

Module X: Leadership Lessons from

Chapter I

Leadership lessons

A. Leadership lessons from Lord Ganesh (A Leader from Head to Toe)



It is said that after Lord Shiva cut off his head and placed the head of an elephant on Ganesh, he got rid of the head of ego latent in it and acquired the true wisdom enabling to take up leadership in earnest

The word “Gana” means “a group of people” and “ish” means Lord. Ganesh (gana + ish) thus means the leader of the group. Ganesh, therefore, by name itself means a leader.

Besides, Ganesh's entire form, each part of His body represents one or another leadership quality.

Big head

A big head, with a big forehead showing brilliance, inspires us to think big and profitably

Large Ears

If one cups his hands around his ear he will hear better (or feel an increase in volume). Keeping this in mind, one can see how Ganesh's large ears enable him to be incredibly receptive. He is aware of everything that goes on.

On the other side is his discretion as to what he actually listens to. His ears, which appear like large winnowing baskets, have a significance too. Just as one uses a winnowing basket to separate grains from dirt, Ganesh's large ears, like winnows, also sifts the bad from the good. Although they hear everything, they retain only that which is good.

In this way, when we worship Ganesh we are reminded to listen to everything, but to only keep the positive and constructive things from all that we hear.

Small Eyes

Not only does Ganesh hear everything around him, but he also sees all that goes on with an elephant's keen eyesight. Those eyes are also a symbol for Ganesh's foresight. A leader must be able to discern what consequences even his smallest actions will have in the future. Small eyes also are a pose of concentration. A leader is also required to not only concentrate but also read between the lines.

Trunk or a long nose

His large trunk has a strong sense of smell which gives him the quality to scent out the smallest problem. It also inspires to poke inquisitively and gather information about competitors, latest technological developments, etc.

An elephant's trunk is both powerful and gentle. An elephant uses its trunk to push down a massive tree, carry huge logs to the river and for other heavy tasks. The same huge trunk is used to pick up a few blades of grass, to break a small coconut, remove the hard nut and eat the soft kernel inside. The biggest and minutest of tasks are within the range of this trunk which is symbolic of Ganesha's intellect and his powers of discrimination.

Leaders need unwavering confidence and strength to overcome obstacles they will face in their path and in uplifting those around them, but they should also respect everyone and be aware of situations that require more care and consideration.

Tusks – One Full and One Half

One will notice that Ganesh has one full tusk and one that is broken. The broken tusk represents intellect and the full one is for faith. Both are necessary in life, but intellect cannot answer our deepest questions without throwing in rationalization. Where intellect is lacking, faith can make up for it. One should always have complete faith in oneself and in God. However, the opposite is often true and intellect overshadows faith inflating the ego and making faith seem insignificant. A good leader will understand the importance of faith in one's life and balance it with their intellect.

Large Stomach

It is also important for a leader not to let out all that he knows or all that he has been told. Ganesh's large stomach symbolizes his quality to digest whatever he listens and let out only that much which is necessary.

Small Legs

Ganesh takes small, but meaningful steps just as leaders should never rush into things. They should plan out their moves and know where each step is taking them.

Four Hands

1. Ankush – the elephant driver's iron rod

A leader must be able to control himself and those who follow him

2. Pash – a hook and a noose

The noose is for pulling man along the right path, the hook is for goading forward the recalcitrant. In this manner Ganesha helps us in overcoming obstacles and ensures success.

3. Modak (laddu)– a special type of sweet

Represents the philosophy of our lives, it is only sweet once we dive deep into something. It indicates that, beneath the outer layer of sordid self, lies the Atman which is sweet and which must be discovered by everyone. The leaders should thus follow their conscience.

4. Ashirvad – the gesture of giving blessing

The fourth hand's palm is always extended to bless people.

Mouse – Ganesh's vehicle

Ganesha rides on a mouse, signifying the unity of the small with the big. A unique combination of his elephant-like head and a quick moving tiny mouse vehicle represents tremendous wisdom, intelligence and presence of mind. Also, his corpulent body, awkward gait, broken tusk and guffaw tell us that outward beauty has no relation to inner perfection.

The snake that runs round his hip is indicative of Energy in all forms.

Thus, every part of Lord Ganesh signifies something important, and by worshipping Him we are reminded of the qualities necessary in life in order to become leaders.

In a nutshell:

BIG HEAD inspires us to 'Think Big' & 'Profitably'

BIG EARS with flap prompt us to listen patiently to new ideas, suggestions and feedback but filter them before retaining

NARROW EYES point to deep concentration needed to finish tasks in hand well and quickly and the ability to read between lines

TRUNK tells us to poke around inquisitely to learn more and to smell the smallest trouble

SMALL MOUTH reminds us to speak less and listen more.

LARGE STOMACH shows the capacity to keep secrets

- When he is seated, he has one leg on the ground showing that the decision he took were down to earth
- The particles uniting to form a Laddu, his favorite, depict his power of creating team spirit with sweetness

His various names also show his leadership qualities:

Ashta Vinayak: Leader with the wisdom of using eight inner powers

Vighna Vinashak: Capable of overcoming all obstacles through right application of his inner abilities at the right time

Siddhi Vinayak: Signifies a leader who attains success through wisdom

A leader with such abilities naturally attracts wealth and success “Riddhi-Siddhi”.

B. Krishna as a Transformational Servant-Leader

Charismatic leadership behavior of Krishna is examined in the Hindu epic Mahabharata just prior to the start of the Mahabharata war. Using modern theories of leadership, it is suggested that Krishna's leadership style fits both the servant-leader and the transformational models of leadership based on situational contingencies servant-leader models.

Krishna could be well described by Max Weber's notion of ‘charisma.’ Weber defined charisma as a special quality in the personality of the leader by which he, "...is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional qualities." (1947: 48).

In Hinduism throughout the ages, Krishna has remained as the clearest example of one of the most charismatic and transformational leaders who; with his great power of intuition; adapted himself to every situation and inspired his followers to do their duty and achieve the goals and objectives that had been set forth. We see Krishna taking a variety of leadership roles both before and during the Mahabharata war. The two most prominent roles Krishna takes are that of a servant-leader and the transformational leader.

Krishna as a Servant-Leader

In the servant-leader model, the goal of leadership is viewed primarily as service. Servant-leaders take into account the interests of those they lead and put the interests of the followers above their own self-interest. Servant-leaders facilitate the growth and development of their followers, promote community, share power and resources, and provide the support needed to help achieve the goals that lead to the common good of individuals and the community as a whole (Greenleaf, 1977;Spears and Lawrence, 2002). In the context of this perspective, we see that Krishna meets the criteria of a servant-leader. The following background of Krishna helps us to assess this aspect of his leadership style.

Krishna's reputation was well established by the time of the Mahabharata war and he was revered and adored by the people he ruled along with his older brother Balarama in the city of Dwarka. Krishna and Balarama were known as the protectors of the weak and helpless in society. On the other hand, Krishna had great reverence for Brahmins and the Rishis (religious monks and spiritual scholars and teachers) and enjoyed helping and serving them in a variety of ways to facilitate their spiritual practices.

Krishna himself had gone through a formal religious training period with his spiritual teacher and understood the importance of maintaining age old traditions. Therefore, he had little tolerance for those who harassed the Rishis and the Brahmins in any way. Many of Krishna's fights had evolved from attempting to protect the innocent from harm. Both Krishna and his brother Balarama were known to be superb warriors who had been through many battles and wars. Krishna's enemies, for good reason, had a great fear of him, although Krishna never fought without a just cause and often patiently waited to determine if aggressive action was necessary.

Krishna Acts as a Diplomat

In order to avert the Mahabharata War, Krishna, although himself the ruler of the kingdom of Dwaraka, took the humble role of a mediator and negotiator to try to bring peace to the community. The Mahabharata epic details Krishna's activities and the crucial role he played as a diplomat by attempting to achieve a last minute negotiated settlement in the conflict between Pandavas and Kauravas. Here we see Krishna in his characteristic role of the servant-leader, not exercising his authority and power which he had in abundance, but instead trying to broker peace by listening to both sides, empathizing with their suffering, attempting to persuade them to peace, offering them consolation and healing for the past wrong that they may have suffered. Even though Krishna knew the Kauravas to be wicked, he left no stone unturned and made a special visit to the Kaurava kingdom to speak with them and get them to agree to some minimal rights of property and conditions of fairness for the Pandavas.

In the modern management leadership literature, the servant-leader model has been recognized as important by Greenleaf (1977) and many authors have viewed this style of leadership as having a moral and a spiritual dimension (Wicks, 2002). Spears (1998), based on Greenleaf's writings, identified ten major attributes of servant leadership that included listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to growth of people and building community. Several writers such as Covey (1996) and others have added more attributes including, vision, integrity, empowerment, teaching, etc., and with minor variations in the terms used, these are generally consistent with Greenleaf's original conceptualization of the servant-leader. In the Mahabharata epic, we see Krishna engaged in most of these activities in his role as a mediator and peace maker in attempting to negotiate a fair settlement between the Pandavas and Kauravas so that a civil war and the resulting bloodshed can be avoided.

Krishna's choice to serve Arjuna as his Charioteer

When all of Krishna's diplomacy to avert the war fails, due essentially to the evil intentions of the Kaurava princes and their oldest brother and leader Duryodhana, war becomes unavoidable and is forced upon the Pandavas. Krishna's older brother, Balarama, decides not to participate in a war where there are family on both sides and leaves the area going on a religious pilgrimage. Krishna, however, when asked by his Pandava cousin Arjuna, who is also his best friend, to be by his side in the war, feels duty bound to take the side of righteousness and justice and agrees. But he does so on the condition that he, Krishna, will not take an active part in the war or engage in battle and spill any blood.

Instead, Krishna offers to serve Arjuna as his charioteer in the battles of the Mahabharata war. Normally, it is not common for a great King like Krishna to play a support role for another in battle. However, by becoming Arjuna's charioteer in the war, Krishna actively takes on and embraces the support role and demonstrates that an act of service for a just cause is, in fact, an act of leadership.

The Starting Scene of Bhagavad Gita

As the appointed hour of the war gets closer, the two massive armies face each other and conch shells “Shanka” are being blown on both sides. Arjuna asks Krishna, now his charioteer, to take their chariot in the middle of the two armies so that Arjuna can have a good look at the opposing army and its leaders. Krishna then drives the chariot between the two armies and stops in the middle.

As Arjuna looks at his foes on the other side, he experiences a deep life crisis and along with it panic, anxiety, and confusion. Arjuna's body starts trembling and his mouth goes dry. He sees his cousins, uncles, and even his revered teacher Dronacharya and great grandfather Bhishma, all on the other side of the war, duty bound to their evil leader Duryodhana and ready to do battle with Arjuna and his Pandava brothers.

While the oldest member of the family, his great grandfather, is on the opposing side, one of the youngest warriors of Mahabharata is on the side of Arjuna, and it is his own son Abhimanyu. Abhimanyu is 16, a talented and brave fighter who has just got married and unknown to him, his wife is pregnant.

All of a sudden, the horrific reality of what is about to happen overwhelms Arjuna and he is thrown into great sorrow at the prospect of death and destruction of families on both sides. He understands that the ground of Kurukshetra will be turning red with the blood of warriors who will leave behind their weeping widows and children. This is what battles bring and Arjuna has seen it all before.

