



# A Qualitative Examination of the Leadership Traits of Rām from Srimad Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇ

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## INTRODUCTION

Trait theories of leadership have explored whether certain traits differentiate leaders from non-leaders. Through the first half of the twentieth century, trait theory dominated leadership research. Then Stogdill (1948) and Mann (1959) expressed their skepticism, stating that the trait lists were exhaustive and inconsistent. After these reviews, researchers' attention shifted to behavioral and situational aspects of leadership (Blanchard et al., 1993; Fiedler, 1978; Hersey & Blanchard, 1977, 1988; Kerr & Jermier, 1978).

Some psychologists, however, continuing to study personality traits synthesized the exhaustive lists of traits by applying factor analysis and created a five-factor model—Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, and Openness—(Goldberg, 1990; McCrae &

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Costa, 1987, 1997). This big-five model has been used extensively in management research, such as in explorations of the personality correlates of leadership (Bono & Judge, 2004; Judge et al., 2002).

During the same time, researchers introduced new theories identifying “extraordinary” traits, such as the qualities of charisma, moral reasoning, servant, authentic, spiritual, motivational, transformational, and transactional (Yukl, 2013). Though traits theory had this resurgence, researchers were concerned whether these leadership traits could address complex business situations (Gordon & Yukl, 2004).

## UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP: A HISTORICAL QUEST

The search for understanding the traits of leadership pre-dates modern management. Zaccaro et al. (2004) found leaders’ traits specified in different ancient civilization’s literatures. They quoted examples from *Lao-tzu* in Chinese literature, dated 6 BCE, describing leaders as selfless, hardworking, and honest. They also gave examples describing attributes of heroes given in early and medieval mythology like Homer’s *Illiad and Odyssey*. Further, they identified leadership qualities of wisdom and capacity from Plato’s *Republic* and seeking virtue from Aristotle’s *Politics*. Bass (1990) in his historical review of leadership traits acknowledged that leader’s attributes have been discussed, in Egyptian hieroglyphics, the Rāmāyaṇa, Babylonian stories, and Icelandic sagas.

My study explored the leadership traits from the Eastern classical book of wisdom on leadership, *Srimad Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇ*. My interest in studying leadership in the *Rāmāyaṇ* comes from my cultural background. Since my childhood, every April during the nine-day festival of Rām’s birthday, I joined my family in chanting the original Sanskrit text of the *Srimad Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇ*, hearing some lectures about Rām and his royal family, and relating his story to contemporary life. This inspired me to explore what are Rām’s leadership traits, so that the role model of Rām might be applied to contemporary complex business situations and society.

The story of Rāmāyaṇ has been told throughout time for its greatness as an example of the qualities of leadership as found in the incidents referring to Rām, his brothers, King Daśaratha, King Janaka and Sītā. *Srimad Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇ* has always had a significant place in the minds and hearts of Indian peoples.

Prior management research by Muniappan (2007) applied a hermeneutic method of qualitative analysis to one volume of *Shrimad Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇ* (Bala Kand). Using this interpretative method of study, he analyzed the original text in the light of transformational leadership characteristics. In the volume of studies on the Rāmāyaṇ from the perspectives of leadership and management (Gupta et al., 2016), none of the authors suggested any techniques or solutions by which an individual could develop the ideal leadership traits of Rām. Abidin and Joebagio (2018) identified nine values or principles from the Indonesian Rāmāyaṇ that a contemporary leader could use in developing personality traits to become an altruistic leader.

The aim of this research was to identify all the traits, including the core trait, that exemplify Rām's leadership and to present a scientifically validated technique to help modern business leaders develop these traits.

## QUANTITATIVE STUDY METHODS

To comprehensively understand the nature of Rām's leadership, a qualitative research method was employed. In-depth qualitative research allows one to question preconceived notions within the field of leadership. Qualitative approaches are preferred for understanding the complex and embedded phenomena in leadership (Klenke, 2008).

I used the grounded theory approach to qualitative research which was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) for the purpose of constructing theory grounded in data. The uniqueness of this method is that the constructed theory is derived from the data collected during the research process rather than being conceived a priori to the research study. The intent of a grounded theory study is to inductively generate an abstract analytical schema of a phenomenon grounded in the concrete evidence of the qualitative data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Creswell, 2013).

## DATA SOURCES

The data collected for my study originates from the Sanskrit text, *Srimad Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇ*, and translations written by authors Hari Prasad Sasthri (1952) and Gita Press (2014), as well as the word-by-word commentary by the late Rao Shahib P.S. Krishnamurthy Iyer (2013). Data sources included segments of text in which characters talk about Rām's traits and

attitudes, incidents in which Rām displays his leadership personality, and Rām’s own statements, advice, comments, or views about leadership traits.

I read the entire original Sanskrit text of *Shrimad Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇ*, using English translation when needed, and created codes in English. Passages from the Sanskrit text and translation were compared with the codes and categories that emerged by analyzing the text, the process that Glaser and Strauss (1967) call constant comparative method of data analysis.

### CONSTANT COMPARISON METHOD

Analysis of the incidents in the text proceeded through three steps of the constant comparative method: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In open coding, incidents, events, or activities that happened in the text were considered as raw data, and codes were derived from those data. Coding was not done based on just words or sentences, but on the level of incidents or events in the story. Throughout the process of the research, whenever I analyzed an individual event or incident, rather than viewing it as an isolated event, I connected that event with the broader context of the whole *Shrimad Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇ*. Inferences were drawn based on the text, bracketing (putting aside) my own preconceived notions about Rām and others (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

As reading the text, I created open codes of leadership traits. “Futuristic,” “intellectual,” and “ethical awareness” are a few examples of initial open codes that were identified. Qualitative data analysis software (atlas.ti) assisted me in connecting codes to textual material. During the open coding process, I created memos and notes so that later I could explore the meaning in more depth to help in creating categories. Memos detail why and how decisions are being made related to all aspects of coding process (Chun et al., 2019). In the next stage (axial coding), codes were analyzed to determine which ones had common characteristics and thus could be merged into categories. During this phase also a core category begins to emerge (Chun et al., 2019). For example, the open codes of “communication skills” and “intelligence” were explored further to find the connections between them that then created the category of “eloquent.”

