understanding individual team members and ensuring the requirements to keep each one ticking, is what is required in our present day defence organization too. Leaders of the armed forces should back their teams under all circumstances. They should know how to deal with their subordinates in order to make many of the followers, leaders in their own right thereby creating options and opportunities for their subordinates to inculcate self-confidence and optimism. In today's military world the one man show does not promise success like the earlier days. Intelligently distributed responsibility and empowerment creates changes for good and more chances to win. So naturally it becomes quintessential for every department, every unit in the armed forces to create more and effective leaders than ever before. It surely would ensure more uniqueness; more tasks completed, more projects concluded, more missions accomplished, more promises achieved and most of all more trust build than ever before.

[1]The Great Hand Book of Quotes, Israelmore Ayivor

[2]Hinduism, By Hiro G. Badlani, pg 103, 01-Sep-2008

[3]Transformational Leadership, Burns, J. M. (1978). New York: Harper & Row

[4]Improving Organizational Effectiveness Through Transformational Leadership, Bernard M. Bass, Bruce J. Avolio, SAGE Publications, 1994

[5]<https://www.sunzu.com/articles/building-leadership-skills-lessons-from-the-ramayana-22687>

[6]<http://www.mensxp.com/work-life/leadership/20918-leadership-lessons-from-lord-rama.html>

[7]http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/navy/reflections_on_leadership.htm