How does one fight evil without becoming evil? How does one fight a wicked enemy, who is intent on destruction, without becoming wicked? This is the most difficult and an age old question for humanity. Arjuna puts it bluntly when he asks Krishna, "Though our enemies blinded by greed do not see evil in the destruction of the family, or sin in being treacherous to friends, why shouldn't we, who clearly see evil in the destruction of the family, think about turning away from this sin, O Krishna?"

Arjuna, whose arrows have always found their mark in the past, now

lays down his bow and tells Krishna that he would prefer to be slain not resisting rather than kill his cousins, uncles, and relatives on the other side, many of whom he admires, respects, and loves no matter how wicked and evil their leaders are. We all understand that this is a natural reaction in the given context. However, in light of current scientific information, Arjuna's question acquires a modern relevance. Scientists now tell us that all persons alive today had common ancestors. Somewhere in our deep biological evolutionary past, there is a super great grandmother that we all share. So, if we view all human beings, regardless of their nationality, religion, color, race, and ethnicity as part of our larger family, we must also understand that when nations conduct wars against each other, it is essentially distant cousins who have to battle and either kill or be killed. The dilemma of Arjuna is not new. Arjuna admits to Krishna that he is very confused and asks for his guidance.

Krishna as a Transformational Servant-Leader

Given the unexpected change in the mood of Arjuna, it falls upon Krishna, acting as his charioteer, to counsel him. Sensing the critical urgency of the situation, with the opposing side getting ready to strike, Krishna with his immensely charismatic personality immediately transforms himself into an authority who speaks with power and conviction to inspire Arjuna to do his just and righteous duty.

Modern leadership literature documents the association between crisis and manifestation of charisma in political leaders (House, Spangler, and Woycke, 1991). Scholars have reasoned that a crisis allows charismatic leaders with the opportunity to display their personality to a fuller extent (Bryman, 1993) and an uncertain situation enhances the leader's ability to appear charismatic. Seen in this context, acting as a charismatic transformational leader, Krishna inspires Arjuna to have a new vision of life and empowers him to act according to his Dharma (duty) as a warrior. Krishna does this by focusing on the immediate psychological needs of Arjuna in order to bring him out of his sorrow and confusion and offers himself (Krishna) as a role model whose ideal conduct is worth emulating. Krishna's approach is consistent with the classic strategy of transformational leadership (Smith et al., 2004), using which, leaders are able to uplift their followers and enable them to share and follow a powerful vision of the future.

We can examine in depth Krishna's response to Arjuna using the four components of transformational leadership behavior that are mentioned in the modern literature as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985, 1996; Bass & Avolio, 1994a, 1994b). Krishna's goal is to pick up Arjuna's spirits by explaining to him the nature of life, death, and the immortal spirit, and the way to overcome mental obstacles that stand in the way of doing his duty.

Given below are a few sample verses from the Bhagavad Gita to demonstrate Krishna's use of the four behaviors commonly accepted as belonging to the realm of transformational leadership.

1. ***Individualized Consideration:***

In the following verses, we see Krishna addressing Arjuna's personal duty as a warrior and advising him what he needs to do to achieve his goals. Specifically, Krishna points out that Arjuna, given his background as a warrior prince, cannot shirk from a battle that is just and righteous. The words used are meant to remind Arjuna that his people are depending on him to protect them from harm, and if Arjuna now retreats, there will be chaos and very serious consequences undermining his past achievements, reputation, and hindering his future potential and growth as a warrior and a person.

Krishna says to Arjuna:

If you will not fight this righteous war, then you will fail in your duty, lose your reputation, and incur sin. (2.33)

The great warriors will think that you have retreated from the battle out of fear. Those who have greatly esteemed you will lose respect for you. (2.35)

Your enemies will speak many unmentionable words and scorn your ability. What could be more painful than this? (2.36).

Further, as part of his individualized consideration for Arjuna, Krishna later advises Arjuna that he can develop his potentially divine nature and become an evolved soul by doing his duty as a warrior without attachment to whether it will bear fruit or not.

Krishna states:

Treating pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat alike, engage yourself in your duty. By doing your duty this way you will not incur sin. (2.38).

You have jurisdiction over your respective duty only, but no control or claim over the results. The fruits of work should not be your motive. You should never be inactive (2.47).

Therefore, always perform your duty efficiently and without attachment to the results, because by doing work without attachment one attains the Supreme. (3.19).

2. Intellectual Stimulation:

Another component of transformational leadership is for the leader to open the followers up to new ideas and different ways of understanding so the followers can integrate this new knowledge into their behaviors and actions. Krishna demonstrates this approach in the following selected verses when he explains to Arjuna the nature of life and death of the body and the eternal nature of the Atma (Soul – Self – Spirit).

Krishna states:

You grieve for those who are not worthy of grief, and yet speak the words of wisdom. The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead. (2.11).

There was never a time when I, you, or these kings did not exist; nor shall we ever cease to exist in the future. (2.12).

The Atma is neither born nor does it die at any time, nor having been it will cease to exist again. It is unborn, eternal, permanent, and primeval. The Atma is not destroyed when the

body is destroyed. (2.20)

O Arjuna, how can a person who knows that the Atma is indestructible, eternal, unborn, and imperishable, kill anyone or cause anyone to be killed? (2.21)

Just as a person puts on new garments after discarding the old ones, similarly Atma acquires new bodies after casting away the old bodies. (2.22)

Weapons do not cut this Atma, fire does not burn it, water does not make it wet, and the wind does not make it dry. (2.23).

3. Idealized Influence:

In this aspect of transformational leadership, the leader offers himself/herself as the ideal role model whose high ethical and moral conduct is worth emulating. We see Krishna use this approach in the following verses emphasizing that although he, Krishna, needs nothing and has nothing to obtain, he still does not give up action and does his duty to set an example to others.

Krishna states:

Because, whatever noble persons do, others follow. Whatever standard they set up, the world follows. (3.21).

O Arjuna, there is nothing in the three worlds (earth, heaven, and the upper regions) that should be done by Me, nor there is anything unattained that I should obtain, yet I engage in action. (3.22)

Because, if I do not engage in action relentlessly, O Arjuna, people would follow My path in every way. (3.23)

These worlds would perish if I do not work, and I shall be the cause of confusion and destruction of all these people. (3.24)

As the ignorant work, O Arjuna, with attachment (to the fruits of work), so the wise should work without attachment, for the welfare of the society. (3.25).

Works do not bind Me, because I have no desire for the fruits of work. The one who understands this truth is (also) not bound by Karma. (4.14).

4. *Inspirational Motivation:*

The last essential facet of transformational leadership is the ability to inspire and energize the followers to act on the shared vision of the leader and empower the followers with the ability to carry it out. The next few verses are examples of Krishna's inspirational motivation and the divine touch that removes Arjuna's confusion about the right course of action.

Krishna states:

Both you and I have taken many births. I remember them all, O Arjuna, but you do not remember. (4.05).

Whenever there is a decline of Dharma and the rise of Adharma, O Arjuna, then I manifest (or incarnate) Myself. I incarnate from time to time for protecting the good, for transforming the wicked, and for establishing Dharma, the world order. (4.07-08.)

Dedicating all works to Me in a spiritual frame of mind, free from desire, attachment, and mental grief, do your duty. (3.30)

Those who always practice this teaching of Mine, with faith and free from cavil, are freed from the bondage of Karma.(3.31).

O Arjuna, I am the Atma abiding in the heart of all beings. I am also the beginning, the middle, and the end of all beings. (10.20)

The Supreme Lord said: O Arjuna, behold My hundreds and thousands of multifarious divine forms of different colors and shapes. (11.05)

Therefore, you get up and attain glory. Conquer your enemies and enjoy a prosperous kingdom. All these (warriors) have already been destroyed by Me. You are only an instrument, O Arjuna.(11.33).

After Krishna had explained many mysteries to Arjuna he asked:

O Arjuna, did you listen to this with single-minded attention? Has your delusion, born of ignorance, been destroyed?(18.72)

Arjuna answered: By Your grace my delusion is destroyed, I have gained knowledge, my confusion (with regard to body and Atma) is dispelled and I shall obey your command. (18.73).

Arjuna then went on to lead his armies into the battle that has become known as the Mahabharata war, with Krishna acting as his charioteer and guide. A ferocious and a hellish battle followed in which large numbers of armies were destroyed on both sides. Arjuna's worst nightmare came true when his son Abhimanyu, trapped behind a cunning enemy formation, lost his life fighting valiantly while Arjuna was preoccupied in a different field of battle and unable to reach him in time. After experiencing the insanity and destruction that war brings to both sides, Arjuna, along with his Pandava brothers, with the counseling and support of Krishna, victorious. Yudhishtira, the oldest Pandava prince, with some convincing from his brothers and Krishna, reluctantly took over the reigns of the new kingdom.

Delegation-Unburdening subordinates

Once the gopikas of Vrindavan were lifting heavy pails of water, while their cowherd friend, Krishna, stood by and watched. He made no move to help them. The gopis marked His strange indifference. However, a little later when they wanted to remove the pails from their heads and place them on the ground, Krishna rushed to help them. Asked why, He replied that His task was to help human souls unburden themselves not to assist them in adding burdens. A leader thus has to unburden his subordinates and not burden them.

C. Leadership Lessons from the Ramayana

One of the few major and greatest epics of India, is the **Ramayana** that has been written by the Great Sage Valmiki, whose life changed even before he started writing the life of Lord Rama and his journey from a princely state of Ayodhya to a Sagely life in the Jungles and then on as a War Hero of Lankapuri.

Those who have read this greatest epic would have definitely come across the following qualities of Lord Rama:

Dharma or Righteousness.

Lord Rama followed “Dharma” or the value of “Righteousness” throughout his life in all his activities.

The Word “Dharma” in itself becomes the first and foremost principle of the path to true leadership. Righteousness was followed by all the leaders we know, be it Mahatma Gandhi or Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King or Aung San Su kyi, everyone who has fought the leadership style has fought it the right way, using the Dharma or Righteousness.

In today’s world where people have no time to relax and are ready to do anything to get what they want or to reach the heights they have dreamt from childhood, there is a tendency to forget Dharma or to suppress it for a while, which is itself equal to not following Dharma. But a true leader is the one who realises the value of righteousness in all his activities. Imagine someone doing a small mistake in a service based industry, and then your whole goodwill will come down to pieces. And if what management gurus have observed is right, losing Goodwill will make you lose the entire thing in the totality.

Doing right thing at the right time and at the right place

Lord Rama, though he was the Lord Vishnu Himself, retained his Human form through out and fought for the right thing at the right time and at the right place. When he was asked to be accompanied by Sage Vishwamitra to save the Hermitage from the rakshasas

(Demons) who were worse than the Pirates of the Carribeans, he stood in the front as a leader who doesn't hide or shy away from taking a risk.

There are several business houses that have reached the heights of successes and still are redefining a new benchmark for successes. And what is common between them is the mere fact that they did the right thing at the right place and at the right time.

Being humble

When Lord Rama was asked by his Father to get ready to become the next king or the very next day when he was asked to go to Jungle for 14 years, he did not show even a discomfort in his attitude, but as a true leader, humbled down and accepted what the elders wanted him to do. Being humble at all times is again an important quality of a true leader.