Finally, at the selective coding stage, one produces a theory that is grounded in the data (Chun et al., 2019). In reviewing all the categories that I had identified in axial coding, I determined which category was

most central to explaining Rām’s leadership. “Self-realized” emerged as the core category linking all the other categories. I then explored if the text supported the theory that emerged: If one possesses the Self-realized trait, they would naturally possess all other leadership traits identified in this research. For this purpose, the memos, notes, and categories that I had developed or evolved during the process helped me develop this central theme with a deeper understanding.

## CATEGORIES IDENTIFIED FROM GROUNDED THEORY CODING

Unless stated otherwise, the referenced passages are from Shastri (1952). The reference is given as the book number, chapter, and page number (e.g., Book 1, chap. 1, p. 4). When clarification was needed, I referred to the Gita Press and P. S. Krishnaswami Iyer commentaries. These will be referred to as follows. Gita Press is referred to as Gita Press (GP), Year (2014), Volume, book-chapter-verse (e.g., GP, 2014, Vol. 1, p. 59, 1-1-3). P.S. Krishnaswami Iyer is referred to as PSK Iyer, Year, Vol. number, page number, chapter number, and Verse number e.g., PSK Iyer, 2010, Vol. 1, p. 1, 1-1-3).

The categories identified from the data included: Self-realized, *Ethical (Dharma)*, *Trustworthy*, *Humble*, *Developmental*, *Knowledgeable*, *Fore-sighted*, *Eloquent*, *Appreciative*, *Benevolent*, *Attractive*, and *Invincible*.

### *Self-Realized*

The foremost trait that emerged after reading and coding the Rāmāyaṇ was the trait “Self-realized,” or “possessed of the higher Self.” *Ātmavān*—a Sanskrit term for Self-realized—is used in the Rāmāyaṇ to describe Rām (GP, 2014, Vol. 1, p. 1, 1-1-4). The following passages illustrate data from different incidents, phrases, and citations that exemplify this core category and its sub-traits.

The preeminent significance of the trait of being established in the higher Self can be found at the very beginning of the Rāmāyaṇ where Sage Vālmīki posed to Sage Nārada the question: “Is there a leader in the world who has subdued his self? who has conquered his anger? who is possessed of splendor? and who is above fault-finding? (*ātmavān ko jīta krodho dyutimān kaḥ anasūyakah*) (GP, 2014, Vol. 1, p. 1, 1-1-4). Sage Nārada replies that Rām is such a leader, who “meditates on his

own essence” (1-1-12), meaning ever united in his *Ātma* or higher Self. Being established in the Self (*Ātma*) is the basis of Rām’s leadership traits.

In Book 2, *Ayodhya Kanda*, when Rām’s father King Daśaratha listed the traits of Rām, he identified traits such as “*Nityam pragrahavān*” meaning “always exercised self-control and practiced purity/morality both internally and externally” (GP, 2014, Vol. 1, p. 196, 2-1-14). Even opponents openly called Rām a “high-souled personality” (*Mahātmane*).

The term “high-souled” is used by various characters in the *Rāmāyaṇ* to refer to Rām. In Book 1, *Bala Kanda*, Sage Viśhvāmitra asks Rām’s father Daśaratha to allow Rām to protect his sacrificial fires (*yajya*) from demons who spoil them by spilling impurities. While conversing with King Daśaratha, Sage Viśhvāmitra praises Rām as follows: “there is no match for high-souled Rām” (GP, 2014, p. 60, Vol. 1, 1-19-12). In Book 6 *Vibhishana*, the younger brother of the demon king Rāvaṇ, after being expelled by Rāvaṇ because he was supporting Rām, warns Rāvaṇ to return *Sītā*. *Vibhishana* runs towards Rām as shelter and surrenders at his feet. Before meeting Rām, he meets Rām’s friends and utters, “Do thou inform the high-souled Raghava (Rām), that magnanimous protector of the world, that I, *Vibhīṣanaḥ*, have come hither” (Book 6, chap. 17, p. 37). This trait of “high-souled” was also noticed by other characters such as *Mārīcha* (golden deer demon), *Sugrīva*, and *Hanumān* on different occasions.

Here we will consider a few other examples suggesting Rām expressed his thoughts and executed actions from the level of consciousness which realizes the connectedness of ultimate reality of the Self with the essential being of others. In Book 7, *Uttara Khand*, recognizing the efforts and support given by his allies and friends, Rām addressed the assembly in a sweet voice, glancing at each one: “You are my friends, my brothers, My very Self! It is you who have saved me from misfortune, O Dwellers in the Woods! Happy is King *Sugrīva* to possess such excellent friends” (Book 7, chap. 39, p. 514). Rām addressed the gathering as my very Self (*sukurthey bhavanthakṣha ca shareera bhratharasthatha*) and claimed all of them as his own brothers. By the expression “my very Self (*bhavanthakṣha*),” he identified his own Self with that of others. One can understand that this is the fundamental trait which gives rise to other traits found under different categories.

Rām, during another incident, instructed *Hanumān* (the monkey servant) to go to the palace to announce his arrival to his brother *Bharat*. *Bharat* was waiting to see him after 14 years. Rām asked *Hanumān* to

meet his friend Guha, the boatman, on the way. He referred to his friend Guha as “*Ātma Samah Guha* (My very Self, Guha).”

Rām treated all the populace as his own relations. In Book 2, when Rām’s father Daśaratha decides to appoint Rām as his successor, he gets the opinion about his decision from his senior people in the kingdom. The seniors expressed how Rām feels everyone’s emotions as his own. “Rām suffers with the afflicted and rejoices like a parent when his people hold a festival” (Book 2, chap. 2, p. 154). When Rām was ordered to go for exile by his queen mother Kaikayī, the entire city of Ayodhyā citizens followed him to the forest. This shows how his love and affection toward his subjects inspired their reciprocal love.

