
THE DHARMA OF LEADERSHIP EXEMPLIFIED BY HANUMĀN

ARUN SUBRAMANIAN¹

MANOGNA SASTRY²

Abstract

Bhārata, has been blessed with several historical leaders, whose lives and personalities have been sources of tremendous and timeless, deep learning. Their exploits and victories have been references and stories of motivation for generations across millennia. These leaders have demonstrated a set of similar traits, along with those unique to the individual. While they have embodied superb leadership, a *sine qua non* is the four dharma-s that we have defined in this paper, in addition to valour, strength and fearlessness. This paper attempts to consider important fundamentals of consummate leadership and delves into the dharma-s of diplomacy, trust, judgement and jurisdiction as part of the analysis. Hanumān, a central character of *Rāmāyaṇa*, embodies these dharma-s. The events of *Rāmāyaṇa* that tested leaders and leadership by fire, sufficiently validate the characteristics and the dharma-s of leadership.

Keywords: Hanumān, Leadership, Diplomacy, Trust, Judgement, Jurisdiction

¹ *Independent Researcher*

² *Independent Researcher*

The Dharma of Leadership Exemplified by Hanumān

The *Rāmāyaṇa* has been a millennia old cord that has bound Bhārata to nations across Southeast Asia. Its influence has spanned domains including literature, architecture, performing arts; it has been central to the ideal of polity and kingship in nations including Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia and Cambodia, apart from being an unshakeable part of the Indian identity. Hanumān, as a pivotal character of the epic, has been embraced and adapted into forms across these countries.

Thailand, for instance, whose citizens consider Buddhism as their national religion, hosts the month-long annual royal festival on the *Ramakien* (*Glory of Rāma*), a Thai national epic influenced by the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and the *Hanumān Nāṭaka*; it is even taught in schools. Phra Phutthayotfa Chulalok, though Buddhist, chose the name Rama I for himself, when he ascended the throne in 1782; his successors too continued with the same, demonstrating the importance they accorded to identifying the reigning king of the land with Srī Rāma, whom they considered the ideal. *Rāmāyaṇa* adorns the walls of the temple of the Emerald Buddha in Bangkok as well. Hanumān of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is interpreted with variations in the *Ramakien*, while occupying a central role in the epic. The khon performance of the *Ramakien* reveals, in its choice of masks used in performance, the manner in which Hanumān is perceived - Warrior, Crown Prince, King, Hermit, Leader.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* also finds itself adapted into *Reamker* in Cambodia, incorporating Buddhist and Chinese influences. Carvings in the ruins of the 12th century Angkor Wat show episodes from *Reamker*, including those of Hanumān. The Southeast Asian interpretation of Hanumān demonstrates interesting morphology, including his relationship with a mermaid princess Suvarnamaccha, which is not a part of the original Indian text and reflects several local influences. Interpretations of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the central role it occupies in society is seen in Indonesia, Malaysia and even Laos, where the *Phra Lac Phra Lam* tells the story of Rāma and Lakṣhmaṇa, and has several differences from the Indian text. While Hanumān's learned and devout nature are the highlights in the Indian *Rāmāyaṇa*, his physical prowess stands out in the inspired versions of Southeast Asia.

The various regional languages of India celebrate Hanumān across literature, plays and architecture. Whether it is Kamban's *Rāmāyaṇa* or Tulsidas's

Rāmacaritamānas, Hanumān is the very embodiment of loyalty, devotion, bravery and as we present in this paper, leadership, at key, challenging moments. G. S. Ghurye documents in his *The Legacy of the Ramayana* (1979) the widespread worship of Hanumān across much of the Deccan. He discusses the influence of the epic, particularly *dig-vijaya Rāma*, on Mādhvacārya, the renowned guru of the Vijayanagara Empire and his successor Vyāsarāya, as well as on Swami Ramdas and his disciple, Chatrapati Shivaji. Ghurye shows how Hanumān became an emblem for Hindu unity and resistance against the invaders' forces. Hanumān, has thus been a symbol of leadership across several millennia for a significant portion of the continent.

While *the Gita* has been, rightly, explored for guidance and leadership principles in several thorough analyses, such as *Essays on the Gita* by Sri Aurobindo, the authors in this paper aim to present Hanumān as exemplifying leadership qualities from whose study one can immensely benefit. We consider below significant aspects of his leadership and key moments demonstrating them, from his life and the *Rāmāyana*.