This probably is the simplest thing to do yet the most beneficial quality one can possess at any time. This truly shows the real leader in you. Being authoritative or showing power or dictatorship is probably the old warlord formula that doesn't suit the current scenario. It doesn't work for too long for anyone. Instead do this when you walk in your work place and see the difference. Be humble, smile at everyone as if you really love them, show genuine concern, help as much as you can wholeheartedly, and think that your worst enemy is none other than your own negative attitude. But as the old saying goes "It is very simple to be difficult but it is very difficult to be simple".

Creating more leaders

Lord Rama had the amazing quality to create more leaders, and he truly was a king maker. Be it Sugreeva, the Monkey prince who was made the King of Kishkindha or the brother of the enemy King Ravana - called Vibishana who was made the King of Lankapuri after the war. That again is a unique quality of a true Leader, as he sows more seeds of leadership around him.

The quality of a true Leader of the 21st Century is to create more leaders. Every organisation today talks about moving ahead in the race by creating more leaders than the competitor. In today's world

the one man show does not promise success like the earlier days. Truly distributed responsibility and empowerment creates more changes for good and more chances to win. So naturally it becomes quintessential for every department, every unit, every organisation, every economy, and every government to create more and effective leaders than ever before. It promises more innovation, more tasks completed, more projects concluded, more promises achieved and most of all more trust from people than ever before.

Compassion and love for all

Lord Rama, was a man of pure and fair compassion towards all. When he was asked to go on 14 years in the Jungles, he started off from Ayodhya being followed constantly by the citizens of Ayodhya. So much was his love for his people that he let them follow him until he was sure that they would be satisfied to have been with him. But the moment they fell asleep in the banks of Tamasa, he silently left them to move into forests. Such was his compassion and love for even the citizens of the nation to which he was a prince.

Lord Rama, along with his consort Sita and brother Lakshmana went to the forests but stopped at one place and waited for long hours for a friend. He was a hunter and king of the jungle Saraayu. His name was Guha. It is written in Valmiki Ramayana that Lakshmana was amazed and puzzled by the compassion and love of Lord Rama that made him wait for an ordinary hunter for so long. When Guha heard the news that Lord Rama was in his jungle Kingdom, he jumped in joy like a baby and came yelling & running towards the Lord. But when he was near the Lord, he became calm and peaceful and did not know what to do next. Such was his respect for the Lord, that even though Lord Rama considered him as his best friend, Guha always respected the Lord for his great virtues. But Lord Rama, seeing this hesitation, hugged Guha and embraced him like a mother who embraces her son who returns home after long years. He caught the hands of the Hunter and pulled him towards Lakshmana and said “Dear Lakshmana, do you remember him? He is the King of this jungle, the King of Saraayu and my dear friend Guha”. Rama never mentioned the word Hunter to Lakshmana or Sita while introducing Guha. Such was his pure compassion for all human beings irrespective of their status, position, caste, creed, or region.

When Lord Rama was later in Lanka, he welcomed Vibhishana, the brother of his own enemy King Ravana to his side and embraced him like a brother. He knew that although Vibhishana was the brother of the Demon King Ravana, he had his heart full of pure devotion and love for the Lord. He made him his best friend instantly even though there were some arguments and feelings against this in his camp.

Lord Rama even disarmed the King Ravana in the first battle and sent him home to come the next day with more weapons. He had the wonderful spirit of truth and a heart of Gold that led him to this path where he could see even his enemy with eyes of compassion and love. He showed humanity to his enemy too.

His love and never ending compassion for his loyal bhakta Shri Hanuman is something that has no boundaries. Lord Shri Hanuman too reciprocates it by never allowing Lord Rama to walk on bare foot from the time he saw Hanuman till the time he reached back Ayodhya. Lord Hanuman himself had a great compassion for everyone he dealt with. This quality is again the make of a true leader.

Every leader should trust his followers and he must show equal treatment and thereby a virtue of dealing fair and clean with all his people. That again proves the fact that he needs to have the heart to deal with people with respect and love. He needs to respect their space, their emotions, their beliefs and guide them the most compassionate way.

Courage

The most rightful and suitable quality of Lord Rama that comes from the duty that he had to perform as a Kshatriya (Warrior) is the quality of Courage. Courage does not mean walking into the river full of crocodiles and challenge to fight them all inside water. That would be called as Foolishness. Real courage comes not from fighting or doing brave things, but from the mental and soulful stability to take both happiness and sadness in the most composed and calm manner. It is the firm heart that can take any feelings in the same pattern that is really a courageous one or a brave heart. It is the quality of a leader that he must be ready to put himself in a big risk when it demands for

the situation where he fights for the truth and the well being of his people.

Lord Rama had the most deserving and the most remarkable courage as a Prince that has ever been displayed by any one from the Past. He had the courageous heart of a lion that could take both extreme happiness and extreme sadness that came across him every time with the same pattern. He did not celebrate happiness nor did he mourn the sadness. He remained calm all through his life and displayed great courage.

This indeed is the prime quality of a leader who wishes to take big risks. He needs pure heart and confidence to display such courage in each of the decisions he takes. He needs courage to take calculative risks, he needs courage to accept major changes, he needs courage to face the competition, accept his weaknesses, and to remain modest and calm in all days - no matter if they are fine or not.

D. Jesus Christ the Leader

Ten ways that Jesus demonstrates how to exercise leadership

1. Jesus used power responsibly

Power is not something evil in itself. Power comes from God, and it should be used for good. If we fail to use our power, when its use is called for, that is irresponsible. Jesus possesses the fullness of all power. He does not exercise his power in a way that is selfish, exploitative, domineering or violent. He uses his power in self-sacrificing love, to heal, to teach, to save. A good leader recognizes his/her power, and uses it responsibly. Our leadership should be “servant leadership”, not for our own glory, and accepting self-sacrifice.

Remember Mark 10:42-45, “Whoever would be great among you must be your servant...The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

2. Jesus was aware of his gifts

He knew he had something to give. A good leader acknowledges his gifts and puts them to good use.

Remember I Peter 4:10, “As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.”

3. Jesus delegated tasks

He asked his Apostles and other disciples to carry out certain duties. A good leader delegates tasks in a clear way.

4. Jesus made sure there were others to lead after him

He trained his Apostles to carry on the work after his Ascension. A good leader makes sure there are good, well-trained leaders in place after him/her. He always creates a second line.

5. Jesus personally invited individuals to help him

He hand-picked his Apostles, saying, “Come, follow me.” A good leader personally invites help, not just issuing a blanket anonymous invitation. Only he who has confidence in himself does not feel threatened by creating leaders.

6. Jesus prayed before major leadership moments

Before beginning his public ministry, he spent 40 days in the desert.

Before calling his Apostles, he prayed all night on the mountain.

Before the crucifixion, he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane.

A good leader will pray before major decisions. Praying is concentrating and seeking divine help.

7. Jesus set high standards for his followers

He told the rich young man, “Go, sell all your possessions, then come and follow me.” He said, “If you wish to be my disciple, you must deny yourself, take up your cross every day, and come and follow me”. A good leader sets high standards.

8. Jesus respected the freedom of his followers

He didn't force people to follow him. He gave people the freedom to respond or not. In John 6, after he taught about the need to eat his Body and drink his Blood, many of his disciples said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” Then after this, “many of his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him.” A good leader will respect the freedom of his followers.

9. Jesus paced himself

He took time to rest, sleep, eat, relax, spend time with supportive friends and get away for solitude. A good leader will pace himself/herself, to avoid burnout. A good leader will not

over-stack his/her plate of activities, which leads to crashing. You need a healthy self-regulating principle.

10. Jesus knew his mission

He was focused on it. In his dialogue with the Syro-Phoenician woman, he made it clear that his mission was to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, not to other nations. He knew that, later, he would send out his disciples to other nations. A good leader helps the group stay focused on the mission.

E. Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhi had so many facets: the traditionalist, the religious innovator, the leader of Indian national liberation, the social reformer, the visionary, the revolutionary, the international human being and then, toward the end of his life, the secularist.

Many people have recognised and understood him as the traditional religious Gandhi and Gandhi as leader of the freedom movement. Once freedom was achieved, however, his leadership of the freedom movement was a thing of the past and therefore his role as social reformer would surely have become ever more important, had he not been assassinated.

In fact he needs to be rediscovered and his relevance understood to our present-day social needs. India is still today a country with vast social problems. Even our political and economic problems need a social approach for their solutions, and it has been tragic that we have addressed those problems with merely political and economic remedies. The emergence of “Gandhigiri” from the movie “Lage Raho Munnabhai” shows his all-time relevance.

Religious Gandhi to Social Reformer

From the outset of his public life in South Africa, Gandhi relied to a great extent on a religious approach to provide social remedies. He not only used religious language but also felt that without religion and belief in god there could be no solution to any problem, social or personal. But then in later years, as he saw more and more the consequences of religious sectarianism and superstitious inertia acting

like poison in the veins of Indian society, he slowly changed and tried to explore new avenues.

He started attributing new meanings to old words. For instance, he would use the word "Rama" to mean "Purushottama," the personification of all good human qualities; so when he talked about Rama Rajya ("The Reign of Rama"), he did not mean anything like the mythological Rama, but the rule of good human beings.

While Gandhi was filling old containers with new contents, many people would see only the container and neglect the contents. The religious Gandhi was adored; the revolutionary Gandhi was conveniently set aside.

In the 1920s he described himself as a fundamentalist Hindu. But then for the sake of unity with other religionists, he declared that he was also in some sense a Muslim, a Jew, a Christian, a Sikh, a Buddhist, a Zoroastrian, and so on; and to demonstrate this feeling of unity he evolved "sarva dharma prarthana" ("all-religions prayer"), taking passages from all religious scriptures.

It is well known that after saying for years that "God is Truth," Gandhi became dissatisfied with this motto and changed it to "Truth is God." It is less well known that the communal riots and religiously inspired mass killings which took place toward the end of his life drove him to remark to Pandit Sundarlal that he wished the communities would turn atheist if that would serve to stop communal hatred and riots, and that he embarked on his last fast "in the name of Truth whose familiar name is God," and at the end of it remarked that:

"In the name of God we have indulged in lies, massacres of people, without caring whether they were innocent or guilty, men or women, children or infants... [but] I am not aware if anybody has done these things in the name of Truth. With the same name on my lips I have broken the fast."

Now as long as Gandhi had associated himself only with religions, a broadly religious approach was natural; but once he associated himself with atheism too, he had to modify his approach to suit all people regardless of their religious or post-religious convictions, though for his own part he would never renounce the love of religion

which he had imbibed from his mother and which he shared with so many millions of Indian villagers. He met the challenge by becoming a secularist. He said that because religion was a personal matter, it should be confined to the personal plane and that if officers of the Government as well as members of the public undertook this responsibility and worked whole-heartedly for the creation of a secular state, then only could we build a new India that would be the glory of the world.

If we had heeded his advice to make religion a purely personal matter and to carry on our social life in an explicitly secular way, we could have solved our worst social problems long ago; but instead, some of our politicians, ignoring that great lesson of Gandhi's, began to exploit caste, religion and other social issues for politically selfish purposes, and in the process they corrupted people's hearts and aggravated our social tensions.

In 1946, Gandhi took a vow that he would bless only those Hindu marriages in which one member of the couple, but not the other, had been born an "untouchable," or else inter-religious marriages. With this vow -- which his followers at Sevagram have honored by permitting only such marriages to be celebrated at the Ashram even to this day -- Gandhi wanted to help create a society free of caste and religious divisions.