*One of the highly appreciated traits of Rām is being emotionally controlled. Rām displayed this trait in many instances irrespective of whether it was a great pleasure or a great sorrow. One incident took place when Rām was announced by his father and senior mentors as successor for Ayodhyā. When this message was told to Rām, he just said “so be it” (Book 2, chap. 3, p. 154). This incidence demonstrates that Rām was unshaken even the when great pleasures such as the kingdom were offered to him. The next morning, the event took a different turn. Kaikayī, one of his stepmothers, convinced Daśaratha to withdraw the ceremony and offer the kingdom to her son, Bharat. In addition, she also wished that Rām go to the forest and live in exile for 14 years. Hearing these words, Rām showed “no sign of distress” (Book 2, chap. 19, p. 199). The following lines clearly show the trait of being emotionally controlled:*

The slayer of his foes, Shri Rāmachandra, hearing the words of Kaikayī, keen as the pangs of death, was in no way moved by them, and answered: "Be it so! To honour the promise made by the king, I will leave for the forest immediately, with matted locks, attired in raiment made of bark, .... (Book 2, chap. 19, p. 199)

*Rām never displayed any happiness or sorrow in either situation, whether being given a kingdom or being banished to the forest. The way in which he received the news of his father giving him the kingdom and his mother’s word to go in exile to the forest was the same. Be it so! This clearly demonstrates his trait of being emotionally controlled.*

Once Rām received the command from his father through his step-mother Queen Kaikayī, he accepted her command to enter the forest soon. Then, he returned to the palace to inform his mother Kausalyā

about his decision to follow the command. Not knowing the happenings between Queen Kaikayī and Rām, friends were waiting along the doorstep of King Daśaratha’s palace to give Rām his royal umbrella, fans, and chariot. Rām gently refused them, did not reveal any sorrows, and with courage and full mastery over his Self (Ātmavān), entered his mother’s palace. Thus, the verse shows his traits of being “courageous” and “emotionally stable,” as attributes of being “Self-realized.”

### *Ethical*

*The data revealed that Rām displayed the trait of “ethical leadership,” which I coded as “dharma.” Rām is considered as the embodiment of dharma. “Dharma” comes from the Sanskrit root dhri, which means “to hold, preserve, or maintain” (Sands, 2013, p. 62). Dharma has been defined as “that invincible power of nature which upholds existence. It maintains evolution and forms the very basis of cosmic life. It supports all that is helpful for evolution and discourages all that is opposed to it” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1969, p. 26).*

In this research I found an example of how Rām was perceived to be the embodiment of dharma and thus upheld the evolution of society. The Rākshasa (demon) *Mārīcha* referred to Rām as “virtue incarnate” (Book 3, chap. 37, verse 13).

*Rāmo Vīgrahavān Dharmah Sādhuh Satya Parākrāmah |  
rājā sarvasya lokasya devānām iva vāsavaḥ || 3-37-13*

Rām is virtue incarnate, pious, and of unfailing prowess.

He is the ruler of the entire humanity as Indra is the ruler of gods.

(GP, 2014, Vol. 1, p. 639, 3-37-13)

Rām is called “*Dharma Ātma*,” meaning Self-realized in ethics or Virtue-souled. Here one can see the explicit connection between the core category of being Self-realized and the trait of ethics. By not deviating from the path of righteousness, he was truly valorous. The question of his defeat did not arise because he was always following the path of evolution of society.

Rām also supported dharma in honoring his father’s promise made to Kaikayī to exile him. On his departure to the forest, Rām uttered the following words to Queen Kaikayī, “I wished to preserve dharma. Know me, like (equal to) the sages, to be a protector of dharma” (Book 2,



chap. 19, p. 200). One could infer that Rām was merely obeying his mother’s promise, but the deeper meaning of this incident is that Rām’s exile brought him to the forest where he destroyed the negative forces (demons) which were hindering the path of evolution of society—an example of how Rām’s actions were spontaneously in accord with dharma, or natural law.

Another example of how Rām was appreciated as one supporting the evolution of the universe was given by Sage Nārada in his reply to Sage Vālmīki. Sage Vālmīki enquired, “Who is the best dharmic leader today?” Sage Nārada answered, “Rām is the protector of his people, pleasing to look upon, supporting the universe, the destroyer of those who contravene the moral code” (Book 1, chap. 1, p. 3).

Rām demonstrated naturally his moral awareness of the duty of a king to *protect his subjects and make them live happily. An example is given in the following verse. In the context of considering Rām as the future king of Ayodhyā, both King Daśaratha and his counsellors praised Rām’s ethical knowledge. King Daśaratha described Rām as “Neither bearing nor speaking aught against Dharma,” “Never uttering falsehood,” “Well-versed in public and individual responsibilities,” and “Ever seeking weal for his subjects.” The senior ministers, counsellors, mentors described Rām as “satyadharmaparāyaṇaḥ” (Verse 29) meaning interested in dharma and truth, “dharmajajñāḥ” (Verse 31) meaning one who knows what dharma is, “dharmārthanaiḥpunaiḥ” (Verse 36) meaning one who is expert in dharma (ethics) and political economy (Book 2, chap. 2, p. 154). The senior ministers also attribute to Rām other traits of ethical leadership, such as keeping promises, integrity, speaking no ill about others, self-controlled, respecting every virtuous heart.*

When Bharat was appointed as king instead of Rām, because of King Daśaratha keeping his promise as demanded by Queen Kaikeyī, Rām consoled his mother Kausalyā and younger brother Lakshman regarding his decision to go to the forest. Kausalyā in grief orders Rām to stay in Ayodhyā and perform duty to her. In reply to her and to Lakṣmaṇa, Rām uttered.

*Dharmah Hi Paramah Loke Dharme Satyam Pratiṣṭhitam |  
Dharma Saṅsritam Etac Ca Pitur Vacanam Uttamam ||  
(GP, 2014, Vol. 1, p. 275, 2-21-40),*

Dharma is the highest good on earth, truth and dharma are one. My father's command is founded on dharma; hence it is superior to my mother's ruling.

