

Nectar of Governance

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Part 7: Essentials of a leader



People in general always need a leader who can guide them or lead them to the goal by practical behavior. A leader is one who leads his people by personal example. Human beings by nature never admit anybody as leader since they want complete freedom. However, the laws of nature don't permit anybody or any living entity to be independent or free from authority. Born leaders are highly enriched with spiritual quotient i.e. they have extraordinary qualities of cognizance, concern and care for all the pertinent things. The basic difference between a leader and a follower is that leader leads by an exemplary behavior

with a clear vision for future, whereas a follower's concern is limited to present context. Any person who is under a perfect leader would always emerge as a winner in any difficult situation. The king or executive head of a state, father and the school teacher are all considered to be natural leaders of the people in general. Such leaders shall have a great responsibility towards their dependents. Therefore, they must be conversant with standard books of moral and spiritual codes of conduct.

In this regard, Bhagavad-Gita (3.21) gives a clear direction for all the people who aspire to lead people as under:

**yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas tat tad evetaro janaḥ
sa yat pramāṇam kurute lokas tad anuvartate**

“Whatever action a great person performs, common man follows. And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues.”

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The above Vedic verse clearly expects exemplary acts from all the leaders because people in general are going to follow their footsteps. If a leader himself smokes, he can't ban smoking in the work place; if he himself takes bribes, he can't enforce any strict measures against corruption; if he himself does not give respect to women force at work, he can't demand respect for women from others. A leader's the most essential qualification is to have a clear vision of the future with definite goals and complete awareness of his people's capabilities and limitations. A leader need not have highest intellectual quotient (IQ), but should have excellent spiritual quotient (SQ), which enables him to attract many talented persons with highest IQ. A leader should be fully aware of the fact that each and every action by him will be observed by all the followers, who try to follow his footsteps. If the leader himself takes wrong steps, that would amount to various people taking wrong steps by default. So, as per the knowledge of Bhagavad-Gita, people in general follow only the standards set by their leaders. There is a nice saying by Chanakya Pandita as under:

*yathā caturbhiḥ kanakam parīkṣyate
nigharṣaṇa-cchedana-tāpa-tāḍanaiḥ
tathā caturbhiḥ puruṣaḥ parīkṣyate
tyāgena śīlena guṇena karmaṇa*

“There are four ways of testing gold, such as rubbing, cutting, heating and hammering; similarly, the four ways of testing a man are through his renunciation, his character, his qualities and his actions.” In the olden days kings or executive heads were called as “*rajarshis*”. It means by action, they were administrators, but by nature they are saintly persons. Since a saintly person has a renunciation mentality, he would never indulge in any corruption or any bad practice. Such persons are committed to their mission. They are indeed treasure houses for all good qualities, which are six in number. They have been nicely compiled in a wonderful book known as “Nectar of Instruction” by Srila Sanatana Goswami of 15th century as under:

*vāco vegam manasaḥ krodha-vegam
jihvā-vegam udaropastha-vegam
etān vegān yo viśaheta dhīraḥ
sarvām apīmām pṛthivīm sa śiṣyāt*

“A sober person who can tolerate the urge to speak, the mind's demands, the actions of anger, and urges of the tongue, belly and genitals is qualified to make disciples all over the world.”

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Any person who wants to lead disciples all over the world or subjects in a small area of his jurisdiction must be endowed with these six qualities. The first quality that a leader must have is total control of speech. Uncontrolled talk would invite avoidable troubles. Urge to speak is so strong that no one can keep silent even for one second. One's speech should be truthful, pleasing, beneficial and not agitating others. Leaders should imbibe this quality of controlled speech to practically guide the subordinates. Though silence makes many problems to disappear, a leader can't keep silent forever. His austerity of good speech makes him a highly glorified leader. Second most important quality that a leader should essentially imbibe is to control the urge of mind. A leader shall never be sentimental; he shall apply all reasoning and logic. It is important to note that people make mistakes just because of their default dwelling on mental platform. Any intelligent person aspiring to cross milestones of success shall never glide down to mental platform from his stable intellectual platform. Then, there is no need to over emphasize this point for any leader, who is responsible for the success of many people.

The next important quality is freedom from anger. If simply by anger things can be achieved, all the dictators of the world would have remained angry forever, but that is not true. Anger leads to delusion, delusion leads to bewilderment of memory, which causes loss of intelligence. With loss of intelligence everything is lost. Inefficiency, negligence, callousness of subordinates certainly would irritate a leader, but with all efforts, one should check it. A leader should also have control on what he eats. Urge to eat so many eatables is well known for everyone. Simple vegetarian food develops mode of goodness, which helps a leader to get fixed up consistently in the intellectual and spiritual platforms. The next two qualifications for a leader are control of urge for belly and genitals. Urge for belly leads to voracious eating that results in big tummy, which is a sign of bad health. Leaders should be healthy by frugal eating. Unless one is healthy no plans of transformation come to reality. There are many examples in the history and present age about the fall of many leaders due to urge of genitals. The whole world is moving on the attraction between man and woman, hence it is a prime requirement for a leader to check the urge of genitals to fulfill his mission. Any person who is endowed with these six wonderful qualities surely can lead his subordinates to the predefined goals with all success in a time bound manner.