On Leadership

Humans have always co-existed in groups and societies since early times, with a sense of belonging and fraternity helping them flourish faster and accomplish much more than would have been possible as an individual. Man's progression throughout history has been possible only on account of capable individuals who have taken initiative, influenced others to work towards a common goal and executed as a team. The ability to bring perspective and focus to life and work are necessary qualities of leadership.

Leaders demonstrate empathy, pace the progress planned according to the individuals in focus, help in self-development, inspire those around to act, plan, execute effectively and share the outcome with the associated group. Leadership is synonymous with direction, guidance, authority, captaincy and command among key features. There are three attributes of leadership, in particular, that are rarely considered – influence, orchestration and initiative. Leadership is neither an entitlement that comes by birth nor by position. To aspire to be a leader, one must possess the aforesaid abilities in abundance. This, when coupled with sagacious advice, moulds an individual into a true leader. Absence of these attributes makes it nearly impossible to occupy leadership roles.

- a. Influence comprises charisma, character and content. Charisma implies charm of presence and presentation; some have it naturally, while most acquire it with practice. It is the first layer of influence and reveals the character underneath. In order to assume the mantle of a leader, the character must be moulded with dharma as the foundation. The ancient dharmic system recognised the four *puruṣārtha*-s and legitimised man's pursuit of *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* within a framework that ensured ethical basis for it. With the *dharma-śāstra*-s, *artha-śāstra*-s, *kāma-śāstra*-s and systems such as Yoga providing paths to the pursuit, disempowering traits such as coveting, jealousy and other negative characteristics were eradicated from the individual, thus creating a society of honourable and strong people. Karma too weaves each individual into the larger *līla* of Life, thus creating a composite, collective system.

Leaders are not CEOs and those occupying senior positions alone. Every individual is a leader, and possesses a sphere of influence. The boundary is often determined by the limits of capabilities, but in many cases, is also circumstantial. It is the individual's dharma to accept both, and not breach them. This acceptance should not be mistaken for a lack of ambition, but reveals pragmatism in managing one's ambitions and keeping away from jealousy and anger.

- b. Orchestration involves a broad understanding of the overarching goal, the synchronization of various roles, the part played by each individual, understanding timing and effectiveness, as part of a defined plan that everybody responds and cohesively works to fulfil. Orchestration not only requires each individual to perform the assigned task to perfection, but also going beyond one's brief to support fellow members, and influence the outcome to be extraordinary, and not disruptive. This extended outreach is a culture built upon a strong foundation of trust.

Orchestration assumes a much deeper significance when the leader acts from a place of understanding the role of karma in one's life and is able to guide his team with the wisdom to accept the same. The understanding of karma by those who lead, brings with it a profound empathy and impact.

- c. Years of training and development of the self and the mind often lie at the heart of fruitful initiatives. While learning from curriculum is helpful, the lessons from keen observation of life and performance of tasks are

invaluable. A combination of these two fosters cogent thinking and out of the box ideas. Initiatives are born as a result of profound experience, deep thinking, and presence of mind. To put forth an initiative, one needs to be clear of the need, articulate it precisely, and be unflinching about the purpose it serves.

Hanumān was an acclaimed *navavyākaraṇa pandita*, who exemplified all the above traits of leadership, rooted in the dharmic framework. He was a master of language, grammar, pronunciation, tone of speech and so on. Having spotted Sītā in Aśokavana, Hanumān could have rushed back to Kiṣkindhā and reported the same. Had Sugrīva or Śrī Rāma questioned Hanumān regarding Sītā's emotional well-being, the size of Laṅkā, the might of the Laṅkāns and so on, he would not have had any answers because he had not gone beyond the basic brief that was given to him at the start of his mission.

Further, self-development is crucial to leadership and is a goal and a path by itself, which begins from birth and continues till death. From acquiring a basic foundation to attaining profundity in thought, the nurturing of one's various psycho-physical faculties is fundamental to self-development. The dharma of self-development denounces and discourages unhealthy comparisons, jealousy, and evil desires to covet what is not rightfully one's own. Blind ambition and recklessly pursuing its achievement at the cost of lives and happiness to others, does not have sanction under dharma. *Dharma-śāstra-s* caution against reckless criticism, as one needs to be perfect oneself, if one wishes to share unsolicited advice with others. Arguments and heated discussions too have an appropriate time and place, and one is expected to share a point of view only when asked.