(Book 2, chap. 21, p. 207)

*The dharmic knowledge of Rām was clearly exhibited later through his actions when he maintained his promise even after his father's demise. First, while king Daśaratha was living, Rām honored his father's promise to Queen Kaikayī to exile him to the forest for 14 years and appoint Bharat, her son, as king for Ayodhyā. Then, after their father's death, Bharat with his ministers and mentors came to the forest in search of Rām. When they found Rām, the ministers and mentors tried to persuade Rām to return to Ayodhyā and take back the kingdom. However, Rām told that he promised his father that he will be in the forest for 14 years and then come back. Rām was steadfast in sticking to his promise given to his father. His action of following the path of truth displays Rām at the height of his moral development.*

*Not only did Rām advise his family members about dharmic knowledge, but he instructed kings as well. After shooting an arrow on the monkey king Bali to punish him for his immoral behavior, Rām instructed the dying King Bali about dharma and the consequences of his immoral behavior. Rām emphasized that, "It is the duty of a king to develop the art of government, be established in virtue [dharma], be endowed with valour and know how to estimate time and place" (Book 4, chap. 18, p. 211). Rām described for Bali what dharmic action he should have followed, what he missed, and why he is punishable in the eyes of the law. Even while punishing his enemies, Rām was following dharmic codes.*

### *Trustworthy*

*Rām also exhibited the trait of being "trustworthy." Trust is based upon the "positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another" (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 395). Rām is trustworthy because others experience that he has only positive intentions toward everyone. He is established in the Self-realized trait; therefore, he can spontaneously behave in this way.*

Conscientious is an extension of the trait of trustworthiness. Conscientious means that the leader displays the tendency of being thorough, organized, controlled, dependable, and decisive (Northouse, 2013). Rām

always was a conscientious leader toward the events and activities allocated to him. He executed them in a proper, well organized, and controlled manner. Let us examine a few incidents to understand these aspects of Rām's trait of being conscientious.

The search for his wife Sītā was executed in a well-organized manner in the epic (Books 4–6). Every incident, every event moved toward this goal. First, Rām delegated the authority properly. He sought the friendship with monkey king Sugrīva for this plan, won his friendship, and organized with him the plan to find Sītā. Sugrīva and all the monkey and titan troops would go in search of Sītā. Rām gave Sugrīva a primary role in helping Rām find Sītā.

Sugrīva assembled all the monkeys at the place where Rām was standing to get his command.

Rāma, these untold millions, who inhabit various mountain tracts, traversing land and sea, have come to place themselves at thy service. All are intent on their master's welfare and obedient to thy behests; they are at thy command; it is for thee to dispose of them as thou wilt. Though I am fully conversant with thy design, yet do thou order all as thou judgest best. (Book 4, chap. 39, p. 272)

In reply Rām says the following for the group and gently seeks Sugrīva to be the leader for the troop and lead the troop.

O Dear and Wise Friend, let us learn if Sītā still lives or no and ascertain in what country Rāvaṇ dwells. Then, having come to where Videha's daughter is to be found, we will adopt those measures that circumstances dictate, the hour having been fixed. (Book 4, chap. 39, p. 273)

The monkey king Sugrīva commands troops to go in four directions to search for Sītā. This incident shows how conscientious Rām was in being well planned and thorough in executing his mission.

When Sītā was found to be at Sri Lanka across the sea, again Rām with his friends and allied parties discuss how to cross the sea and organize for the construction of a bridge.

At Rāma's command, those lions among the monkeys entered the mighty forest with alacrity in hundred and thousand on every side and those

leaders of the simian tribes, tearing up the rocks, which in size they resembled, and the trees also dragged them to the sea and they covered the ocean with ... that immense causeway. (Book 6, chap. 21, pp. 53–54)

From these incidents, we can see that Rām is conscientious, being proper, controlled, and well organized in executing the plans to fulfill his goal to find Sītā.

### *Humble*

YUKL (2013, p. 348), in his description of values of ethical leadership, defines a humble person as one who “treats others with respect, avoids status symbols and special privileges, admits limitations and mistakes, is modest about achievements, emphasizes the contributions by others when a collective effort is successful.” Rām treated others with respect, was modest about his achievements, avoided the status symbols and special privileges, and emphasized the contributions of others. The following incidents are examples of how Rām displayed the trait of humility.

Rām was noted for his obedience, his respect toward his elders. This aspect of the trait of humility was very well noted by his father King Daśaratha, who commented that Rām was always “seeking friendship with those eminent in wisdom, learning, age and conduct” and “honoring the learned and aged” (Book 2, chap. 1, p. 149).

Even the learned scholars, seniors, and elderly ministers in Ayodhyā advising King Daśaratha described Rām as “ever courteous, humble, and wise” (Book 2, chap. 1, p. 154). These qualities gave them confidence in appointing Rām as the future king for their country.

An example of the aspect of humility in avoiding special privileges and status is when Rām gave his position of leadership to his friend Sugrīva. According to their plan, a huge monkey troop was gathered by Sugrīva to search for Sītā in different directions. Sugrīva requested Rām to give them all the commands. Rām in his humility utters the following:

O Lord of the Monkeys, it is not for me to command this expedition nor for Lakṣmaṇa; it is thou who must direct it; thou shalt be its leader. Do thou, O Lord, take the command thyself in this matter, thou art fully acquainted with my purpose, O Hero. Thou, the second of my friends, art

full of courage, wise, knowing how to choose the fitting moment, devoted to my true interests, supremely loyal and accomplished. (Book 4, chap. 39, p. 273)

Although Sugrīva was waiting for Rām's command, Rām gave Sugrīva the authority to decide what is right for the situation and to act for the benefit of everyone. One could infer how gently, how humbly Rām gives the full authority to Sugrīva to act according to the situation.

