

Antigone the ideal leader



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

of the of the Concerned 8 May 2009 Antigone the Ideal Leader Leadership is a multifaceted endeavor that requires a whole range of qualities and values. One of the hallmarks of a true leader is one's ability to facilitate a sound and secure anchorage to timeless values and ethics, that furnish an apt sense of direction to masses amidst the troubled times. Still, there is no denying the fact that oft it gets immensely difficult to owe allegiance to the right set of values, especially when the opposition to them is endowed with immense political and legal powers. History has repeatedly proven beyond doubt that even the worthiest of the leaders; do not hesitate to relinquish what is right and just, once they discern even a faint possibility of intimidating consequences and a ruthless repression. Only a few dare to support what is right, irrespective of being vulnerable to a wrathful and violent opposition. Sophocles' Antigone is one such literary character that exudes with the requisite nobility, strength and courage to stand for what is right, despite facing the risk of being susceptible to an unfavorable and avoidable outcome, which is the true and unexceptional trait of a natural leader.

In Sophocles' famous tragedy Antigone, the central character Antigone is presented and unraveled amidst a unique and peculiar set of circumstances, where she is a hapless witness to the dereliction of the cherished morals and ideals, not only by her near and dear one's like her sister Ismene, but also by the people who are supposed to uphold the righteousness in Theben society, like Ceron, who comes to power in Thebes after the civil war. At the centre of the tragedy lies the body of Polyneices, Antigone's brother and one of the important leaders of the Thebe's civil war. The new king of Thebe, Ceron decides to deprive the body of Polyneices of all the holy rites and a decent burial, by ordering it to be left lying in an abandoned and disgraced state on

the battlefield, to be consumed by carrion animals. Such a dishonor of the body of any political rival and opponent was considered be the harshest punishment in the times in which the tragedy unfolds itself.

Thus, the body of Polyneices stands to be a symbol of state repression and the annihilation of the civil rights in the play. Antigone despite being a woman dares to restore the sanctity of humane values and civil rights by giving a decent burial to her brother's body. She manages to do so irrespective of the repeated warnings and forebodings of her sister Ismene, who decides to choose safety and well-being by abiding by the state dictums. She even tries to dissuade Antigone by invoking the fear of a death penalty. In a hearing before Ceron, Antigone dares to argue in favor of the morality of her actions and openly questions the integrity and propriety of Ceron's actions and intentions. Eventually Antigone is buried alive for her beliefs.

In today's troubled times, how rare it is to come across leaders like Antigone, who dare to defy power and authority to uphold righteousness.