Mahatma Gandhi very much wanted to inculcate a sense of self-respect, self-confidence and self-reliance to promote the power of decision-making among the people. He very much wanted that every individual would acquire the capacity to resist the abuse of power. He said that although he did not want to be reborn, yet if he had to be, "I should be born an untouchable so that I may... endeavor to free myself and them from that miserable condition." Removal of untouchability, Khadi and Hindu-Muslim unity were to form the essential ingredients of Indian swaraj (independence). Already in 1920 Gandhi had categorically rejected "any religious doctrine that does not appeal to reason and is in conflict with morality." He abhorred blind following; his morality consisted "not in following the beaten track but in finding the true path for ourselves and in fearlessly following it." He saw exploitation as the essence of violence and so he insisted on the sharing not only of political power and social respect,

but also of economic opportunity; in a free India the poor must enjoy the same power as the rich, who must understand that their desires above and beyond the bare necessities were to be accommodated only after the essential needs of the poor were satisfied; a violent and bloody revolution would be a certainty one day unless there was a voluntary abdication -- sharing for the common good -- of riches and the power that riches gave.

Mahatma Gandhi was socially a universal human and a revolutionary, and today he is beyond freedom of India, beyond religion, beyond the traditions he inherited and the fads he cherished. We should take a great lesson from his secular approach to life and promote social reforms to build a better individual and to cultivate an awareness and interaction among individuals that will lead to mutual co-operation for a better society.

Corporate India and Gandhi

The Father of the Nation is now being held up as the master strategist, an exemplary leader, and someone whose ideas and tactics corporate India can emulate.

Management Guru, C K Prahalad calls Gandhi as a 'strategist.' He once said:

“Gandhi's ideas are of particular relevance to India at this juncture, as it struggles to find ways to inch closer to the 8-10 percent gross domestic product growth rate necessary to become an economic superpower.

Gandhi reinvented the rules of the game to deal with a situation where all the available existing methods had failed. He broke tradition. He understood that you cannot fight the British with force. So he decided to change the game in a fundamentally different way. He unleashed the power of ordinary people, inspired women and men in the country to fight under a unifying goal. Resource constraint did not bother him. He aimed at a common agenda: Poorna Swaraj. That was the motivation.

Freedom or Poorna Swaraj was necessary. We did not know how to get it. Same way, today, I do not know how to grow at 10 percent or

more, or how to create 10-15 million new jobs every year. But that is not an option for us. We have to invent a new way and that is what Gandhi taught us: clarity of goals. Let us have the courage to invent the means. Let us change the paradigm on how we can run,"

For Arindam Chaudhuri, economist Professor, Gandhi had been a big source of inspiration.

In his book, *Count your chickens before they hatch*, Chaudhuri has written extensively about Gandhi's style of leadership and how it can be applied to corporate India. He says:

"Mahatma Gandhi's example to me is a perfect case of adopting styles to suit the culture. The country today stands divided on whether what he did was good or bad... I just know one thing: there was never a leader before him nor one after him who could unite us all and bring us out in the streets to demand for what was rightfully ours. To me, he is the greatest leader our land has ever seen. It is 'Theory 'I' management' at its practical best: productively and intelligently utilizing whatever the resource you are endowed with."

[Theory 'I' management has been propounded by Arindam Chaudhuri and refers to India-centric management. Like the popular management theories, Theory X and Theory Y, Theory 'I' is an attempt to define the Indian worker and develop a theory on management style for him, keeping in mind the Indian conditions.]

Gandhi's leadership style is being termed as 'follower-centric' and one that took into account existing conditions before determining the strategy.

"Gandhi advocated having leadership styles that were dependent on the circumstances. When Gandhi was in South Africa, he launched his protests in a suit and a tie. But when he came back to India, he thought of *khadi* and launched non-violent protests on a greater scale," says Chaudhuri.

Dr Gita Piramal, managing editor, *The Smart Manager* says that the rediscovery of Gandhi by corporate India is not surprising. According to her,

"..... Gandhi is a fascinating figure. On the one hand, he had totally ambivalent feelings about industrial manufacturing. But, on the other, he was a wonderful strategist, showman and leader. He had an amazing public relations network and a very good relationship with the press then.

For instance, look at the Dandi march. If Gandhi had gone there quietly, it would just not have made an impact. He knew he had to create an event to make an impact and so he took his followers on a march that stirred popular imagination of the time. He had a total understanding of the human psychology and used it along with his public relation skills,"

Today, business leaders are clear that Gandhi's managerial ideas are what they want to follow.

"It is not really selective application of Gandhi's ideas. Gandhi's example as a manager and leader is extraordinary. There was no one like him who could get people together to embrace his vision as their vision. An understanding of these qualities about him is what is happening now in corporate India," says Piramal.

Mahatma Gandhi was perhaps one of the greatest leaders produced by mankind. He was a simple person. When we read his autobiography "My Experiments with Truth" we realise how absolute integrity and ensuring that there is no shadow between what he practiced and what he preached, resulted in his enormous credibility and effectiveness as a leader.

The basic root of the success of Mahatma Gandhi was his absolute integrity. Integrity leads to credibility. People find out very soon if there is a gap between what you preach and what you practice. The reason why many of our so called leaders today do not carry credibility is because there is a gap between what they practice and what they preach. The first requirement for a leader to be effective is absolute integrity. The integrity of a person is determined by his background and the values he derives from parents, friends, teachers and so on. Part of the values of integrity is also derived from religion. The values cherished by the society also affect us.

Gandhi came from a background far worse than ours. He was born as the fourth child from the fourth wife of his father who had less than grade three education and his mother was illiterate. Gandhi was a below-average student, was married at age 13 and had fathered a son by age 16. He was too shy to participate in any extra-curricular activity and had not read a newspaper until he was 18. In fact he did not show any sign of leadership up to the age of 23. And then, slowly but steadily, he rose to become one of the greatest leaders that this world has ever seen!

"You must be the change you want to see in others." – Mahatma Gandhi

"In mass civil resistance leadership is essential; in individual civil resistance every resister is his own leader." – Mahatma G

F. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

The history of India would have been different had Sardar Patel not been the Deputy Prime Minister when India became independent in 1947. The triumvirate-Gandhi, Nehru and Sardar Patel were responsible for giving direction to the destiny of the country. Sardar Patel consolidated the country into one united whole in a unique manner.

Formative Years

Born on October 31, 1875 at Nadiad, in the Kaira district of Gujarat, Vallabh Bhai Patel was the son of Zaverbhai Galabhai Patel, a Leuva Patidar. This class of cultivators was known for their simple character, industrious habits and straightforward dealings. Vallabhbhai possessed an ingenious mind as a school boy. He was a rebel whose exceptional organisational abilities were recognised by his schoolmates and teachers.

Even as a young boy Vallabhbhai displayed qualities of organization and leadership that marked him out for his future role. Once as a sixth standard boy he organized a successful strike of his classmates that lasted for three days to teach a lesson to one of the teachers who was unduly fond of the rod. Vallabhbhai must have inherited these attributes from his father who, it is said, had fought in the Mutiny

under the Rani of Jhansi and was subsequently taken prisoner by Malharrao Holkar.

Gandhiji's Disciple

The impact of Gandhiji's personality on Vallabhbhai was tremendous. It gave him a new mission in life. The Champaran struggle waged by Gandhiji had a sweeping effect on Patel's mind. In Gandhiji's Champaran victory Patel saw the beginning of a new agrarian revolution. His interest in politics had been kindled, as became abundantly clear in the Provincial Political Conference organised by the Gujarat Sabha and presided by Gandhiji at Godhara. The conference appointed a permanent committee with Gandhiji as the President and Patel as one of the secretaries. He became a staunch follower of Gandhiji. From then on there was no looking back. Blessed with rare qualities of fortitude, integrity and an iron determination, Patel played an important role in the freedom movement.

Indomitable Personality

In 1917 he was elected for the first time as a Municipal Councilor Ahmedabad. From 1924 to 1928 he was Chairman of the Municipal Committee. The years of his association with the Municipal administration were marked by much meaningful work for the improvement of civic life. Work was done to improve water supply, sanitation and town planning and the Municipality came to be transformed from being a mere adjunct to the British rule into a popular body with a will of its own. There were also calamities like plague in 1917 and famine in 1918 and on both occasions Vallabhbhai did important work to relieve distress.

It was due to his sterling leadership and practical vision that the peasant movement in Gujarat became a success. It was in this struggle that the organisational capacity, for which Sardar Patel later became famous in the whole country became visible.

The Bardoli Satyagraha was organised under the leadership of Vallabhbhai Patel against the Government's decision to increase the assessment of land revenue from Bardoli taluka by 22 per cent and in some villages by as much as 50 to 60 per cent. The struggle was grim

and bitter. There were seizures of property and livestock to such an extent that for days together, people kept themselves and their buffaloes locked in. Arrests followed and then brutalities of the police and the hired Pathans. The struggle drew the attention of the whole country to it. Patels and Talatis resigned their jobs. Government revenues remained unrealized. The Government had ultimately to bow before popular resolve and an inquiry was instituted to find out to what extent the increase was justified and the realization of the increased revenue was postponed. It was a triumph not only of the 80,000 peasants of Bardoli but more particularly of Vallabhbai personally; he was given the title of "Sardar" by the nation.

He took over as the nascent nation's Home Minister at a very crucial juncture in history and devoted himself whole heartedly to ensure that the country which was already partitioned remained intact and united.

Building a Union

On the eve of their departure, the British government announced that its paramountcy would lapse not only over the British territory but even over the native States. This meant that as many as 625 small and big native States would become independent like India and Pakistan. Consequently, the country would be divided into a number of small and big units.

Before embarking on the mammoth task of uniting them, Sardar sought to ensure the stability of administration by forging a bridge of faith and confidence with the "Steel Frame". Most of the I.C.S. officers suspected that the Congress leaders, particularly Sardar in view of his past experiences with them, would have no faith in the I.C.S. But Sardar rose to the occasion and reposed total trust in their capability to serve the nation. He was, thus, able to win their unstinted support in the endeavour of nation building.

Attempts were afoot for finalizing the standstill agreement with the States. It provided that the Central Government will be vested with powers of defence, foreign policy and communications even over the States. Travancore, Hyderabad and some other States declared themselves sovereign States and created hurdles in the agreement. On the other end, Jinnah with a view to tempt Jodhpur, Jaisalmer and

other border States made them an unconditional offer to align with Pakistan on their terms.

Political Sagacity

To find an amicable solution to this complicated situation, Sardar issued a statement to the princes wherein he appealed to their sense of patriotism and reiterated that the new States in no way, desire to have supremacy over them. "If at all, any sense of supremacy is required, it would be with common understanding and for common good. We are at a momentous stage in the history of India. By common endeavour, we can raise the country to new greatness, while lack of unity will expose us to unexpected calamities. I hope the Indian States will realise fully that if we do not cooperate and work together in the general interest, anarchy and chaos will overwhelm us all great and small, and lead us to total ruin". The statement which amply reflected his statesmanship and political sagacity, removed whatever doubts lurked in the minds of the princes.

There was a popular agitation in Travancore and the State acceded to India. The Nawab of Bhopal could not take all this but when he realized that there was no alternative, he sent the instrument of accession duly signed to Sardar.

A man of iron will and absolute fearlessness, Sardar Patel tackled the question of 550 and odd State territories and principalities in such a strategic manner that left even his wildest critics in complete amazement. Almost within a year he redrew the map of India with every princely State joining the Indian union and thus, forming part of the political stream of life that was endowed with cultural unity and harmony.