### *Developmental*

*Rām led in such a way that he cultivated the development of leadership in others. In Book 6, Vibhīṣaṇaḥ, the younger brother of the demon king Rāvaṇ, wanted to join Rām's force, as he understood that Rām was fighting for truth and righteousness. Rām assembled all of his friends, the army of monkeys and bears, and his younger brother Lakshman. Rām initiated their participation in discussing whether Vibhīṣaṇaḥ could be accepted to join the team. After opening words by his monkey king friend Sugrīva, Rām addressed the gathering of monkeys with the following words:*

You have heard for yourselves what your Sovereign has expressed in judicious words of deep significance regarding the younger brother of Rāvaṇ; in times of crisis one should always receive the counsel of one who desires the welfare of his friends, and who is intelligent and prudent. (Book 6, chap. 17, p. 38)

*Rām Thus Invited More Views from Other Members of the Monkey Troop. The Other Monkeys Expressed the Following Words to Rām:*

Nothing is unknown to thee in the Three Worlds, O Raghava; it is in deference to us that thou dost consult us as friends. Thou art loyal, brave, pious, established in heroism and dost act only after thou hast considered the matter in accord with tradition with full confidence in thy friends. Let all the intelligent and experienced ministers debate this matter thoroughly, each in his turn. (Book 6, chap. 17, p. 38)

This passage clearly indicates that the monkeys understood that Rām knew what was right, but he loved to gain full confidence from his friends through their participation. During this conversation, initially his friend Sugrīva was opposing the idea of admitting Vibhīṣaṇaḥ as a teammate. After everyone had participated in the discussion, Sugrīva was convinced that Vibhīṣaṇaḥ could become their teammate. The goal of

allowing everyone to participate and agree on admittance of Vibhīṣaṇaḥ was achieved.

In the same way, most of the major decisions, such as *building a bridge across the ocean, searching for Sītā, discussing Bharat's request for Rām to return to the kingdom, deciding on war tactics against Indrajit, and fighting against Rāvan* were made with Rām initiating participation from all members of his troop. With this quality of developmental leadership, he gained their support and concurrence in pursuing the next action.

### *Knowledgeable*

*Throughout the Rāmāyan, Rām showed familiarity with all branches of knowledge, including Vedic knowledge, geography, grammar, and scriptures. This was expressed by Sage Nārada to Sage Vālmīki when narrating Rām's traits (Book 1, chap. 1, verse 4).*

A complete picture of Rām's all-round knowledge is given when he met his brother Bharata in the forest and enquired about everything—the city, administrative practices, security, water place, and also about the different sectors of people in city of Ayodhyā.

Do other monarchs know of thy decisions before they are applied? When thou hast determined upon what must and should be done, dost thou speedily accomplish it? Are lesser kings acquainted with thy determined resolve after the event or before thou hast set it in motion? Are thy forts well supplied with wealth, food, arms, water, armaments, and furnished with archers and bowmen? O Prince, does thy treasury contain more than is needed for thine expenditure? (Book 2, chap. 100, p. 370)

The quote clearly specifies how Rām gave importance for timely decisions and how to manage them. Rām's own timely decision for extending friendship to Sugrīva and accepting Vibhīṣaṇaḥ on his team allowed him to manage finding Sītā most efficiently.

### *Foresighted*

The coding process revealed that Rām displayed leadership traits of being intuitive, strategic, and having the ability to predict future events. The

first incident was found in Book 1, chap. 30 when Rām was protecting the sacred fire performance in the forest for Sage Vishwāmitra.

On this, the two illustrious princes kept watch in the Tapovana forest continuously for six days without sleeping. Armed with bow and arrows they guarded the rishi and his sacrifice with firm resolve. Five days passed without interruption and on the sixth day Shri Rāmachandra said to Lakṣmaṇa:

“Brother, be prepared to-day.” (p. 65)

On the sixth day Rām had the intuition some danger will come to obstruct the fire sacrifice and warned his brother Lakṣmaṇ to be prepared for meeting enemies.

Another example of Rām’s intuition is when he was about to start fighting the brave demons Khara and Dhushan. From the bad omens he saw, he knew in advance the demons would be defeated. Addressing his brother Lakṣmaṇ, he said,

Meseems the cry of wild birds that frequent the woods foretells danger, nay, that the very lives of our foes are in jeopardy. Assuredly a great battle will shortly take place; the twitching of my left arm betokens it. O Hero, for us victory is imminent, and the defeat of the titan assured. (Book 3, chap. 20, p. 51)

Rām also possessed the trait of being strategic, another aspect of foresightedness, as shown in the above-mentioned event about his fight with Khara and Dhushan. Rām strategically planned that Lakṣmaṇ would move Sītā to a safe place and protect her while he dealt single-handed with the titans.

### *Eloquent*

*Rām was often identified as a great communicator. He never uttered any wrong remarks, nor did he criticize. Rām was noted by Sage Nārada as “eloquent” and with a “courteous disposition in speech” (Book 1, chap. 1, p. 4). His speech was noted for pleasant usage of words, soft words, and words appropriate to the situation.*

*One of the most striking incidents noticed in the data was when Rām was appreciating Hanumān’s communication skills. It demonstrated that Rām himself must be an expert communicator.*

This is the minister of the King of the Monkeys, the magnanimous Sugrīva, whom I seek. O Saumitri, answer Sugrīva’s counsellor who is eloquent and warm-hearted and the sub-doer of his foes in courteous terms... His speech is neither lacking in fulness, depth, assurance or distinction; his voice issues from his breast in clear modulated tones. He expresses himself with admirable felicity without any hesitation; his tone is harmonious and moves the heart agreeably. What foe, having drawn his sword, would not be disarmed by the charm of that voice that enunciates each syllable so perfectly. O Irreproachable Prince, the king who employs messengers gifted with such talent is certain to succeed in all his undertakings, since they are enhanced at the very outset, by such *eloquence* [emphasis added]. (Book 4, chap. 3, p. 174)

*In this passage about Hanumān’s speech, Rām gave importance to physical expression, including facial and body language. Furthermore, he suggested that ideal communication is full, with depth, assuring, and with clear tone, including perfect pronunciation of words and syllables. From this example of the category of “eloquent,” one can understand how Rām himself displayed eloquence.*