We analyse the dharma of leadership, exemplified by Hanumān, along the following broad categories:

1. Dharma of Diplomacy
2. Dharma of Trust
3. Dharma of Judgement
4. Dharma of Jurisdiction

1 Dharma of Diplomacy

Diplomacy is one of the strongest leadership skills. The standard definition of this skill refers to a focus on resolving problems or conflicts by discussion and

negotiation. There is a strong sense of respect for the opposing view, and those demonstrating it. Dharma of Diplomacy is also required when venturing into new markets and rolling out new products. This dharma, thus, demands several traits from a leader.

Articulation is a core component of diplomacy, which understands that content must be tailored to the recipient. The pace of delivery must be moderate and the voice, pleasant. Everybody in the audience must feel that the leader is addressing them. The *Rāmāyaṇa* presents many instances demonstrating the efficacy of this core leadership trait; two of them particularly stand out and we consider them below.

In the *Kiṣkindhā kāṇḍa*, Hanumān was sent by the banished vānara king Sugrīva to enquire about the two men (Śrī Rāma and Lakṣhmaṇa) who had entered the forest at the foot of the Ṛṣyamūka hills. Hanumān disguised himself as an elderly man, accosted the brothers, and sought to know who they were. Hanumān correctly assessed that both seemed to belong to a royal family and were well armed too. While Rāma was dark complexioned, and Lakṣhmaṇa fair, there apparently was no other difference in their physical appearance. Not knowing whom to address first, Hanumān begins to speak to both the brothers, employing the *dvivacana* of Sanskrit. Elegance in articulation, both in poetry and prose, marks Hanumān's conversation with the brothers. This graceful addressing impresses Śrī Rāma and he in turn assesses Hanumān to be a scholar in several subjects. Rāma is further impressed with Hanumān's measured speech, pleasant voice which was neither meek nor aggressive, and clear and well-paced enunciation.

A second instance in the epic from *Sundara kāṇḍa*, refers to the plan Hanumān formulates to face Sītāin Laṅkā and let her know that he is an emissary of Śrī Rāma. Sītā, who was abducted by Rāvaṇa, was imprisoned for several months, facing taunts, mental torture and agony constantly. She was always surrounded by fearsome guards who tracked her every movement. Rāvaṇa appeared every day, to belittle her and Śrī Rāma and ask her to forget the latter and marry him, adding to her suffering. She was weak from hunger as she had vowed to eat less. She had not heard from Rāma or Lakṣhmaṇa and had almost lost hope of being rescued. She planned to give up her life, when motivation to live was at its nadir. To add to her misery, spotting a monkey would have exponentially increased her woes as it was considered a bad omen.

Hanumān was faced with this set of complex problems even before he faced Sītā for the first time in Aśokavana. Hanumān had no choice but to speak and reassure Sītā and return to Rāma with information. Further, he had to do it without losing time. Hanumān concluded that an introduction to Sītā was possible only if he could kindle some hope in her and therefore chose to recite the life story of Rāma, packed with love and bhakti, so that it would attract her attention, and assuage her fears. His choice of language (spoken Sanskrit) and the tone of his voice aroused a motherly affection in her for him. He then alighted the tree he was perched on and greeted Sītā with a salutation of folded hands, a *namaste* - a perfect sign of friendship and respect. His affectionate description and praise of Śrī Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and the Ikṣvāku clan, his patient disposition as Sītā lamented to him her woes, helped turn around the predicament he faced earlier. Finally, he presents Rāma's ring to Sītā, and in return is given Sītā's *cūḍāmaṇi*. Hanumān, also understanding of and empathetic to Rāma's despair, requests Sītā for a message which he can convey to Rāma and that is when Sītā shares her personal stories of Rāma, with him. Hanumān's assurances lift Sītā's spirits, and she starts to look forward to the day she would be rescued. Hanumān, once again, through his episode, demonstrates remarkably effective leadership and turns the situation from one of total gloom and despondency to one of hope; he is a supremely consummate diplomat. The dharma of diplomacy seeks to manage the doubts and set the right frames of mind and states of emotion in both parties.

