

# BREAK YOUR LEADERSHIP CHAKRAVYUH



STORIES AND LEARNINGS  
FROM INDIAN MYTHOLOGY

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# INTRODUCTION TO RAMAYANA

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Ramayana is an epic tale around Lord Rama. Ramayana is the journey of Lord Rama's exile period.

Lord Rama is the eldest of the four sons of King Dasharatha and Queen Kaikeyi, who ruled the kingdom of Ayodhya. King Dasharatha has three wives Kaushalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra and four sons sired through them. Queen Kaushalya is the mother of Lord Rama. Lord Rama is the crown prince and is an obedient son, a great warrior and a follower of Dharma. Kaikeyi is the mother of Bharata. Sumitra is the mother of Lakshmana and Shatrughna (twins).

When Lord Rama is to sire the throne of Ayodhya, Queen Kaikeyi turns the game over. Queen Kaikeyi is influenced by her caretaker Mantara, who came along with Kaikeyi after her marriage. Queen Kaikeyi's mother had to leave her as a child under certain circumstances. Mantara had raised Queen Kaikeyi as her own. Mantara is a wicked lady and wants the best for Queen Kaikeyi. However, after knowing about Lord Rama's coronation as the crown prince, she asks Queen Kaikeyi to make use of her two wishes that King Dasharatha had given her. The first wish was that Bharata, her son, be made the crown prince, and the second wish was that Lord Rama is sent to exile for fourteen years.

King Dasharatha was emotionally influenced as Kaikeyi had once saved his life on the battlefield. He granted her wishes though, he was shattered with this decision. The day before Lord Rama's coronation

ceremony, King Dasharatha with a very heavy heart, had to fulfill Kaikeyi's wishes against his will. Lord Rama, instead of being crowned as the King of Ayodhya, was sent for a fourteen 14-year exile. Sita, Lord Rama's wife also followed him in exile. Lakshmana also joined Lord Rama and Sita as he was very close to them and wanted to serve them. Bharata, the son who was to be crowned, did not wish to be crowned. Bharata was an ardent follower of Lord Rama. He never accepted the throne which his mother had tried to gain for him through deceit. He did not consider himself worthy of taking Lord Rama's place. He kept Lord Rama's footwear on the throne and remained the acting prince for the fourteen years Lord Rama was in exile.

During the exile, Lord Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana stayed in the forest. They gave up all the opulence of the palace and led a simple life. The forest was home to demons and wild beasts. Once, a Rakshasi (demoness) – Surpanakha disguised as a beautiful girl expressed a desire to marry Lord Rama. Lord Rama said that he was already married and she should ask his younger brother Lakshmana. When she went to Lakshmana, he also said that he could not marry her as he was already married. In the process of avoiding the Rakshasi, they irritated her and she came in her real form and wanted to kill Sita so that Lord Rama can then marry her. Lakshmana was quick to act and he cut off her nose instantly. She ran away with a bleeding nose proclaiming that she will come back seeking revenge. She goes to her brother Khara, who goes with a huge army to seek revenge from Lord Rama but is killed by Lord Rama.

Then Surpanakha narrated this to her brother Ravana, the king of Lanka (currently Sri Lanka). She convinced him to avenge her insult. She also mentioned how beautiful Sita was and that she deserved to be his wife and not Lord Rama's.

Ravana infuriated, came to the aid of his sister Surpanakha. As a strategy, he sent across a magical golden deer towards Sita's hut. Seeing this radiant creature, Sita asked Lord Rama to get her the deer.

Lord Rama followed the deer that was but a mere illusion. He did not return. Lakshmana sensed danger. He drew a powerful line of security around the hut with his arrow while saying some chants and told Sita not to cross the line before he comes back. While Lakshmana went into the deep forest in search of Lord Rama Ravana transformed himself into a sage and came to Sita's hut to ask for alms. He put her in a situation where she had to cross the line that Lakshmana had drawn. She had to come out of her hut to give alms to the sage. Once Sita had crossed the line, Ravana abducted her and took her to his kingdom in Lanka. When Lord Rama and Lakshmana returned the hut was empty. Thus began the search for Sita.