*Rām is referred to as a person “speaking soft words to all, never returning a harsh answer when treated with contumely” (Book 2, chap. 1, p. 149). King Daśaratha’s senior ministers, describing Rām, who could be a possible regent for the kingdom said,*

Forgiving every injury, a comforter of the afflicted and the distressed, he addresses all with gentleness. Acknowledging every favor received in full measure, self-controlled, true to his word whatever betide, speaking no ill of others, of candid utterance, full of wisdom he ever reveres the aged. (Book 2, chap. 1, p. 154)

*Rām was undisparaging in his own speech and also corrected his younger brother not to speak ill about others. In Book 3, chap. 16, when Lakṣmaṇ complained about his stepmother Queen Kaikeyī for sending Rām to the forest, he utters the following words:*



“How can a woman as cruel as Kaikayī be his mother?” Lakshman says. Rām replies, “She who occupies the second place among the queens, O My Friend, should not be disparaged in any way whatsoever.” (p. 38)

In another incident, Lakshman expressed anger when he saw Bharat with his army force in forest. He felt that Bharat had come to attack his beloved brother. He talked ill about Bharat. Rām replied, “It is improper for thee to speak ill or harshly of Bharata. Those bitter things thou sayest of Bharata, thou hast in fact said of me” (Book 2, chap. 97, p. 374).

### *Appreciative*

Rām also had the trait of appreciating others. In the beginning of Book 6, chap. 1 when Hanumān returns to Kishkinda after successfully finding Sītā at Lanka, the following words were uttered by Rām in appreciation:

The mission that Hanumān has carried out is of great significance and the most arduous in the world; none other could have achieved it, even in thought! Other than Garuda and Vayu, verily I know of no being able to cross the mighty ocean save Hanumān himself. (p. 3)

In Book 6, chap 19, when his brother Lakṣmaṇ was victorious against brave Indrajit, the son of Rāvaṇ, Rām spoke the following words in appreciation for this action:

Thou hast accomplished an auspicious and highly momentous  
feat, O Thou whose exploits are beyond the power of others.

Vibhīṣaṇaḥ and Hanumān too, bore themselves with valour in the great  
fight.

The conqueror of Indra having fallen in combat with thee, under thy  
direction, O Lakṣmaṇa, neither Sītā nor the earth itself would be hard to  
regain. (p. 267)

The following example displays how Rām appreciated even his enemy Rāvaṇ for his courage and bravery. As Rāvaṇ was dying on the battlefield, Rām consoled Rāvaṇ’s brother Vibhīṣaṇaḥ with the following words:

Nay, this hero has not succumbed on account of his lack of prowess! Endowed with burning courage in battle, having displayed the greatest energy, he fell without yielding. One should not mourn for those who, firm in their duty as warriors, for the sake of renown fall on the field of battle.

This path followed by Rāvaṇ was taught to us by the Sages and the warrior class hold it in great honour. The warrior who is slain in battle, should not be mourned, this is the law. He is as dear to me as thee. (Book 6, chap. 111, pp. 317–318)

### *Benevolent*

At the opening of Srimad Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇ, Sage Nārada mentioned benevolence as one of Rām's traits: "Wise, conversant with the ethics code, eloquent...ever-mindful of the good of those dependent on him; true to his promises, benevolent to his subjects, omniscient, renowned for his good deeds, pure, and ever responsive to devotion; meditating on his own essence" (Book 1, chap. 1, p. 4). The category of *Rām's trait of being benevolent encompasses codes like being charitable, friendly, sacrificial, service minded, and respecting elders.*

Rām was altruistic; he was always concerned about the welfare of others. Rām did not display any selfish motive throughout the epic. Rām was always concerned about his people, brother, his relatives, and creatures in the forest more than thinking about himself. Let us see some of the incidents when Rām was more concerned about others than for himself.

When his younger brother Bharat came to the forest to meet Rām, Rām greeted him by expressing his concern for Bharat. At the same time, his concern for the city is shown as follows: "Rām inquires about the city, its welfare and its protection for different classes of peoples living in it" (Book 2, chap. 100, p. 371).

Another aspect of benevolence is sacrifice. Rām had the mindset of sacrificing everything for the greatness of the society and his people. Rām in his promise to his father accepted his exile to the forest. Immediately, he was ready to sacrifice everything even his brother. He stated the following to his mother Kaikayī, "O Mother, by thine order, I am willing to surrender to my brother Bharata, not only the kingdom, but also Sītā, together with every object of desire, my wealth and my life" (Book 2,

chap. 19, p. 199). For the sake of accepting ascetic life, he was ready to even give away all his belongings, desire, and also his life as a king.

### *Attractive*

Throughout the epic Rām was appreciated for his charming physical features such as lotus eyes, long arms, brave shoulders, dark complexion, and hair locks matted on cheeks. Every character in the Rāmāyaṇ spoke of his physical features and beauty. For example, “broad-shouldered, long-armed, possessing a conch-shaped neck and prominent chin, eminent in archery, with a muscular body, arms extending to the knees, and a noble head and brow” (Book 1, chap. 1, p. 3). It is interesting to note that, whereas other characters often remarked about Rām’s physical features, when his father king Daśaratha lists Rām’s traits, he thinks of his behavioral traits of serving others, respecting elders, and his bravery.

### *Invincible*

This category denotes Rām’s brave actions and victorious outcomes. He could not be conquered by anyone. Rām is described as *Dhairiyavān* (courageous) by sage Nārada in his conversation with Sage Vālmīki (Book 1, chap. 1, pp. 4–5), “All the wicked Rākshasas came led by Khara, Dushane and Trishira, to engage in combat with Shri Rām, and were slain by him. Shri Rām slew fourteen thousand Rākshasas who dwelt in that forest.”

In our time, the great challenge is to achieve happiness and success in an increasingly competitive society. To guide those who want to become invincible leaders, management techniques and rules have been proposed. For example, Harung (1999/2021) has presented techniques for developing one’s full potential through the development of consciousness. Okawa (2018) provides rules on how to become an invincible leader who can seize opportunities for continuous success in the face of any difficulty.