When an objective with far-reaching consequences is set, even if one progresses along a defined path, one will face challenging obstacles; some will require individual effort to overcome but many others remain obstructions to achieving one's goals. The dharma of diplomacy requires one to determine how to handle such challenges. Should they be aggressively encountered and defeated, or ignored, or handled with skill? While some risks can be mitigated by merely ignoring them, most require calm and pragmatic engagement. Sanātana dharma prescribes an order to handle challenges – *sāma*, *dāna*, *bheda*, *daṇḍa*, *catura*; it assigns diplomacy its rightful place in the order. Every obstacle cannot be tested by these principles in the particular order alone; at times, bold decisions need to be taken instantaneously.

In the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s *Kiṣkindhā kāṇḍa*, the king of the vānara-s Vāli banishes his brother Sugrīva from the kingdom on account of a misunderstanding.

Sugrīva tries in vain to convince Vāli but the latter lends a deaf ear and takes punitive action against his brother. Sugrīva, thus, is in hiding along with a few of his associates, one of them being Hanumān. Hanumān's advice to Sugrīva is that the only resort is punishment by clever means.

In the *Sundara kāṇḍa*, when Hanumān was on his way to Laṅkā, he faced three obstacles and he handled each one differently. The challenges were in the form of 1) an annoying friend (Mount Maināka) who wanted to help even when it was clearly unnecessary (*bandhu śatru*) 2) a territorial hurdle (Surasā) that needed to be managed shrewdly (due to *prārabda karma*) and 3) an impediment (Simhika) that clearly had to be dealt with aggressively (using *kāma* and *krodha*). The choice in each case was made keeping in mind the objective with which Hanumān set forth, the nature of the obstacle, and the time within which the goal had to be achieved. Each response effectively demonstrates Hanumān's clarity in understanding the challenge and the level of intervention it needed as a response. Misreading any of the situations would have had ripple effect on the ultimate goal and Hanumān exemplifies apposite response in each case, as a true leader.

2 Dharma of Trust

Trust kindles belief, faith and is conviction built on a robust foundation of positive affection. It is not a physical attribute that can be visualized or felt with one's hands, but an experience gained by just actions performed consistently and repeatedly. It grows with time, exponentially.

When Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa were accosted by Hanumān the first time, in the *Kiṣkindhā kāṇḍa*, the latter had to find out who they were, and if possible, have them befriend Sugrīva and help him regain the kingdom from his brother Vāli. Rāma, through Hanumān's queries and introduction, was impressed and identified a very learned, dignified person in him. When Hanumān cast aside his disguise and revealed his true form, he shared the pitiful situation of Sugrīva and sought the brothers' help. Hanumān promised in return to have Sugrīva help in the search for Sītā.

Building trust implores timely and just action. After Vāli was defeated in the battle, Sugrīva was crowned as the king of the vānara-s. Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and the vānara-s decided to wait for the monsoons to pass before starting their search for Sītā. As soon as the last showers of the season ended, Hanumān advised Sugrīva to begin preparations for the search, initiating action even before

Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa reminded him of the promise made to them.

Vibhīṣaṇa, the wise younger brother of Rāvaṇa, counselled him to return Sītā to Śrī Rāma, in the *Yuddha kāṇḍa*. He spoke with great restraint, but with firmness so that the truth in his statements were centre stage. When Rāvaṇa rejected Vibhīṣaṇa's advice and banished him from the kingdom, the latter sought refuge with Rāma. While Sugrīva, Aṅgada, Jāmbavān and Lakṣmaṇa expressed their misgivings about Vibhīṣaṇa's plea for refuge, Hanumān's advice to Śrī Rāma was to accept Vibhīṣaṇa into their fold. It was based on the ancient dharma of establishing genuineness of refugees, and then ensuring their protection. Sanātana dharma values and relies on the trust placed in the persecuted homeless and believes in integrating them wholeheartedly into the place of sanctuary. Śrī Rāma agreed with Hanumān and Vibhīṣaṇa was inducted into the vānara army. Hanumān's leadership at such crucial moments demonstrate how deeply rooted in and guided by dharma he was.¹

As considered in the previous section, Hanumān had to gain the trust of Sītā at a pivotal moment in Laṅkā, made difficult by circumstances. The asura-s of Laṅkā were known to disguise themselves in various forms and the beleaguered Sītā was in no position to trust anybody. The trust gained in such circumstances, if lost, would be beyond redemption. Hanumān had to tread on a very tricky rope to retain hope for Sītā.