Intricate Situation

The intricacy of the situation can perhaps be gauged by the fact that there were 26 small States in Orissa and 15 in the Chattisgarh area of present Madhya Pradesh. It required skilful diplomacy on the part of Sardar Patel to persuade them to merge into bigger, more viable units. Even more ticklish was the case of Saurashtra where there were 14 big States, 119 small States and other units under different administrations totaling 860.

The Herculean task of merging all of them into the Saurashtra union was also accomplished by Sardar Patel. Soon, State after State started acceding to the Indian Union. One after the other, Gwalior, Indore, Dhar, Dewas all accepted the advice of Sardar. Rajputana States followed the same. The Sikhs of Punjab also cooperated with the merger.

Even by August 15, Hyderabad kept aloof. Hence, Lord Mountbatten himself started negotiations. At one stage, it appeared that there was a settlement but Nizam found himself helpless against the pressures of Razakars. The Razakars started harassing the local public. Thus, when the situation went out of control, Sardar with the consent of the Governor General initiated police action. In 108 hours, the Nizam surrendered and Hyderabad acceded and merged with India. The Nawab of Junagadh accepted an accession with Pakistan. Sardar solved this complex problem in his own inimitable way and the Nawab and his Diwan left Junagadh for Pakistan.

Thus, the 'Yagna' for establishment of a united India undertaken by Sardar was completed with the merger of Hyderabad. Politically, India became one and united. In the history of India stretched over ages, India became one and united for the first time and that too without shedding a drop of blood. That was the marvel of the personality of Sardar. The sterling qualities of leadership he had shown as leader of Satyagraha, flowered in greater way in the administration of the country, maintenance of law and order and ensuring stability of the country and making it invulnerable.

Prophetic Vision

Sardar's prophetic vision is seen clearly in his perception of the Chinese threat from across the border when the cry throughout India was "Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai", in a letter to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister, Sardar wrote on Nov.7, 1950.

"Throughout history we have seldom been worried about our North-East Frontier. The Himalayas have been regarded as an impenetrable barrier against any threat from the north. In our calculations we shall have to reckon with Communist China in the North and North-East, a Communist China which has definite ambitions and aims and which

does not, in any way, seem friendly disposed towards us.” Jawaharlal Nehru wrote a note on China and Tibet that touched on some of the Sardar’s points and sent a copy to Sardar.

He wrote:

“I think it is extremely unlikely that we may have to face any real military invasion from the Chinese side. It is inconceivable that China should divert its forces and its strength across the inhospitable terrain of Tibet and undertake a wild adventure across the Himalayas. Thus I rule out any major attack on India by China.”

The attack on India by China that Sardar feared and Jawaharlal had ruled out took place twelve years thereafter.

Simplicity of Sardar

The indomitable Sardar who decided the fate of hundreds of princes, many of them fabulously rich, and habituated to lavish living and giving, was so utterly unconcerned about accumulating any money for himself or his family. When he died, he left virtually nothing, not even a will. Like his Guru, the only “personal property” he left behind was a few pieces of clothes, one or two pairs of chappals and other minor personal effects.

Impregnable Composure

His wife, Zaverbai, died early in 1909 after an operation for some abdominal malady. When news of the bereavement reached Vallabhbhai, he was cross-examining a witness in a murder case at Anand. With an impregnable composure for which he became known later, he did not show grief but went on with the cross-examination in hand.

Vallabhbhai Patel was thus one of the chief architects and guardians of India's freedom and his contribution towards consolidating the freedom of the country remains unrivalled.

He died on December 15, 1950, leaving behind a son, Dahyabhai Patel, and a daughter, Maniben Patel.

G. Bhagavad Gita

Old truths in a new context

The *Bhagavad Gita*, written thousands of years ago, enlightens us on all leadership techniques leading us towards a harmonious and blissful state of affairs in place of conflict, tensions, poor productivity, absence of motivation and so on, common in most of Indian enterprises today – and probably in enterprises in many other countries.

The modern (Western) management concepts of vision, leadership, motivation, excellence in work, achieving goals, giving work meaning, decision making and planning, are all discussed in the Bhagavad Gita. There is one major difference. While Western management thought too often deals with problems at material, external and peripheral levels, the Bhagavad Gita tackles the issues from the grass roots level of human thinking. Once the basic thinking of man is improved, it will automatically enhance the quality of his actions and their results.

The management philosophy emanating from the West is based on the lure of materialism and on a perennial thirst for profit, irrespective of the quality of the means adopted to achieve that goal. This phenomenon has its source in the abundant wealth of the West and so 'management by materialism' has caught the fancy of all the countries the world over, India being no exception to this trend. India has been in the forefront in importing these ideas mainly because of its centuries old indoctrination by colonial rulers, which has inculcated a feeling that anything Western is good and anything Indian is inferior.

The result is that, while huge funds have been invested in building temples of modern management education, no perceptible changes are visible in the improvement of the general quality of life - although the standard of living of a few has gone up. The same old struggles in almost all sectors of the economy, criminalization of institutions, social violence, exploitation and other vices are seen deep in the body politic.

The source of the problem

The reasons for this sorry state of affairs are not far to seek, the Western idea of management centres on making the worker (and the manager) more efficient and more productive. Companies offer workers more to work more, produce more, sell more and to stick to the organization without looking for alternatives. The sole aim of extracting better and more work from the worker is to improve the bottom-line of the enterprise. The worker has become a hireable commodity, which can be used, replaced and discarded at will.

Thus, workers have been reduced to the state of a mercantile product. In such a state, it should come as no surprise to us that workers start using strikes (gheraos) sit-ins, (dharnas) go-slows, work-to-rule etc. to get maximum benefit for themselves from the organizations. Society-at-large is damaged. Thus we reach a situation in which management and workers become separate and contradictory entities with conflicting interests. There is no common goal or understanding. This, predictably, leads to suspicion, friction, disillusion and mistrust, with managers and workers at cross purposes. The absence of human values and erosion of human touch in the organisational structure has resulted in a crisis of confidence.

Western management philosophy may have created prosperity – for some people some of the time at least - but it has failed in the aim of ensuring betterment of individual life and social welfare. It has remained by and large a soulless edifice and an oasis of plenty for a few in the midst of poor quality of life for many.

Hence, there is an urgent need to re-examine prevailing management disciplines - their objectives, scope and content. Management should be redefined to underline the development of the worker as a person, as a human being, and not as a mere wage-earner. With this changed perspective, management can become an instrument in the process of social, and indeed national, development.

Now let us re-examine some of the modern management concepts in the light of the *Bhagavad Gita* which is a primer of management-by-values.

Utilization of available resources

The first lesson of management science is to choose wisely and utilise scarce resources optimally. During the curtain raiser before the Mahabharata War, Duryodhana chose Sri Krishna's large army for his help while Arjuna selected Sri Krishna's wisdom for his support. This episode gives us a clue as to the nature of the effective manager - the former chose numbers, the latter, wisdom.

Attitudes towards work

Three stone-cutters were engaged in erecting a temple. An HRD Consultant asked them what they were doing. The response of the three workers to this innocent-looking question is illuminating.

'I am a poor man. I have to maintain my family. I am making a living here,' said the first stone-cutter with a dejected face.

'Well, I work because I want to show that I am the best stone-cutter in the country,' said the second one with a sense of pride.

'Oh, I want to build the most beautiful temple in the country,' said the third one with a visionary gleam.

Their jobs were identical but their perspectives were different. What the *Gita* tells us is to develop the visionary perspective in the work we do. It tells us to develop a sense of larger vision in our work for the common good.

Work commitment

A popular verse of the *Gita* advises “detachment” from the fruits or results of actions performed in the course of one's duty. Being dedicated work has to mean “working for the sake of work, generating excellence for its own sake.” If we are always calculating the date of promotion or the rate of commission before putting in our efforts, then such work is not detached. It is not “generating excellence for its own sake” but working only for the extrinsic reward that may (or may not) result.

Working only with an eye to the anticipated benefits, means that the quality of performance of the current job or duty suffers - through mental agitation of anxiety for the future. In fact, the way the world works means that events do not always respond positively to our calculations and hence expected fruits may not always be forthcoming. So, the *Gita* tells us not to mortgage present commitment to an uncertain future.

Some people might argue that not seeking the business result of work and actions, makes one unaccountable. In fact, the *Bhagavad Gita* is full of advice on the theory of cause and effect, making the doer responsible for the consequences of his deeds. While advising detachment from the avarice of selfish gains in discharging one's accepted duty, the *Gita* does not absolve anybody of the consequences arising from discharge of his or her responsibilities.

Thus the best means of effective performance management is the work itself. Attaining this state of mind (called "nishkama karma") is the right attitude to work because it prevents the ego, the mind, from dissipation of attention through speculation on future gains or losses.

Motivation – self and self-transcendence

It has been presumed for many years that satisfying lower order needs of workers - adequate food, clothing and shelter, etc. are key factors in motivation. However, it is a common experience that the dissatisfaction of the clerk and of the Director is identical - only their scales and composition vary. It should be true that once the lower-order needs are more than satisfied, the Director should have little problem in optimizing his contribution to the organization and society. But more often than not, it does not happen like that. ("The eagle soars high but keeps its eyes firmly fixed on the dead animal below.") On the contrary, a lowly paid schoolteacher, or a self-employed artisan, may well demonstrate higher levels of self-actualisation despite poorer satisfaction of their lower-order needs.

This situation is explained by the theory of self-transcendence propounded in the *Gita*. Self-transcendence involves renouncing egoism, putting others before oneself, emphasising team work,

dignity, co-operation, harmony and trust – and, indeed potentially sacrificing lower needs for higher goals, the opposite of Maslow.

“Work must be done with detachment.” It is the ego that spoils work and the ego is the centerpiece of most theories of motivation. We need not merely a theory of motivation but a theory of inspiration.

The Great Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941, known as "Gurudev") says working for love is freedom in action. A concept which is described as “disinterested work” in the *Gita* where Sri Krishna says,

“He who shares the wealth generated only after serving the people, through work done as a sacrifice for them, is freed from all sins. On the contrary those who earn wealth only for themselves, eat sins that lead to frustration and failure.”

Disinterested work finds expression in devotion, surrender and equipoise. The former two are psychological while the third is determination to keep the mind free of the dualistic (usually taken to mean "materialistic") pulls of daily experiences. Detached involvement in work is the key to mental equanimity or the state of “nirdwanda.” This attitude leads to a stage where the worker begins to feel the presence of the Supreme Intelligence guiding the embodied individual intelligence. Such de-personified intelligence is best suited for those who sincerely believe in the supremacy of organisational goals as compared to narrow personal success and achievement.

Work culture

An effective work culture is about vigorous and arduous efforts in pursuit of given or chosen tasks. Sri Krishna elaborates on two types of work culture – “daivi sampat” or divine work culture and “asuri sampat” or demonic work culture.

Daivi work culture - involves fearlessness, purity, self-control, sacrifice, straightforwardness, self-denial, calmness, absence of fault-finding, absence of greed, gentleness, modesty, absence of envy and pride.

Asuri work culture - involves egoism, delusion, personal desires, improper performance, work not oriented towards service.

Mere work ethic is not enough. The hardened criminal exhibits an excellent work ethic. What is needed is a work ethic conditioned by ethics in work.

