4 Let us be True Leaders

Man is a being who desires to lead a group life. When working as a group, as a result, there emerges the unique ability called 'Leadership'. By gaining some idea about leadership, the individual will be able to face the challenges of life successfully. Moreover, through good leadership it is possible for one to perform a valuable service to others as well as to society. A large number of followers rally round successful leaders. By identifying leadership and by following the leadership qualities, one will be equipped with the knowledge and strength to act as a successful leader and also as a successful follower. By studying this lesson, you too will gain such a skill.

Men act collectively as a group on various occasions to fulfil different needs. Guiding the group in order to achieve the group objective through collective activities can be defined as 'Leadership' in simple terms. You may have come across various leaders on various occasions. Think of the leadership in your household. Your father, mother or any other older member of your household is your closest leader. You can identify a number of such leaders in school too. The Principal, Teachers, Prefects, Class Monitors and Sports Captains can be given as examples. When you observe society too, you can identify different leaders such as political leaders, heads of establishments and leaders of community societies.
In order to achieve the objectives a group desires, there should be a leadership to guide it. Even during the Hunting Age, people worked collectively to meet the basic needs such as security, and the procurement of food. In order to fulfil these requirements successfully, the guidance given by the leadership was important. Since man is a being with a high intellectual capacity, he works intelligently to guide his group. A true leader contributes with dedication towards achieving the group’s goals. For example, the Jathaka Story - *Vannupatha Jathaka* (The tale about the Sandy Path) in the *Pansiya Panas Jathaka Potha* (The Five Hundred and Fifty stories of previous births of the aspirant to Buddhahood) can be mentioned. All five hundred trader carters with their loads were stranded in the middle of the desert, and were desperate and exhausted without water. In this situation their leader encouraged all of them undergoing much hardship, dug a well, until water appeared there. In this way his toiling hard to quench the thirst in all of them was a display of true leadership qualities. Hence, a group needs a leader in order to achieve its goals successfully and to guide the group efficiently. The following statements about leadership reflect its importance.

"*Be your own leader*"
- Lord Buddha

"*Leadership is expected to get the followers to perform the do's and guide them on the don'ts*"
- Harry S. Truman

"*Leadership is an orientation towards fulfilling a common objective through the relationship between the individuals and groups*"
- Encyclopedia of Social Sciences

If a person wants to qualify for leadership, it is essential that he prepares for it. A true leader attempts to lead his followers towards correct goals. He constantly inquires after them, consults their opinion, treats everybody equally, respects all. When this happens all the followers respect the leader and work in harmony.

Even though the real qualities, ethics and economic and social standings of the people of a country or a region may change, the character of a good leader should not change. Maximum credibility should be safeguarded in the character of a leader.
4.1 Let us identify leadership qualities

By now you may have got some idea about the unique ability called 'Leadership'. Not only among humans, but also among animals there are leaders. In the *Nalapana Jataka* (Tale of drinking through a straw) in Buddhist Literature the leader of the monkeys saved its gang from imminent danger by its farsightedness. Hence, a successful leader is endowed with specific qualities. By now you too may be holding certain positions about leadership. Are you working as a true leader? Think over it. Among the animal species that act collectively, the bee is considered an insect that displays good leadership qualities. The bees work together collectively and build the hive, and provide honey for the world which is a valuable medicament, and feed the pollen. Thus the queen bee that is the leader of the swarm and all the bees round her hive give the world a valuable message about the "importance of leadership and adherance."

**Activity 1**

- Identify the persons who work as leaders in your school, and prepare a list of their designations.
- State the tasks performed by them in order to fulfil the goals of the school.
Activity II

Read the following incident carefully.

Mrs. Ashoka, the teacher in charge of Grade 8 B, posed the following question to her class that day. "We need a leader (Monitor) for our class. Whom shall we appoint as our Class Monitor?"

Several pupils said in one voice, "We like Pasan".

Teacher : Why do you children show special preference for Pasan?

Tharanga : He is very kind.

Ishara : He treats all equally.

Kumudu : Pasan is a person who keeps his promises.

Priyal : Pasan listens to everyone patiently.

Devi : His work is very orderly, systematic.

Munnera : The words he speaks are very unambiguous and clear.

Edward : Pasan always admits his faults.

Mohommed : Pasan thinks in a way different from us. Thus he has a solution for every problem.

Teacher : Ah, Very good. Since all of you like Pasan we'll make him the Class Monitor.

- Read the above incident carefully and list the leadership qualities in Pasan.
- Name other qualities a successful leader should have, in your opinion.
- If you were Pasan, briefly write a speech addressing your classmates after you have been appointed Class Monitor.
Observe the following diagram. It contains several leadership qualities.