Hope and trust are built with truthful, yet soft words. While Sītā was happy to meet Hanumān, and was reassured of being saved, she questioned the ability of the army supporting Rāma. How would they cross the ocean? How mighty were they to face the extremely strong army of Rāvaṇa? Hanumān had to speak reassuringly, reminding Sītā of the dharma of a messenger. An emissary is not a very high-ranking officer and usually does not possess the ability of his superiors. Thus, if Hanumān, a messenger, could cross the ocean and spot Sītā, the others who possessed greater calibre would definitely be able to do so as well and defeat Rāvaṇa in a battle.

Further, Hanumān orchestrated a demonstration of his strength by destroying the grove, intimidating the Laṅkan forces and engaging them in deadly duels. Sugrīva had not instructed Hanumān to do so, but, Hanumān felt this was a much-needed act to bolster Sītā's trust and hope, and at the same time, put fear into the minds of the Laṅkan military forces who considered themselves invincible until then.

Hanumān, having decided to test their strength, provoked the Laṅkan forces and defeated them until Indrajit bound him with a very superior weapon. When presented to Rāvaṇa, Hanumān reminded him of how the mighty Rāvaṇa himself was once tamed by Vāli, while he, Hanumān, was an emissary from the court of Sugrīva, the king who had slayed Vāli. Seeing the havoc created by Hanumān, the fear he had instilled in the minds of the Laṅkāns, the reminder of how Vāli had once snared him by his tail and hung him for hours to amuse a young Aṅgada who demanded a toy, and now facing an emissary from the court of Sugrīva who had slayed Vāli, Rāvaṇa begins to doubt his own invincibility.

Even during the fight with the Laṅkāns, Hanumān only extolled the might of his king Sugrīva, Śrī Rāma, Lakṣhmaṇa, Jāmbavān and others. Not once did he speak of his own abilities, intellect or might. His deeds instead spoke for him. Leaders never refer to their own experiences to boast and demonstrate skills. If they mention their experiences, it is to explain where they failed, and the lessons from them. Leaders do not limit their learning to the advice of only their superiors but learn from the experiences of their peers, subordinates, acquaintances, friends and family.

The entire episode of the exchange between Hanumān and Sītā at Aśokavana and his exchange with Rāvaṇa, is a study in the principles and character of leadership, perfectly embodied in Hanumān. He establishes through the episodes his ability to lead from the front on a critical mission, his prowess in crossing the sea, observing first-hand the situation Sītā was in, understanding her emotional, mental and psychological states, realising the perfect moment to intervene, demonstrating empathy and sensitivity in his first response, gaining trust and realising that an exhibition of his strength was crucial to bolstering Sītā's hopes while simultaneously, giving the enemy a preview of the destruction that lay ahead for them.

3 Dharma of Judgement

When Hanumān crosses the ocean and views Laṅkā for the first time, he is stunned by the richness of the place, along with being intimidated by the security cover and the might of the armed forces. He wonders how he will enter such an impregnable country and locate Sītā. He then begins to wonder how the army of Sugrīva, Rāma and Lakṣhmaṇa will cross the ocean and if at all they can match the might of Rāvaṇa's army. A sense of despondency sets into Hanumān.

He then shakes himself out of it by remembering that his primary task is to

locate Sītā, speak to her and assure her that Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa are soon going to rescue her. He focusses on the immediate issue at hand to the exclusion of everything else, holding back surging emotions. Accurate assessment of the situation and prioritisation of action are fundamental elements of what constitutes judgement and Hanumān consistently demonstrates both.

While Hanumān searched Laṅkā, he observed keenly the lifestyle, health and ability of the citizens, and the army's capabilities including weapons and ammunition. He gauged the situation and rightly determined that Laṅkā could not be won with *sāma*, *bheda* or *daṇḍa*. While Hanumān did not immediately attempt to propose a solution, he was clear about what would not work.

Searching for Sītā in a seemingly impregnable fortress such as Laṅkā presented itself as the immediate problem for Hanumān to solve. If he increased his size, as he did while crossing the ocean, he would intimidate the Laṅkāns and invite aggression from them leading to a small-scale war. Realising that the chances of him being unnoticed in his current form were zero, Hanumān decides to shrink himself so that he can remain undiscovered by the guards in Laṅkā. He thus reduces himself to the size of a cat – it would help him wander inconspicuously in Laṅkā and cover the country too.