The whole episode turned out to be a reason for war, where not only Lord Rama and Lakshmana were involved, but also Lord Rama's followers. As an endeavor to connect Bharatvarsh (India) and Lanka, the RamSetu bridge was constructed. Ravana was ultimately defeated and killed. The trio Lord Rama – Sita- Lakshmana came back to Ayodhya victorious.

The victory over evil - Ravana's death is to date celebrated as Dussehra in India. Lord Rama Sita and Lakshmana's return to Ayodhya is to date celebrated as Diwali.

Ramayana is a very influential epic as it narrates the story of a Leader – Lord Rama who faced his set of challenges and yet emerged victorious. In the larger interest of the kingdom, he had to make certain sacrifices, yet he came to be known as an influential king.

# INTRODUCTION TO MAHABHARATA

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Hastinapur was a kingdom ruled by King Dhritarashtra, from the Kuru Dynasty. He was blessed with a hundred sons and a daughter and they were called Kauravas. The Kauravas also had their cousins in Hastinapur, the Pandavas. Though they were also from the Kuru Dynasty, they were called Pandavas after their father's name Pandu. Pandu was the younger brother of Dhritarashtra. He had given up his wives and his throne as he was reeling under a curse of a sage whom he had killed unknowingly. Duryodhana was the eldest of the Kauravas and considered himself the obvious successor to the throne after Dhritarashtra. Yudhishthira was the eldest of the Pandavas and Kauravas and was considered a default successor to Dhritarashtra. However, in the game of the throne came many twists and attempts at sabotage. The Pandavas were almost burnt alive in the palace of Khandavprastha. The game of dice was the turning point of the Kauravas – Pandavas episode. The Pandavas lost everything in that game and were asked to leave on exile for thirteen long years. Back from exile, the throne of Hastinapur had to be won and it led to the epic war of Mahabharata.



# LEADERSHIP AND ITS TYPES

Leaders portray a lot through their leadership styles. The fact is an organization's success and progress depends upon the leader's qualities. The leader's vision, mission, goals, accomplishments, integrity, knowledge, and expertise influences people to follow him. How a leader holds on to the team or extracts the best from the team becomes a game-changer for the organisation. But for one to lead, one has to have the mettle to influence. As a leader, you can influence by your work, your knowledge, your expertise, your experience, your working style or how you manage your teams. A leader has the quality to move their team and organisation the extra mile.

- But being a leader, are you inclined to include your team in the decision- making?
- Is your leadership style superficial, without any followers? Are you a sole decision-maker, the insecure leader who does not involve team members?
- Are you a taskmaster?
- Do you believe in team spirit?
- Are you grateful to your team?
- How often do you give credit to your team for their contribution?
- Winning comes with the right attitude, integrity, and perseverance.

This story narrates that Lord Brahma being the creator of the universe has all the elements to lead and succeed. Yet, his claim towards supremacy on the foundation of fake accomplishments turns him into a leader unworthy of trust. Fame and supremacy are short-lived, whereas integrity and transparency make leaders lead better.

Though Lord Brahma is a revered god, he is not worshipped as much as Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva. This in itself should make you ponder about what kind of leader you are or wish to be.

## Lord Brahma the Creator

The power of supremacy has obsessed even the gods. Let us see how.

There is a very popular guru mantra –

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः

गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।

गुरुःसाक्षात् परब्रह्म

तस्मै श्रीगुरुवे नमः ॥

*‘Guru Brahma, Guru Vishnu, Guru Devo Maheshwara, Guru Sakshat  
Para Brahma, Tasmaishree guru ve namah.’*

**Meaning** – Guru in true essence is the representative of Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu, and Mahesh (Lord Shiva). He creates and sustains knowledge and eliminates the weeds of ignorance. I salute such a Guru.

This mantra is ubiquitous in every Hindu home. The Gurus (leaders) are paid reverence before starting a new venture. In this scenario, when we speak about the three gurus – Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva, we see Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva have

many temples across India and find a place in almost every puja room. However, Lord Brahma who is equivalent is not worshipped as much as Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva. There is a wonderful story that brings to light how a leader can have ulterior motives and defame himself.