Rām expressed the trait of being invincible by performing brave acts. An example of how his bravery was appreciated by others is when he met King Janaka and accepted the challenge of breaking the bow in exchange for Sītā. Other kings couldn’t even lift the bow, but Rām bravely took it up and broke it without exertion.

Shri Rāmachandra with a slight effort, seizing the center of the bow, lifted it up in the presence of thousands of people and without exertion drew it. By the unparalleled strength of the illustrious Rāma, the bow broke into two parts and a sound resembling the fall of a thunderbolt rang forth cleaving the mountains asunder and causing the earth to shake, and on this the people on every side fell insensible, save only Vishwāmītra, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. (Book 1, chap. 67, p. 128)

When the monkeys and Rām's army were discussing whether to admit Vibhīṣaṇaḥ into their troop, everyone was warning Rām that he might be Rāvaṇ's secret agent. Rām showed his confidence in his prowess and capacity when he said,

Whether this titan be ill-intentioned or no, what does it matter, he cannot do me the least mischief. On earth, *Pisachas*, *Danavas* and *Yakshas*, as also the titans can be slain by me with the tip of my finger, if I so desire it, O King of the Monkeys. (Book 6, chap. 18, p. 42)

When Rām fought with ogres and demons and slayed fourteen thousand of them single handily, the angels from heaven were appreciating his invincible power:

Then the Gods and the Charanas assembled and, amazed and delighted, struck their drums, showering flowers on Rāma and saying: "In this great conflict Raghava, by means of his pointed shafts, has in instant slain fourteen thousand demons, able to change their shape at will, with their generals, Khara and Dushana. Great indeed is this exploit of Rāma, versed in the science of the Self." (Book 3, chap. 30, p. 64)

### RELATIONSHIP OF OTHER TRAITS WITH THE CORE CATEGORY—SELF-REALIZED

Rām, being Self-realized was able to exhibit other traits naturally such as Appreciative, Humble, Benevolent, and Eloquent. *Being established in the higher Self, Rām is found to be emotionally controlled in all situations, whether pleasurable or painful. The most striking example of this was his emotional control when he was announced as the king and when it was then denied. Rām exhibits resolute intellect or steady intellect (Sthita Pragyah). This attribute is discussed in the Bhagavad-Gita (Chapter II, verse 55): "He whose mind is unshaken in the midst of sorrows, who amongst pleasures is*

*free from longing, from whom attachment, fear and anger have departed, he is said to be a sage of steady intellect.”*

When the kingdom was offered to him by his father, *Rām* uttered “be it so” and accepted it. On the next day when he was asked to leave the country and go on exile to the forest, then also he uttered “be it so.” Because he was established in the higher Self, *Rām*’s emotional response to both pleasure and sorrow was naturally even, maintaining balance of mind. *Rām* supported dharma, ethical conduct, in honoring his father’s promise made to *Kaikayī* to exile him. *Rām* said to Queen *Kaikayī*, “I wished to preserve dharma” (Book 2, chap. 19, p. 200). *Rām*’s positive response to his mother *Kaikayī*’s desire for him to go to the forest according to his father promise, showed his attitude that he wanted to preserve dharma rather than to acquire wealth and power. One can infer from this that *Rām* was Self-realized.

*The text connects Ram’s quality of invincibility to the core category, Self-realized. Vishwāmitra praises Rām as follows, “I know the high-souled Rām as possessed of true prowess” (GP, 2014, Vol. 1, p. 60, 1-19-13). He also commented that there is “no match for high-souled Rām” (GP, 2014, p. 60, Vol. 1, 1-19-12).*

*Rām* equated himself to the role of sages to protect dharma. A sage does not have to think about his welfare, but from his Self-realized state he lives for the greatness of the society.

From the incident with Queen *Kaikayī* one can also infer *Rām*’s trait of being benevolent. He did not intend to have the kingdom for wealth and power, which would be the usual expectation of one wanting to become the leader.

In the following incident, *Rām*’s trustworthiness is directly connected to his Self-Realized status. *Lakshman*’s mother *Sumitra* convinces *Rām*’s mother *Kausalyā* that she can trust *Rām* to return from the forest. She states, “wherever he dwells in the forest or the city, all is one to him” (Book 2, chap. 44, p. 256). She characterizes him in a supreme level of Self-realization when she declares “all is one to him.”

Successful developmental leadership is natural for *Rām*. Being Self-realized, *Rām* patiently allowed every teammate to voice his opinion and reflect upon the situation. Moreover, he never shut out or turned out anyone who was opposing his views. His soft communication, his patient behavior, and his ability to motivate others to participate in the team indicated that *Rām* displayed naturally the developmental leadership even in a time of crisis (Book 6, chap. 17, p. 42). As a developmental leader, he

usually had a mindset and a view, then he allowed all his teammates to reflect on the situation, and later he brought them all toward the goal which was dharmic to the situation.

The person who is Self-realized will naturally, spontaneously display the trait of being eloquent—soft speech that is pleasant, harmonious, and powerful (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1990, pp. 149–155). Rām’s eloquent speech can be found in many instances, for example, dealing Sage Parasuraman’s rage, meeting Sugrīva, communication with Sage Vishwāmītra, Gautama, Āhalya, and other incidents. One could see he was soft spoken and presenting the topic in a logical way.

From these analyses, one can understand that Rām was observed by every character in the Rāmāyaṇa as being established in higher states of consciousness. This enabled Rām to display the required traits naturally.

## DISCUSSION

While grounded theory does not rely on prior scholarly literature to generate research propositions prior to data collection (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 49; Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 45), during the coding process consideration of prior literature can create theoretical sensitivity and provide insights into the data to get more clarity for theory building (Glaser, 1998). In this section of the paper, I relate the traits of Rām to two streams of extant literature: the first about constructive-development theory and leadership, and the second about Vedic science concepts pertaining to higher states of consciousness.