Hanumān searched the city of Laṅkā, including the palaces, for Sītā. He searched the inner chambers of the palaces built exclusively for ladies, despite being a *naiṣṭhika brahmacāri*. In the last phase of his search, Hanumān reached the groves of Aśoka. He spotted a stream and decided to wait atop the Siṃsapā tree, surmising that, since it was twilight, should Sītā be held captive in the grove, she would definitely come to the stream for her evening ablutions and prayers.

Hanumān then spotted a group of ladies and in their midst, one who looked particularly sad and morose. He concluded that she must be Sītā, because she was the only depressed lady, he saw in Laṅkā. She was also the only lady who was not adorned with jewels. Hanumān noticed the cloth she wore was unmistakably the one from which Sītā had torn a piece and dropped her jewels as she was being carried away by Rāvaṇa. These jewels had been collected by Sugrīva and his team when they were hiding in the caves of the Ṛṣyamūka hills.

Thus, even before Hanumān actually spoke to Sītā, he gathered crucial information about Laṅkā and its residents that would help with the preparations for war later. He managed his own internal doubts, moved past them to set and

achieve reconnaissance goals throughout his time in Lañkā, correctly identified Sītā and engaged with her, thus accomplishing the core aim of his mission to Lañkā.²

4 Dharma of Jurisdiction

Leadership at every level is two-pronged. It requires keeping those higher in the hierarchy engaged with the progress of one's work and seek their guidance and intervention when necessary. It also requires keeping those lower in the organisational rung and part of one's team abreast of developments and guiding them wherever required. The details of what is reported is not the same across the hierarchy, but the key message remains the same.

When Hanumān returns from Lañkā, Jāmbavān, Aṅgada and a few other fellow vānara-s notices him from a distance. As Hanumān reaches the shore, his first statement is that he has seen Lady Sītā. The purpose of the travel to Lañkā was to spot her. Hence, Hanumān's first and primary message is to communicate the success of the mission. Hanumān then narrates to the overjoyed vānara-s the details of the search. He speaks of the riches of Lañkā that he saw, the wellness of the people, their strength, their lifestyles and finally the encounters and fights. The vānara-s enjoy the narration, and it instils in them a spirit to take on the challenge of capturing Lañkā and defeating Rāvaṇa and his army. It also helps them dwell on the key concerns to prepare for and overcome when they attempt to capture Lañkā.

Led by Aṅgada and Jāmbavān, the vānara-s including Hanumān, partake the fruits and nectar at Sugrīva's fiercely guarded grove. The caretaker, overpowered by the happy vānara-s, rushes to Sugrīva and informs him of the bustle outside. Sugrīva immediately understands that Hanumān has been successful and awaits his entry. Led by Aṅgada and Jāmbavān, Hanumān and the rest of the team soon arrive in the presence of Sugrīva, Śrī Rāma and Lakṣhmaṇa. As per protocol, Aṅgada as the leader of this group, announces that Hanumān has spotted Sītā. Hanumān is then asked to describe the details of his visit and the subsequent narration is focussed on the strategic structuring of Lañkā, the difficulties faced by Sītā, and her hope of victory of Rāma over Rāvaṇa after they cross the ocean.

Indeed, Hanumān's narration of his experiences in Lañkā is one of the earliest stake holder management reporting. As an emissary, Hanumān carried messages from Śrī Rāma to Sītā and from Sītā back to Rāma. The stress on

correct aspects of the details communicated to both the parties was crucial to evoking the right emotions in them and keeping hope alive. Sītā, on account of her misfortune and terrible circumstances, needed a huge dose of reassurance. She had to be told to keep herself prepared to be rescued. At the same time, she also needed to be told of how much Rāma longed for her.

Śrī Rāma, on the other hand, had to be reminded of the details of the misfortune of Sītā, which aroused anger in him. Simultaneously, he needed to be informed of the many fights of Hanumān while in Laṅkā, that had reduced several places to ashes, in addition to slaying several heroes of Rāvaṇa's army. The latter was to pin Rāma's hopes on crossing the ocean, entering the impregnable Laṅkā, and defeating the mighty Rāvaṇa and his army.

It is commonplace in the corporate world to employ liaison officers to work alongside industry bodies and with governments. Their job description is akin to that of an emissary. Without forgetting their primary goal, they must be astute to determine what to share, how to share, what to seek and procure for the achievement of their goal, in line with dharma.