## The Story Goes as Such

*Lord Brahma who is the creator of the whole universe has emerged from the navel of Lord Vishnu. However, one day there was a heated argument between Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu. Lord Brahma said, ‘I am superior, as I created the universe’ and Lord Vishnu said, ‘I am the superior, as you emerged from my navel.’ The fierce argument led to a fight. Both were using deadly weapons that would have destroyed the universe. The fight went on for days without a conclusion. Then one day from nowhere suddenly a sharp light slashed between them and they both stood apart.*

*Lord Brahma was thrown to one side and Lord Vishnu to the other. As the **two gods** stood back, Lord Shiva stood between them. He asked the reason for the clamor. Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu tried to prove their supremacy to Lord Shiva. Tell us, they say, ‘Who you think is superior,*

*the one who created God himself or the one who created the beautiful, lively Universe?’*

*Lord Shiva stood transfixed. He was in a dilemma, yet he had to answer... He kept calm for a while and then said, ‘Do you see this light which just slashed you apart? I want you both to find the end of this light. The one who finds the end first, I declare him as supreme of you two.’*

*Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu took the challenge. They went in the opposite direction in the search of the source of light. They travelled for months but found no end to the light. Lord Vishnu, after searching for many months, accepted that there is no end to this light and he decided to return. He told Lord Shiva that he could not find the end of the light and in case Lord Brahma finds the end he will consider Lord Brahma as the Superior God. Lord Brahma, on the other hand, also went searching for the source of light for months but in vain. However, he was not ready to give up. Along the way, he stumbled on Ketaki flowers and was struck with an idea. He took Ketki flowers in confidence and asked her to be an accomplice in stating in front of Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu, that they saw the source of light together. Ketaki agreed.*

*Lord Brahma and Ketaki came back to face Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu. Lord Brahma was brimming with confidence, already having declared himself the winner. He considered himself superior to the two and was not bothered to know about Lord Vishnu’s experience. Lord Brahma’s insecurity had made him so impervious to Lord Vishnu’s findings that he cooked up a story.*

*As Ketaki gave testament of having witnessed the source of light with Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu folded his hands and accepted Lord Brahma as superior. This brought a big smile on Lord Brahma’s face but left Lord Shiva infuriated. Lord Shiva lashed back saying, ‘There is no end to light and you are a liar.’ Lord Brahma and Ketaki were startled at being caught and soon surrendered. Lord Vishnu, who by now had given up on his supremacy completely, perked up. Lord Shiva announced, ‘There is no end to light and as Lord Vishnu was honest enough to accept his defeat*

*and surrender, I declare him Supreme of you two. You, Lord Brahma, have tried to gain supremacy based on lies and bribery. What kind of insecurity is this? Hence I curse you that from this time on, you will be considered as a god, but will never be prayed to as much as Lord Vishnu. He will be considered superior to you.'*

## **Why Lord Brahma is Shown Aged in All Reference Images?**

There is another observation that Lord Brahma is shown aged in all reference images whereas, Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva are shown young and full of life. Let us understand why.

- Lord Brahma has already created the universe, hence represents exhausted energy, Lord Vishnu is the maintainer of the universe and hence active energy and Lord Shiva is the destructor of evil, the future, and represents passive energy.
- People care about the present and the future, not the past. This psychology of people makes the past - Lord Brahma, less important.
- You can create something, but its possession is not in your hand. Nature provides shelter to everyone for a certain period. Showing unnecessary proprietary rights over it gives nothing but miseries, worries, tension, anxiety, and suffering. That is what Lord Brahma did after the creation of the Universe. He started showing signs of possession. This is the quality of Jiva (life) of low birth, not a person of divine quality. Lord Brahma is highly attached to his creation: 'I have created this world, I am the owner of this world, everything belongs to me and everything should work according to me.'

This attitude develops the fear, tension, and insecurity, making Lord Brahma appear aged as compared to Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu. He is worshipped less as compared to his counterparts Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva.

To date, we find only one temple of Lord Brahma in entire India. This temple is at Pushkar in Rajasthan.

The prayer, 'Guru Brahma, Guru Vishnu, Guru Devo Maheshwara, Guru Sakshat, Para Brahma, Tasmaishree Guru Ve Nama' is often chanted in every Hindu household. It says Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu, and Lord Shiva (Maheshwara) as the supreme leaders, but ironically Lord Brahma is not prayed to because of his greed for supremacy and his biased outlook.