It is in this light that the counsel, “yogah karmasu kausalam” should be understood. “Kausalam” means skill or technique of work which is an indispensable component of a work ethic. “Yogah” is defined in the *Gita* itself as “samatvam yogah uchyate” meaning an unchanging equipoise of mind (detachment.). Tilak tells us that acting with an equable mind is Yoga.

(Bal Gangadhar Tilak, 1856-1920, the precursor of Gandhi, hailed by the people of India as "Lokmanya," probably the most learned among the country's political leaders. For a description of the meanings of the word "Yoga", see foot of this page.)

By making the equable mind the bed-rock of all actions, the *Gita* evolved the goal of unification of work ethic with ethics in work, for without ethical process no mind can attain equipoise. The guru, Adi Sankara (born circa 800 AD), says that the skill necessary in the performance of one's duty is that of maintaining an evenness of mind in face of success and failure. The calm mind in the face of failure will lead to deeper introspection and see clearly where the process went wrong so that corrective steps could be taken to avoid shortcomings in future.

The principle of reducing our attachment to personal gains from the work done is the *Gita's* prescription for attaining equanimity. It has been held that this principle leads to lack of incentive for effort, striking at the very root of work ethic. To the contrary, concentration on the task for its own sake leads to the achievement of excellence – and indeed to the true mental happiness of the worker. Thus, while commonplace theories of motivation may be said to lead us to the bondage or extrinsic rewards, the *Gita's* principle leads us to the intrinsic rewards of mental, and indeed moral, satisfaction.

The *Gita* further explains the theory of “detachment” from the extrinsic rewards of work in saying:

If the result of sincere effort is a success, the entire credit should not be appropriated by the doer alone.

If the result of sincere effort is a failure, then too the entire blame does not accrue to the doer.

The former attitude mollifies arrogance and conceit while the latter prevents excessive despondency, de-motivation and self-pity. Thus both these dispositions safeguard the doer against psychological vulnerability, the cause of the modern managers' companions of diabetes, high blood pressure and ulcers.

Assimilation of the ideas of the *Gita* leads us to the wider spectrum of "lokasamgraha" (general welfare) but there is also another dimension to the work ethic - if the "karmayoga" (service) is blended with "bhaktiyoga" (devotion), then the work itself becomes worship, a "sevayoga" (service for its own sake.)

(This may sound a peculiarly religious idea but it has a wider application. It could be taken to mean doing something because it is worthwhile, to serve others, to make the world a better place.)

Manager's mental health

Sound mental health is the very goal of any human activity - more so management. Sound mental health is that state of mind which can maintain a calm, positive poise, or regain it when unsettled, in the midst of all the external vagaries of work life and social existence. Internal constancy and peace are the pre-requisites for a healthy stress-free mind.

Some of the impediments to sound mental health are:

- Greed** - for power, position, prestige and money.
- Envy** - regarding others' achievements, success, rewards.
- Egotism** - about one's own accomplishments.
- Suspicion, anger and frustration.**
- Anguish** through comparisons.

The driving forces in today's businesses are speed and competition. There is a distinct danger that these forces cause erosion of the moral

fibre, that in seeking the end, one permits oneself immoral means - tax evasion, illegitimate financial holdings, being “economical with the truth”, deliberate oversight in the audit, too-clever financial reporting and so on. This phenomenon may be called as “yayati syndrome”.

In the book, the *Mahabharata*, we come across a king by the name of Yayati who, in order to revel in the endless enjoyment of flesh exchanged his old age with the youth of his obliging youngest son for a thousand years. However, he found the pursuit of sensual enjoyments ultimately unsatisfying and came back to his son pleading him to take back his youth. This “yayati syndrome” shows the conflict between externally directed acquisitions (extrinsic motivation) and inner value and conscience (intrinsic motivation.)

Management needs those who practice what they preach

“Whatever the excellent and best ones do, the commoners follow,” says Sri Krishna in the *Gita*. The visionary leader must be a missionary, extremely practical, intensively dynamic and capable of translating dreams into reality. This dynamism and strength of a true leader flows from an inspired and spontaneous motivation to help others. "I am the strength of those who are devoid of personal desire and attachment. O Arjuna, I am the legitimate desire in those, who are not opposed to righteousness," says Sri Krishna in the 10th Chapter of the *Gita*.

In conclusion

The despondency of Arjuna in the first chapter of the *Gita* is typically human. Sri Krishna, by sheer power of his inspiring words, changes Arjuna's mind from a state of inertia to one of righteous action, from the state of what the French philosophers call “anomie” or even alienation, to a state of self-confidence in the ultimate victory of “dharma” (ethical action.)

When Arjuna got over his despondency and stood ready to fight, Sri Krishna reminded him of the purpose of his new-found spirit of intense action - not for his own benefit, not for satisfying his own greed and desire, but for the good of many, with faith in the ultimate victory of ethics over unethical actions and of truth over untruth.

Sri Krishna's advice with regard to temporary failures is, “No doer of good ever ends in misery.” Every action should produce results. Good action produces good results and evil begets nothing but evil. Therefore, always act well and be rewarded. All clouds will vanish. Light will fill the heart and mind. I assure him of this. This is the message of Holy *Gita*.

My purport is not to suggest discarding of the Western model of efficiency, dynamism and striving for excellence but to tune these ideals to India's holistic attitude of “lokasangraha” - for the welfare of many, for the good of many. There is indeed a moral dimension to business life. What we do in business is no different, in this regard, to what we do in our personal lives. The means do not justify the ends. Pursuit of results for their own sake is ultimately self-defeating. (“Profit,” said Matsushita-san in another tradition “is the reward of correct behaviour.” – ed.)

H. Dhirubhai Ambani

Dhirubhai H. Ambani (1932-2002) played an important role in the country's quest for economic growth and regeneration. Rising from humble beginnings he went on to build India's largest business conglomerate through the brilliance of his entrepreneurial genius and sheer hard work.

Among the greatest contributions of Ambani was the way he generated an equity cult in India. Starting with the initial public offering of Reliance Industries in 1977, he attracted a large number of retail investors to the stock market with issue after issue. The trust that he earned from millions of shareholders, employees and customers was crucial to the phenomenal growth of Reliance Industries from a small time business firm in 1977 to one of the world leaders within two decades. Analysts have often marveled at four exceptional qualities of Dhirubhai Ambani which made his incredible success possible; **the spirit of self-reliance, speed, size and scale of operations** and ability to sell products by leading the market. In business, he adopted a strategy that could never fail – that of producing goods of high quality and selling them at the cheapest possible price.

Dhirubhai Ambani, the entrepreneur who emerged as the tallest industrial leader in India in the last two decades, transformed the industrial landscape just as Jamshed Tata and G. D. Birla did in their times.

Dhirubhai leaves behind a strong legacy of thinking big and doing the impossible. He was not just a visionary beyond par but also an achiever. He was the architect of the equity culture in India. His competitors feared and respected him alike. International media credits him for the competence he developed for 'getting round the regulators'. Sure he did find a way to cut the bureaucratic labyrinth, but only to bypass restrictive licensing practices of those times.

I. Maharana Pratap Singh (1572-97)

Maharana Pratap, the son of Maharana Udai Singh, is the only Rajput ruler who is celebrated throughout the country for his courage and patriotism. He is more popularly known in Rajasthan as Rana Kika or Mewari Singh. Col. Tod, the famous British antiquarian, bestows title of Leonidas of Rajasthan on Rana Pratap. According to Tod, "There is not a pass in the Alpine Aravalli that is not sanctified by some deed of Maharana Pratap – some brilliant victory, or oftener, more glorious defeat." Pratap was the only Rajput who never surrendered to the Mughal Emperor Akbar. "Has anyone seen the Maharana bow his head before the balustrade in the Mughal court?" asks a famous poem on Maharana Pratap. Though once tempted on seeing his son cry for food, Rana Pratap never gave Akbar the satisfaction of receiving his submission.

Living up to traditional Rajput pride, Pratap had once refused to eat with Raja Man Singh of Amber because Man Singh had given his sister in marriage to Prince Salim. Man Singh avenged this insult at the battle of Haldighati. Pratap was defeated.

Rana escaped to the jungles of Chavand, living with the Bhils and sometimes going without food. Left without an army, Pratap took to guerilla warfare, hitting the Imperial army and withdrawing into the forests. This went on for 25 long years, and eventually the Rana was able to conquer most of Mewar.

On his deathbed Pratap took an oath from his chiefs "by the name of Bappa Rawal" that they would not permit mansions to be raised till Mewar had recovered her independence. He made his successors vow that they would not live in palaces, sleep on beds nor eat off metal utensils until Chittor was recaptured. From then on into the 20th century the Maharanas of Mewar continued to put a leaf platter under their regular utensils and a reed mat under their beds as a symbolic maintenance of this vow.

The End of The Great Soul

Pratap died in 1697 with the unfulfilled dream of conquering Chittor, but not until his courtiers assured him that they would not submit to the Mughals. When the news of his death reached Akbar it is said that his eyes had filled with tears and had ordered his court poet to compose a poem in his honour.

J. Subhash Chandra Bose

Known as *Netaji* (leader), Mr. Bose was a fierce and popular leader in the political scene in pre-independence India . Subhash Chandra was born on January 23rd 1897 in Cuttack as the ninth child among fourteen of Janakinath Bose, an advocate, and Prabhavati Devi, a pious and God-fearing lady. A brilliant student, he topped the matriculation examination of Calcutta province and passed his B.A. in Philosophy from the Presidency College in Calcutta. He was strongly influenced by Swami Vivekananda's teachings and was known for his patriotic zeal as a student. His parents' wishes kept him away from the Indian freedom struggle and led him into studies for the Indian Civil Service in England.

Although he finished those examinations also at the top of his class (4th), he could not complete his apprenticeship and returned to India, being deeply disturbed by the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre. He came under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi and joined the Indian National Congress (a.k.a. Congress). Gandhiji directed him to work with Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, the Bengali leader whom Bose acknowledged as his political guru.

Bose was outspoken in his anti-British stance and was jailed 11 (eleven) times between 1920 and 1941 for periods varying between six months and three years. He was the leader of the youth wing of the Congress Party, in the forefront of the trade union movement in India and organized *Service League*, another wing of Congress. He was admired for his great skills in organization development.

The Influence of Bose

Bose advocated complete freedom for India at the earliest, whereas the Congress Committee wanted it in phases, through a Dominion status. Other younger leaders including Jawaharlal Nehru supported Bose and finally at the historic Lahore Congress convention, the Congress had to adopt *Poorna Swaraj* (complete freedom) as its motto. Bhagat Singh's martyrdom and the inability of the Congress leaders to save his life infuriated Bose and he started a movement opposing the Gandhi-Irvin Peace Pact. He was imprisoned and expelled from India. But defying the ban, he came back to India and was imprisoned again! Clouds of World War II were gathering fast and Bose warned the Indian people and the British against dragging India into the war and the material losses she could incur. He was elected president of the Indian National Congress twice in 1937 and in 1939, the second time defeating Gandhiji's nominee. He brought a resolution to give the British six months to hand India over to the Indians, failing which there would be a revolt. There was much opposition to his rigid stand, and he resigned from the post of president and formed a progressive group known as the *Forward Block* (1939). The Second World War broke out in September of 1939, and just as predicted by Bose, India was declared as a warring state (on behalf of the British) by the Governor General, without consulting Indian leaders. The Congress party was in power in seven major states and all state governments resigned in protest.