This dharma also encompasses behavioural decorum for group meetings (*sabhā-s*). It covers two aspects - speaking when asked for inputs, and resolute faith in the council or leader. Two instances in the *Rāmāyaṇa* particularly illustrate this dharma. In the *Kiṣkindhā kāṇḍa*, the team led by Aṅgada, reach the shores of the ocean, and contemplate how to cross it. Each of the team members expresses his ability and volunteers to cross first. Jāmbavān encourages Hanumān to take up the challenge as he is the most capable, even though he has been silent throughout the discussion. In the *Yuddha kāṇḍa*, Śrī Rāma encouraged a debate when Vibhīṣaṇa entered their camp and sought Rāma's protection. Sugrīva shares his opinion, following which Rāma seeks the views of the other senior leaders like Lakṣhmaṇa, Jāmbavān, Aṅgada and Hanumān. Hanumān then expresses his thoughts and the reasons for the same. The focus through each discussion is not on why somebody's statement is rejected, but on what is right, and the trust placed on Śrī Rāma's conclusion.

Hanumān demonstrates complete and sage understanding of his role in each of these moments; he is respectful of others' positions, such as those of Sugrīva, Aṅgada, Jāmbavān and so on, while also being honest and open in sharing his thoughts on matters under consideration.

Discussion

Leadership has to be steady, and good for all, be it organizations, groups or a country. A lack of this foundational principle causes stagnation, and a lack of direction, leading to chaos, even in good times, and not rough periods alone. Difficult times amplify the stark difference between truly good leadership and mediocrity.

Good Leaders understand that they face continuous uncertainty, and that they cannot control or accurately predict several aspects around them. But they understand their market (be it for an organization or country), plan for possible adversities, and prepare for the challenge well in advance. Their acts are well bounded by values of the organization or the country. They do not accept instantaneous gains or gratifications.

Over several decades eminent scientists and scholars have studied in-depth long-standing organizations, interviewed several thousands, to draw out patterns for happiness, trust, longevity, on account of the leaders of the time. Western analysis of leadership, in the 20th century, has relied on research from Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis, especially the impact of the ego on leadership abilities. This is seen in the works of Abraham Zaleznik, whose research had influence on the Harvard Business Review, which continues to be a standard on managerial and leadership principles to this day. The concept of democratic leadership, now widely discussed in organizational hierarchy, is another framework, pioneered by Warren Bennis, which is based in western social sciences model and studies in group behaviour. The evolving domain of Leadership Studies is seen in the principles identified as core by companies and individuals alike, over time.

While it will be difficult to delve into details of these various studies and their hypothesis, we consider two theories – one proposed by Myers-Brigg-Jung and the other by Daniel Coleman – and briefly compare their styles with the proposal of the dharma-s of Hanumān.

Myers Brigg and Carl Jung theories of leadership have detailed 8 types. They are participative (collective involvement, joint responsibility), ideological (follow a set of values founded on a sound belief system) , change-oriented (unaware of the future but want to do explore ways to do better – a refreshingly new way of doing things), visionary (uncanny sense of the unknown, position themselves and organizations better to face the unknown), executive (setting

processes across a wide range of tasks and priorities - executing accordingly), theorist (research dependent – focus on models), action-oriented (involved in actions and leading by example) and goal-oriented (setting targets and working towards them).

Daniel Goleman and his co-authors (Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee), discuss six styles of leadership in *Primal Leadership* - visionary (draw people to a shared dream), coaching (associating the individual’s goal to the organization’s), affiliative (connect and network), democratic (commitment through participation), pacesetter (focus on timely high-quality goals) and commanding (‘do as I say’). As Goleman himself says of a leader, “If your emotional abilities aren’t in hand, if you don’t possess self-awareness, if you are not able to manage your distressing emotions, if you cannot have empathy, if you cannot have effective relationships, then no matter how smart you are, you are not going to get very far” (Treher et al. 2011).

We project below Hanumān’s leadership in terms of both the frameworks, Myers-Brigg-Jung and Daniel Goleman.