### **Things to Ponder**

1. Have you been Lord Brahma or Lord Vishnu to your subordinates?
2. Have your seniors come across as Lord Brahma or Lord Vishnu to you?
3. What kind of leader is the person you are reporting to?
4. What qualities can reform you as a leader so that you grow along with your team and with your organisation?
5. Does insecurity often rule your mind?
6. Have you faced integrity issues with your role in the current organisation?
7. What is your idea of a good leader?
8. What drives you to lead?

Learning from Lord Brahma – Don't be an insecure leader. If you are insecure people will not respect you and may not follow you.

## The Benevolent Lord Vishnu

*Lord Vishnu is the supreme Godhead. He is considered a savior, a benefactor, responsible for churning life on earth. Lord Vishnu is one God who is being called time and again in the event of distress, in need of help, not only by his followers but by other Gods alike.*

*Lord Vishnu came as a fish to warn his followers of the impending dangers. He came as a savior in the form of Kurma – A Turtle, at the event of the churning of the sea to extract nectar. He came as Lord Narasimha and saved his devotee Prahlada from his evil father Hiranyakashipu. He appeared in various incarnations as Lord Parashurama who came to reduce crime on earth, Lord Rama to kill a Demon named Ravana, as Buddha to spread the message of peace, and as Lord Krishna, not only to kill demons but also to share his knowledge with us (Bhagwad Geeta) and to help people resolve their problems.*

*In Bhagwad Geeta, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna, ‘Parth, I will be there every time I am required, just to ensure that evil is uprooted and truth wins. I will stand by my followers, lead them and support them so that they win.’*

*Lord Vishnu is a Godhead who is charismatic and thus has the entire world praising him for his leadership qualities. He engages, invests and retains his followers through his important deed - problem-solving. He shares his knowledge in the form of the Bhagavad Gita in his incarnation as Lord Krishna. Therefore, he is a leader sought after and worshiped.*

### Things to Ponder

- Are you considered a problem solver?
- When was the last time you shared your knowledge with someone without any insecurity that he/she will outperform you on the corporate ladder?

- When did you guide your team members without getting involved in the execution?

Learning from Lord Vishnu – Be a problem solver, share your knowledge. Be a secure leader. More people will come to you if you could solve their problems and share your knowledge.

## The Hostile – Lord Shiva



If you notice, Lord Shiva is the only lord who is also represented by a symbol i.e. Linga. We pray to the Linga, but have you thought what is the purpose of the symbol?

Well, it means that Lord Shiva wants you to connect with him in the way you want. He wants you to imagine him in the way you want, as a symbol does not have a face. He is a leader who is comfortable connecting with his followers in the way they want. Usually, when a devotee goes to a temple, he does a 360-degree *parikramma* i.e. going around the idol. But if you go to a Lord Shiva temple where there is a Linga, you cannot take a 360-degree *parikramma*, you start from one point, go around the Linga, and you have to stop at a particular point

between. Milk/water is offered to Lord Shiva. The reason you cannot make a complete circle is that no one understands Lord Shiva. He is mystic, he is always in deep meditation, but the moment he is awake he will destroy our vices. He will drink away the poison that is destroying my life (like in Samudra Manthan)

Lord Shiva is also referred to as Shankar and Rudra. He has many names that define his different virtues. While Shankar is represented as the DOUBLE the peaceful family man, Rudra is destructive and is represented as the hostile one.

*Rudra is the manifestation of Lord Shiva, the most powerful Godhead. Rudra is often portrayed as a hostile and destructive form, Rudra comes to cleanse the ill happenings and is also referred to as a storm. Such is Rudra countenance that he becomes the storm in the necessity, otherwise a - calm, non-terrifying god.*

*As Rudra, Lord Shiva does not allow people to stray from spiritual and worldly matters. He aims at having a civilized and orderly society.*

*Rudra is an extremely compassionate and calm God, but his mighty, grievous form appears when he sees people drifting from the set norms.*

*Rudra's principle has been: for something new and good to begin, the old and bad should be destroyed. His presence has been invoked when the need for destruction was imminent in the face of new beginnings.*

## **Things to Ponder**

- When did you take a tough decision that was challenging for you but very important for your organisation?
- Are you as unpredictable as Lord Shiva – calm, angered as well as innocent?
- When was the last time you suffered to make other people benefit?

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