Subhash Chandra Bose now started a mass movement against utilizing Indian resources and men for the Great War. To him, it made no sense to further bleed poor Indians for the sake of colonial and imperial nations. There was a tremendous response to his call and the British promptly imprisoned him. He took to a hunger-strike, and after his health deteriorated on the 11th day of fasting, he was freed and was

placed under house arrest. The British were afraid of violent reactions in India, should something happen to Bose in prison.

Bose suddenly disappeared in the beginning of 1941 and it was not until many days that authorities realized Bose was not inside the house they were guarding! He traveled by foot, car and train and resurfaced in Kabul (now in Afghanistan), only to disappear once again. In November 1941, his broadcast from German radio sent shock waves among the British and electrified the Indian masses who realized that their leader was working on a master plan to free their motherland. It also gave fresh confidence to the revolutionaries in India who were challenging the British in many ways.

The Strategy

"The time has come when I can openly tell the whole world, including our enemies, as to how it is proposed to bring about national liberation. Indians outside India, particularly Indians in East Asia, are going to organize a fighting force which will be powerful enough to attack the British Army in India. When we do so, a revolution will break out, not only among the civil population at home, but also among the Indian Army which is now standing under the British flag. When the British government is thus attacked from both sides - from inside India and from outside - it will collapse, and the Indian people will then regain their liberty. According to my plan, it is not even necessary to bother about the attitude of the Axis powers towards India. If Indians outside and inside India will do their duty, it is possible for the Indian people to throw the British out of India and liberate 388 millions of their countrymen." - *Speech by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose at a mass rally, Singapore, 9 July 1943*

Loyalty to colleagues

No doubt there was an authoritarian streak in him, but his actions often belied his dictatorial postures. In 1939, as Congress president, he behaved - against Gandhi's wishes - less like an autocrat and more like a negotiator who had won one round and expected to reap some benefit from it. Throughout his political career he was always loyal to colleagues even at the risk of damaging his own chances: hardly the mark of a man of iron.

An extreme man

An extreme man, he produced extreme reactions: total adulation or permanent rejection. Certainly the India of Bose would have been very different from the India of Nehru. Bose had often said that India needed at least twenty years of iron dictatorial rule, and he would most certainly have rejected the type of parliamentary democracy that has developed. This opens up the whole question of whether it is better for people to have food or to have freedom to change their political rulers every five years. The argument can never be resolved - though, given the recent adulation of the West for China, some of the oldest democracies in the world seem to think food is more important.

Chapter II

Leadership Lessons from Lagaan

While it is not often that movies offer more than entertainment, ever so often there comes a film which can make a deep impact and teach us a few things. Lagaan is one such film which teaches us many leadership lessons. Lagaan is about Bhuvan and his team, who, against all odds, fight for pride, land and country - and win. It is how one single person with a passion can make a difference. It is about the triumph of human spirit, the Indian spirit. The following leadership lessons can be learnt from this film:

Think of Problems as Opportunities

When Captain Russel challenges Bhuvan to a cricket match, Bhuvan accepts it because he knows that there is really no option. It is a risk, but without taking risks, there are no rewards. Leaders need to think adversities as opportunities for innovation.

Dream Big and Define the Goal

Once Bhuvan accepted the challenge, his dream was three years of no tax. It may have seemed unrealistic or even improbable, but then that's what dreams are. Dreaming is about imagining a different future. In the case of Bhuvan, he not only dreamt big but also put in place a strategy to make that a reality. Another name for Dream is Vision. To make things happen the way we want, we have to envision the future, and paint a picture in front of others of what we want to achieve.

Put Community before Self

The important thing about Bhuvan's dream was that it was not for himself, it was for the community. Never in his talk or action did Bhuvan put himself or his self-interest before that of what his village needed. Bhuvan's dream of greater good thus elicited (after some initial resistance) the support of the entire province.

Be Determined in face of Opposition

This comes across many times in the movie. Right from the start when the entire village opposes Bhuvan's having taken up the challenge to when the rest of his team refuses to play because Bhuvan wants to take on board Kachra, an untouchable. On all occasions, Bhuvan knows he is right, and faces up and answers his critics with courage, winning their support in the end. Leaders face this situation many times. It is at times like these that his leadership is on test.

Give Examples to Enhance Understanding

Even though Bhuvan didn't know the difference at that time, he simplified the challenge of learning cricket by portraying it as something similar to gilli-danda. By doing this, he made the impossible seem achievable; he made the mountain seem climbable. Analogies have that effect and can be powerful in helping tame the seemingly difficult. Leaders too have the task of motivating the troops to take up challenges in the marketplace. Vision needs to be translated into a series of tasks that the team can understand can relate themselves with, thus building a path through the fog.

Make a Beginning

Bhuvan did not wait to start. He did not see around. He made a bat and a ball, got the kid interested and started. Many times, we brood and end up thinking too much. The only way a leader test out new ideas is by jumping in, by getting started. Only when we close the door behind us will we see the doors in front start opening.

Small Victories are Important at the Start

The first time Bhuvan hits the ball, he does so in public, in full view of the entire village. He makes it seem easy, he makes them want to participate. In the film, watch the faces of the villagers after Bhuvan's first strike. When starting any project, it is important to have small wins at the start to motivate the team.

Building the Team

This is at the heart of the film in the first half. Building the team is like recruitment. One needs to select the right people and motivate them. Just

watching Bhuvan go from one to eleven offers a lot of learning. He understands the pressures and the soft points of people, and uses this knowledge to make them part of his team. Watch and listen to the song which he uses to recruit Goli, the largest land owner in the village, and Ishwar Kaka, Gauri's father. To get Bhura, the murgiwalla, he makes him feel important as a person who can teach something (catching) to the rest of the lot. Watch also how Bhuvan talks to each of his team members. Each one is treated as special, as being different.

Allocating Roles

Bhuvan also assigns responsibilities to each of his people. Just getting the people on board is not good enough. They have to be told what the goal is. Just as the hand consists of a thumb and four fingers, a team consists of different individuals. The objective is to make them all work together like a fist, like a team.

Support the Team Members

Bhuvan backs his people to the hilt, even when they make mistakes. He is willing to give Kachra a second chance (on the second afternoon of the match) despite the skepticism of others. He knows Kachra can be a match-winner - and Kachra proves him right. It is very important in any team that the captain support his team, backing the right person at the right time for the right job.

Passion as the Differentiator

Bhuvan and his team were playing for the hopes and aspirations of a nation. Their passion, especially Bhuvan's, made all the difference. It is in crunch times that one's passion for the work helps in bringing out that extra strength from within. Bhuvan's body language, his actions all speak for themselves. He is confident, not arrogant. A leader has to be careful of what we says and does, for the slightest sign of weakness can get magnified within the rest of the team.

Lead from the Front

Bhuvan is always there - encouraging, talking, making the decisions. He knows that having taken up the challenge, he has to take the fight and be

there till the end. The same applies to us. If we take on a responsibility, we have to take it to completion.

Define the Enemy

To Bhuvan and his team, the enemy was clear: the (bad) British and their oppressive laws. For Russel's team, it was not so clear. While for Russel the enemy was clearly (and only) Bhuvan, his team members were not quite sure about the cause. To them, it was just a game. Having a clearly defined enemy works as a rallying point for the team.

Overconfidence Destroys

Look at Captain Russel. In trying to destroy Bhuvan (a personal enmity), he forgets what he is speaking and what he is offering (when he puts up the challenge). What he was trying to do was to take his anger against an individual as against the entire province - and it boomeranged back at him. It made the opposition (the villagers) united, it made them discover talents they never had. One should never overestimate oneself or underestimate others.

Train and Practice

Bhuvan and his team did not just go into the match; they trained and practiced day and night. There are no short-cuts for physical and mental fitness. To be fit, one needs to work hard.

Celebrate the Small Wins

Watch the genuine joy in Bhuvan's team when a catch is taken or a wicket falls. The small celebrations help in encouraging and motivating the team as a whole. It also helps lift everyone's spirits. How many of us celebrate the small wins in the workplace?

Never Give Up

Because the Last Ball can be the winner. A small opening - as in Chess, as in Cricket, as in a battle, and as in life - is all that it takes to make the difference and turn the tide. But you have to be prepared to be able to exploit it. Look at the situation in the Lagaan match. One ball to go in the match, 5 runs to win and Bhuvan is at the non-striker's end, with the partly

handicapped Kachra facing. A seemingly lost cause. But Bhuvan did not give up. When Kachra hit the ball, he ran and took a single. As it turned out, the ball was a no-ball. That single created the opening for Bhuvan. If he had not taken that run assuming that they could not have won, the extra ball would not have made a difference. In sport, in life and in business, always be alert because you never know how and when opportunity comes.

Faith in God

The pre-match rituals and the prayer at the end of the second day are examples. When everything else seems lost, God shows the way - as long as you are on the side of the Right.

Make the Best of Limited Resources

Watch how Bhuvan makes the bat and ball, and later how the pads are made. Look at the scene where Bhuvan and his team are practicing at night - the entire village is gathered around their team with mashaals to create the light. The villagers of Champaner have limited resources, but they make the best use of them. One cannot always wait for the perfect tools or for the availability of infinite resources. As entrepreneurs, we must innovate - focus on getting the work done. When one has fewer resources, the brain and body work that much harder and much more imaginatively.

Face the Challenges

When you are batting and facing a fast bowler, if you run away it is all over. You have to stand there and face the bowling to have a chance of winning. The balls being thrown are like the challenges we have to face every day: the answer is not trying to escape from them, but to stand there and let the bat (our actions) do the talking.

Take the unexpected in Your Stride

The run-out of Devaa (bowler running out the non-striker before delivering the ball), Russel's kicking the ball for a boundary towards the end to keep Bhuvan away from the strike - unfortunate things will always happen. One cannot dwell or worry too much about the setbacks. One has to take them with the good and move on.

It's about Team Spirit

However good and passionate Bhuvan was, he could not have won the match on his own. Cricket needs eleven players. It is a team game. So is business. Individual brilliance means a lot, but as Bhuvan showed, an average group filled with team spirit and playing with passion can overcome a group of talented, experienced but under-motivated individuals. Members must put the Team before Self. Take the time when Bhuvan is batting with Bhura, and he (Bhuvan) slips while going for a run. Bhura pushes Bhuvan away to the other half of the pitch, and sacrifices his own wicket because he knows that the captain is the one who can lead the way.

It's about People

Lagaan is about how ordinary people can do extraordinary deeds. We all have it within us. Look at the Reader's Digest "Drama In Real Life" stories. When the occasion comes, people - each one of us - can do amazing things.

The Legacy of Lagaan

Movies come and go. Ever so often, one movie comes and leaves a mark, an indelible impression - because it succeeds in bringing out something from within us. Something which has been hidden and perhaps long forgotten. Something whose existence which we didn't even know about. As we go about our lives, we need to be reminded that each of us matters, that each of us has it within us to make a difference. Living in today's India makes optimists out of all us ("tomorrow can only be better"). But it is we who have to create tomorrow's India. Our ideas, our vision, our skills have to come together to build this New India. Lagaan's Bhuvan stokes us somewhere to become part of that team.