If you want to be a successful leader you should take into consideration the above qualities. It may be that these qualities are hidden in you. When engaged in group work these qualities will arise in you and it is your responsibility to develop them. A clever leader is able to attract other persons towards his words and take them to the relevant goal. Even if you do not have all the leadership qualities indicated above, all of you may have most of them in you. You should not be disappointed about it. Be determined to develop them. If you want to work as a leader in school or in any other social institution, determine to train yourself in the above qualities from today. Try out those qualities, and absorb them. This will not be a difficult task. You will be able to achieve leadership according to your varied abilities, within the classroom or beyond it, in the playground or in any other place.

Be quiet and think for a moment. Recollect the specific abilities in you. Identify the leadership qualities that are concealed in you, and follow the courses of action that will improve them. Whenever possible wear a smile. You will become an outstanding person among others due to the qualities in you such as pleasant friendly speech, inclination to help others, respecting others, and not condemning or looking down upon the opinion of others. These qualities will provide the basic foundation to make you a leader. Direct all the activities related to your life along this path. You will be able
to assume leadership in various fields such as class monitors, subject leaders, sports leaders, leaders of societies related to extra curricular activities. For this you need determination, dedication and training. With these you could be a good leader from today itself. Do not hesitate, put this thought into practice. Through this you will be able to achieve the leadership you desire.

You may desire to live as a successful individual in the years ahead. Of course it should be the target for all of you. For this it is very important that you take certain decisions and identify your capabilities and the hidden skills properly. Similarly, we will be able to be top level leaders in fields where we now have capabilities and skills. Hence, as individuals, there is a hidden leadership in all of us. Our future depends on this. Thus it is important that we identify the leadership qualities that are concealed or hidden in us. If you are unable to do it by yourself you can get the assistance of your parents, teachers and relations and friends. Otherwise, you can participate in certain situations, cases, processes and surface such leadership qualities.

Activity III

- Think of yourself for a moment. What leadership qualities do you possess? Note them down.

- What are the fields in which you like to accept leadership? Think what results you will achieve by leading a group in one such field.

4.2 Various leadership styles

There are three leadership styles that have drawn the attention of scholars engaged in leading research on leadership. They are indicated below:
We can identify how man acted collectively in achieving various goals on various occasions, from very ancient times. On most occasions, when a group of individuals work together, we may notice the leader and the adherents who follow the leaders and act accordingly. The leader should always provide leadership on matters that are beneficial to society and are not harmful to oneself and others. You may have heard of anti-social activities carried out by groups. Society will not benefit from such leadership or adherence. In India's struggle for independence the leadership of
Mahatma Gandhi reflects how he uplifted the plight of his followers through civil disobedience and non-violence moments. Millions of people in India worked in collaboration with him. Mahatma Gandhi's statement that he expected "to wipe off every drop of tears from every eye" clearly demonstrates his noble qualities. Similarly, Martin Luther King was a great leader who fought for the civil rights of the 'black' community in America. In the demonstrations against the reservation of seats in buses owing to the discriminatory policy of apartheid according to the person's complexion, the idea he held was "Walking with dignity is more honourable than travelling in those buses in humiliation."

In the same manner we can mention other leaders who were committed to with their followers. The leaders such as Sri Jawaharlal Nehru and Winston Churchill too are outstanding.
Nelson Mandela who fought against apartheid in South Africa and the Red Indian Leader Seattle, too are noble leaders who fought for the rights of their followers.

Speaking of the Sri Lankan leaders, the Ven. Anagarika Dharmapala who launched his struggle peacefully against the slaughter of cattle and the clamour "Save Buddha Gaya" too is a true leader.

Speaking about the Freedom Movement in Sri Lanka the leaders such as Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam and Siddhi Lebbe who led the struggle with Sinhala leaders such as the Right Honourable D.S. Senanayake in the forefront too should be commermorated as true leaders.
Taking adherence into consideration, when the leader of the group guides the group regarding the aims of the group, the follower should be prepared to act according to the guidelines. The followers should take the path set by the leadership. It is the duty of the followers display their confidence in the leader. When the leader fulfils his obligations, it is essential that the follower too should work with responsibility. The follower should dedicate himself to helping the leader to take the correct path.

The followers should not exploit their leader. In order to be a good leader one should work as a follower or adherent under a good leader. The leader should maintain the confidence the followers have placed in him and constantly see that he works without breaching what is socially accepted. When the leader and the follower work constantly so as not to breach their mutual duties and responsibilities, good governance will automatically emerge.

On certain occasions leadership emerges depending on the circumstances. You may have noticed how the leaders who emerge at times of natural disasters and calamities take decisions and execute these decisions. There are also followers who act accordingly in such situations.

Activity IV
As mentioned in this lesson what are the qualities that should be practised in order to be a successful follower.

Summary
- Man likes to live in groups.
- In such collective activities the special quality called "leadership" becomes prominent.
- Leadership is necessary for society and there are qualities one should practise in order to be a successful leader.
- Successful leadership as well as adherence, help in the progress of society.

Assignment
Prepare an information file of the qualities and mission of noble leaders with reference to biographies of distinguished personalities. Display this information in the wall newspaper of your class.