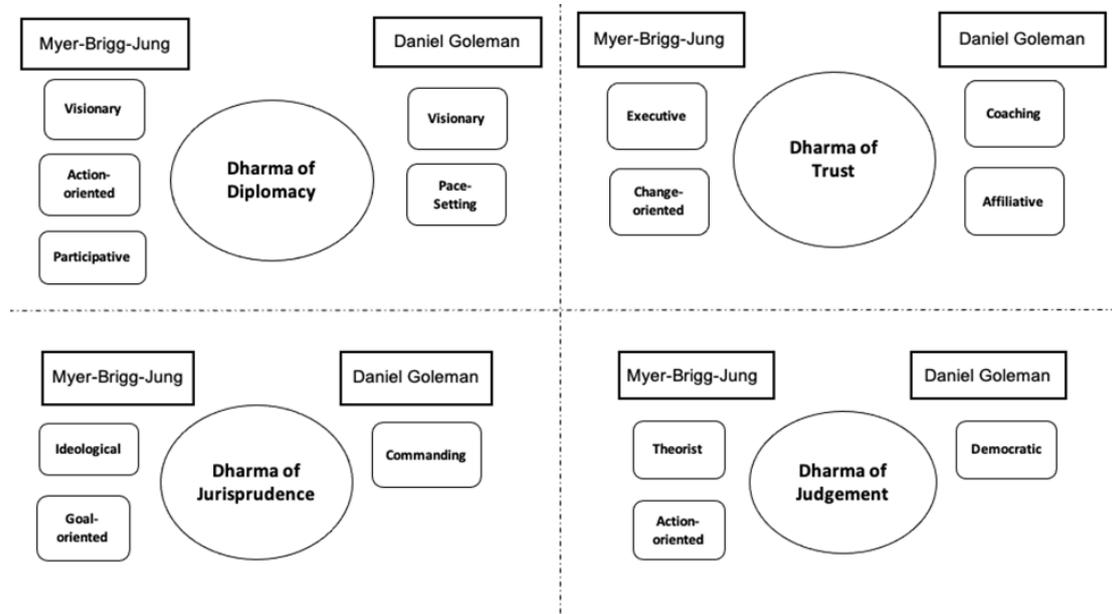


Figure 1

The comparison in the four diagrams demonstrates the collective appeal of the leadership of Hanumān that has encompassed all styles proposed by both the theories. Additionally, we also see a few missing elements in the two western frameworks, such as humility, keen desire to learn, behavioural decorum for

sabha-s and delivering key messages as per the needs of the recipient. These differences are attributable to not only the individual per se i.e. Hanumān, but also the difference in the very fundamentals between a western social sciences-based model and one founded in dharma. While the western notion of intelligence is considered a necessary condition in any leader, the dharmic understanding of psycho-physical complex of man i.e., *antahkaraṇa*, views the various faculties of *buddhi*, *manas*, *chitta* and *ahaṃkāra* as interconnected and a leader, fundamentally, embodies refined centres of each of these faculties. Thus, leadership steeped in this dharmic understanding is true leadership.

Conclusion

A leader influences his team to engage in initiatives that are orchestrated for the well-being of everybody. People eagerly await a leader's communication for it isn't mere carpentry of words but conveys information, guiding instructions, truth and direction. Countries and corporations who have incomplete leaders at the helm of affairs, find their progress plateauing. The four dharmic principles of leadership we consider in this paper demonstrate the roles of influence, initiative and orchestration, in addition to possessing presence of mind, strength and valour. A leader while demonstrating the four dharma-s is also found to be mature in handling karma, speaking truth but offering hope (*satyam brūyāt*, *priyam brūyāt*), empathetic to each and every citizen or employee, and has conquered base human instincts. Hanuman embodies all these principles and his leadership is timeless.

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Endnotes

- 1 In recent times, one recalls the act of former finance minister Arun Jaitley, during the discussions with state finance ministers related to the GST Bill. The states were sceptical of the new law being, and it was increasingly becoming impossible to forge the Bill ahead. At that moment, Arun Jaitley sought the reasons for the scepticism and opposition and learnt that in the past, when VAT was introduced, the central government had promised to make up for any loss in revenue on account of the sales tax that existed in the place of VAT. But that promise had not been kept for almost 15 years. Jaitley promised to release the funds in two phases, and had the first tranche released immediately, thus regaining the trust of the states in the central government and ensuring a passage for the Bill. See Krishnan 2019:34.
- 2 From contemporary history of the country, one can view the 1991 reforms as an example of such prioritisation. When P.V. Narasimha Rao took over as the prime minister, the country faced several crises, each of demonic proportions. It was impossible to address all of them at once. Narasimha Rao had to prioritize and pick the most pressing issues and plan actions to overcome them - it was India's debt at international level that he picked as the one which required immediate attention and ensured India would not default on its obligations. See Sitapati, 2016