Chapter III

Akbar The Great

Muslim, Indian, and Western historians all see Akbar as the greatest ruler of Indian history. When his father, Humayun, died in 1556, Akbar became *padshah* ("ruler of the empire") at the age of thirteen. Under the guidance of Bairam Khan, who had been instrumental in Humayun's reconquests of Panipat, Dehli, and Agra, Akbar instantly began seizing more territory throughout Hindustan. Bairam Khan fell from power in 1560, but Akbar continued his conquest of India and Afghanistan. By the time he died in 1605 (his reign, 1556 to 1605, corresponds almost exactly to that of Elizabeth I of England), his Empire was greater than that of Babur and included almost all of northern India.

Akbar's bureaucracy

In order to govern this territory, Akbar developed a bureaucracy and a system of autonomy for the imperial provinces. Akbar's bureaucracy was among the most efficient in the world. He put military governors, or *mansabars*, in charge of each region. Each governor was responsible for the provincial military and, as in the Ottoman state, was directly responsible for all abuses. Abuses of power and mistreatment of the poor or weak resulted in severe punishments and death, just as in the Ottoman Empire. Each military governor was put in charge by the *padshah* himself, so he could be dismissed at will.

The most important part of the bureaucracy was tax collection. Akbar made several innovations. His tax, like all other states, was a land tax that amounted to one-third of the value of the crops produced on it each year. However, the tax was assessed equally on every member of the empire—a radical innovation considering that every other state in the sixteenth century rarely taxed the nobility. He also eliminated the tax assessed on non-Muslims. From the beginning of the Islamic expansion, a special tax was levied on non-believers. This special tax, called the *jizya*, was bitterly resented all during the history of Muslim rule in India. In addition, Muslim rulers in India charged a "pilgrimage" tax on unbelievers travelling to various Hindu pilgrimage sites. Akbar eliminated this tax in 1564.

A large part of Akbar's administrative efforts were winning over Hindu populations. The Rajput kingdoms had never fully accepted Islamic rule, but the revocation of the *jizyat* and the pilgrimage taxes helped to calm their restiveness. Akbar also included vast number of Hindus in the official bureaucracy; by his death, almost one-third of the imperial bureaucracy were Hindu. He cemented relations with the various kingdoms by marrying the daughters of the kings. By the end of this process he had over five thousand wives, almost all of whom he married for political reasons. His favorite wife, however, was a Hindu, and she gave birth to his successor, Jahangir.

Akbar's Administrative Style

His most successful administrative coup, however, was allowing Hindu territories to retain a large degree of autonomy. In all other Muslim kingdoms, non-Muslims came under the same law, the *Shari'a*, as all Muslims. Akbar, however, allowed the Hindus to remain under their own law, called the *Dharmashastra*, and to retain their own courts. This loose style of government, in which territories were under the control of the Emperor but still largely independent, became the model that the British would emulate as they slowly built the colonial model of government in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The Political Theory of Akbar's State

There was considerable disagreement all during the reigns of Babur, Humayun, and Akbar over the nature of monarchy and its place in Islamic society. Many Islamic scholars under Babur and Akbar believed that the Indian monarchies were fundamentally un-Islamic. At the heart of the problem was the fact that none of the invading monarchs were approved by the Caliph, but rather were acting solely on their own. The majority of Islamic scholars, however, concluded that the monarch was divinely appointed by God to serve humanity and that the Indian sultanate or the Mughal *padshah* was acting in the place of the Caliph.

The political theorists and Islamic scholars surrounding Akbar were deeply influenced by Shi'a Islam. In particular, they subscribed to the Shi'a notion that God had created a Divine Light that is passed down in an individual from generation to generation; this individual is known as the **Imam**. The central theorist of Akbar's reign was Abu'l Faz'l, who joined Akbar's court in

1574 and is considered one of the greatest political theorists in Islamic history. He believed that the Imamate existed in the world in the form of just rulers. The Imam, in the form of a just ruler, had secret knowledge of God, was free from sin, and was primarily responsible for the spiritual guidance of humanity. This, to a certain extent, made the *padshah* superior to the *Shari'a*, or Islamic law, and the Islamic scholars that interpreted it. Needless to say, orthodox Islamic scholars bitterly opposed this political theory, but instead advocated a close partnership between the *ulama*, or Islamic religious and legal scholars, and the Sultan or *padshah*.

Abu'l Fazl was also deeply influenced by Platonic philosophy as it had been handed down by Muslim philosophers. In particular, he argued for Plato's concept of the "philosopher-king," who, by virtue of his talent, wisdom, and learning, deserved to be obeyed by all others. He saw Akbar as the embodiment of the perfect philosopher-king.

From a religious standpoint, Akbar's state was built on the principle *sulahkul*, or "universal tolerance." All religions were to be equally tolerated in the administration of the state; hence the repeal of the *jizya* and the pilgrimage taxes. In Akbar's theory of government, the ruler's duty is to ensure justice (*'adale*) for all the people in his care no matter what their religion.

The magnanimity of Akbar

The story below, taken from *The Moghul Emperors* by Sri Chinmoy illustrates the magnanimity of this great Moghul Emperor of India, who although a Muslim, had great respect and love for his subjects of different faiths.

“In the course of his rule Akbar came to hear about Mirabai, a great devotee of Lord Krishna. The bhajans that she sang became known throughout the length and breadth of India. Akbar decided to go and see her for himself.

His advisers discouraged him from going to visit Mirabai saying “Her husband, Prince Bhoja Raj, had always been a worst enemy of your rule. If Your Highness go to see Mirabai, you would be risking your life as well as that of Mirabai”.

But Akbar was determined to go. He said, "I will not go as the Emperor with my army. I will go in disguise."

So he and his court musician, Tansen, dressed themselves in ochre robes like wandering “sannyasins”. In this disguise, they approached the temple where Mirabai was worshipping. In the temple, devotees were singing and dancing. Right in the centre was Mirabai, singing most soulfully.

Akbar and Tansen were deeply moved by Mirabai's beautiful voice beautiful voice and her soulful prayers to God.

To show his gratitude, Akbar placed a diamond necklace at the feet of Mirabai's little statue of Lord Krishna. Those who were present were amazed at the mendicant's gesture. They wondered if perhaps somebody quite rich had come in the form of a mendicant. After Akbar had made his offering, he and Tansen quietly slipped away.”

Akbar was least perturbed that he was honoring Mirabai and her Lord Krishna. To him talent has to be praised whoever possessed it.

Although he was a Muslim, he liked the Hindu spirituality and culture immensely. At his court, he retained all kinds of talented and extraordinary people from various religions. Akbar always appreciated good qualities in others.

He used to confer with representatives of all the major religions of his vast empire. He even combined the highest truths of each to form a new "religion" suitable for all, named the Divine Faith.

But this proved to be too great a task for even Akbar the Great, and like many great men; he too died without realizing his fond dream.

Akbar’s ways may be outdated but the principles behind his actions remain relevant till today. The world today is in dire need for leaders like him, who possess a passion for the humanity, regardless of race or creed.

Din-i Ilahi

Akbar took very seriously Abu'l Fazl's idea that he was a spiritual leader of his people and he devoted considerable amounts of time and resources to sorting out the common truth in the multiple religions he ruled over. From this concern he developed a new religion he called **Din-i Ilahi** , or "The Religion of God." Believing, as Muslims do, that every faith contained the essential truth that God is unified and one thing, he sought to find the

unifying aspects of all religions. He originally began this project, long before he came up with *Din-i Ilahi* , by sponsoring a series of debates at his court between representatives of the various religions, which included Christianity (Catholic Jesuits), Hindus, Zoroastrians, and Jains. Eventually he included members of the *ulama* , but the debates did not go well because of the intolerant attitude and behaviors of the Jesuit participants who wanted to convert Akbar, not discuss the formation of a universal religion.

Akbar was a devout and, so he said, an orthodox Muslim; still, aspects of his belief were in part derived from Shi'a Islam. The *Din-i Ilahi* , the religion that would synthesize the world's religions into a single religion, that he established was predominantly based on Islam. Like Islam, it was rationalistic and was based on one overriding doctrine, the doctrine of *tawhid* : God is one thing and is singular and unified. Akbar also elevated the notion of *wahdat-al wujud* , or "unity of the real," to a central religious idea in his new religion. The world, as a creation of God, is a single and unified place that reflects the singularity and unity of its creator. Finally, Akbar fully subscribed to the Islamic idea of the Perfect Man represented by the life of the Prophet or by the Shi'ite Imamate. There is little question that Akbar accepted Abu'l Fazl's notion that he was the Divine Light and was a Perfect Man. He assumed the title, "Revealer of the Internal and Depictor of the Real," which defined his role as a disseminator of secret knowledge of God and his function of fashioning the world in the light of this knowledge.

In addition to Islam, however, the *Din-i Ilahi* also contained aspects of Jainism, Zoroastrianism, and Hinduism. The *Din-i Ilahi* borrowed from Jainism a respect and care for all living things, and it derived from Zoroastrianism sun-worship and, especially, the idea of divine kingship. This latter innovation deeply disturbed the *ulama* ; they regarded it as outright heresy. The notion of divine kingship, however, would last throughout the history of the Mughal Empire.

Chapter IV

Mother Teresa

A. **Doing “little things with great love”**

Doing “little things with great love” defined Mother Teresa’s life and witness in the world; she became an emblem of selfless and devoted service to those in need.

But how can we apply Mother Teresa’s way to our own lives? Learn here:

Mother Teresa knew that great opportunities are rare and that the little opportunities that come our way every day provide the occasions for us to grow in love by transcending ourselves. It takes considerable awareness from moment to moment to recognize these little opportunities. We need to be alert to the invitations we receive in each moment.

We can respond with love in all the situations of life and practice compassion without counting the cost. And of course a spiritual practice of meditation or prayer can help prepare us to do everything with extraordinary love in each moment.

One of the reasons we are here in this existence is to learn and hone this skill of great love. The great achievements our society celebrates often have no beneficial effect on anyone. It is really the little things that are important.

Born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu on August 26, 1910 in Skopje of Albanian parents, she left her home at the age of 18 to join the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Dublin after being called at the age of 12 "to propagate the message of the love of Christ."

Sent to Calcutta by the Sisters of Loreto, who worked with the city's diocese, she took her vows in the Himalayan resort of Darjeeling and became a geography teacher before she was inspired to help the poor while travelling on a train on September 10, 1946.

"I felt as though I were leaving behind me all beauty and all joys of the universe it was a call from God," she said.

Alone and without a base, Sister Agnes became Teresa. She moved into the city's teeming slums and studied nursing to help hundreds of destitutes in Calcutta.

She donned a blue-trimmed white sari, which became the uniform of her Missionaries of Charity, formally founded on October 7, 1950.

Mother Teresa spoke of coming across an ailing woman in the street whose feet had been gnawed by rats and whose wounds were crawling with maggots. The sight led her to begin the Ministry to the Dying in 1952.

She opened a hospice -- fittingly, near Calcutta's temple of Kali, the Hindu goddess of death -- where she offered victims of tuberculosis, dysentery and tetanus a place to die in dignity. It was named "Compassionate Heart."

The Missionary Brothers of Charity followed, established on March 25, 1963. The order became a pontifical congregation in 1965, subject only to the authority of the Pope.

Mother Teresa was gifted with other qualities besides devotion.

She betrayed her pragmatism and business acumen during a visit to Rome when she asked Pope John XXIII to make a contribution towards the poor of Calcutta. He offered her a Rolls-Royce, which she auctioned off at several times its value.

Mother Teresa, who died on Friday aged 87, was revered throughout the world as a symbol of selfless devotion towards the poor, the sick and dying.

For many, she was a living saint.