### CONSTRUCTIVE-DEVELOPMENT THEORY AND LEADERSHIP

Developmental psychologists have identified that there is a range of possible stages of self-development. According to Loevinger (1976), the concept of a developing self refers to the progressive redefinition or reorganization of the self in relation to the social and physical environment and is conceptualized in terms of developmental change in the four domains: character development, cognitive style, interpersonal style, and conscious preoccupations. Loevinger considered it as the master trait.

Individuals at higher stages of self-development are found to display psychological autonomy and integration, wisdom, self-actualization, and moral awareness (Loevinger, 1976; Maslow, 1976). Higher stages of development enable leaders to understand the complex patterns of life

problems with a holistic approach toward the world. However, the highest stages have not been experienced by most individuals (Miller & Cook-Greuter, 1994).

The developmental progression identified by Loevinger has been applied to explain differences in leadership. Merron et al. (1987) observed systematic differences in managerial mindsets and practices among managers testing at different levels of development. Strang and Kuhnert (2009) found that the constructive-developmental stage predicted performance ratings from all rater sources—superiors, peers, and subordinates. Rooke and Torbert (2005) described these levels of development as a difference of action-logics which have consequences for organizational leadership. In these studies, developmental levels are, in effect, a master trait in that developmental differences help explain cognitive, affective, and behavioral differences among leaders.

Rooke and Torbert described some characteristics of a rarely seen highest level of development—which they called Alchemist: “Alchemists are typically charismatic and extremely aware individuals who live by high moral standards. They focus intensely on the truth” (2005, p. 72). Alchemists are leaders who can generate society-wide transformations. Certain leadership traits from our analysis of Rāmāyaṇ can be seen in this depiction of the Alchemist stage of human development.

Cook-Greuter (2000) analyzed empirical data to articulate characteristics of an uncommon advanced level of self-development which she called Unitive. Characteristics of this stage include a perspective on reality that is dynamic, global, and inclusive. The subjects in the research experience what Cook-Greuter calls self-transcendence, which deepens their sense of connectedness. According to Cook-Greuter (2000, p. 237): “The Unitive stage is conceived here as a potential gateway to the transpersonal or spiritual realm of knowing ... as described in the wisdom literature of the East.” The Eastern, Vedic tradition describes higher states of consciousness which are an extension of the range of psychological development beyond what is normally observed in Western psychology.

## DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND LEADERSHIP

As discussed in Subramaniam (2022), Maharishi Vedic Science describes four higher states of consciousness—Transcendental Consciousness,

Cosmic Consciousness, Refined Consciousness, and Unity Consciousness (Alexander et al., 1994; Orme-Johnson, 2000).

In Transcendental Consciousness one experiences pure consciousness, pure knowledge—“the simplest form of human awareness, which is the most intimate, most personal experience possible. There is nothing more simple or more natural” (Pearson, 2016, p. 44). “The knowledge gained in this state when consciousness knows itself, by itself, in its pure unbounded state is an absolute state of knowledge, knowingness” (Pearson, 2016, p. 47). When the state of Transcendental Consciousness is permanently maintained throughout all the changing states of waking, dreaming, and sleeping, one experiences Cosmic Consciousness. When the nervous system is further cultured to experience the finest manifest value of every object along with the permanent experience of the Self, perception of relative existence has been raised to its most refined value in Refined Cosmic Consciousness (Alexander & Boyer, 1989). This culturing takes place through the process of regular transcending to the level of pure consciousness, the Self, through a meditation practice such as Transcendental Meditation, which is in the class of automatic self-transcending meditation (Travis & Shear, 2010). In Unity Consciousness, one’s perception has expanded to the infinite level and one perceives that the essential nature of entire relative life is one’s own Self (Nader, 2012).

The Self-Realized trait identified from our grounded theory analysis appears to correspond with all the higher states of consciousness starting with Cosmic Consciousness. In our discussion of incidents in which Rām refers to others as his very Self, we find expressions consistent with the experience of Unity Consciousness, the highest state of consciousness.

Pure consciousness is viewed as the essential nature of life—an unbounded, unified field of pure intelligence, beyond space and time—which gives rise to all expressed values in the universe, both subjective and objective (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1969; Nader, 2021). The practical implication of opening one’s awareness to this field is said to be a skill in action which “consumes least energy and utilizes the total organizing power of Natural Law (Principle of Least Action) to hit the target with maximum speed and least resistance” (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, 1995, pp. 171–172). The depiction in the Rāmāyaṇ of Rām’s exalted consciousness and his extraordinary leadership effectiveness is consistent with this Vedic knowledge.



A scientifically validated technique to help modern business leaders experience pure consciousness and grow in higher states of consciousness is Transcendental Meditation® (TM®), which has been shown to help develop the ideal leadership traits exemplified by Rām. TM is a simple, natural technique during which the active level of the mind “naturally and effortlessly settles to its own quiet, peaceful, transcendent state of awareness” (Roth, 2018, p. 35).

Some research findings on Transcendental Meditation illustrating the development of some of the leadership traits exemplified by Rām are presented here. Chandler et al. (2005) found high level of principled moral reasoning [ethical] among the subjects studied. Schmidt-Wilk (2000) in her qualitative research conducted among three European top management teams who practiced TM as a management development program recorded improved trust [trustworthy], communication [eloquent], and team relations [developmental], clarity of thinking [knowledgeable], and increased energy, greater resiliency in stressful situations, and improvements in physical and mental health [invincible]. Advanced TM and TM-Sidhi participants having frequent experiences of higher states of consciousness have shown developed intuition [foresighted] (Jedczak et al., 1990). Long-term practitioners of the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program reported that their meditation practice enabled them to cultivate inner experiences of an unshakeable, transcendental inner core, which led to enhanced intuition and broad awareness that embraced the wider interests of the community and environment (Herriott et al., 2009). Harung and Travis (2016) equated peak experiences of musicians, athletes, and successful managers with the experience of transcendence and concluded that such experience seems to bring more orderly functioning of the brain and results in higher moral reasoning [ethical]. With regular practice of TM, the peak experiences of transcendence can be more regular.

## HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS MANAGEMENT

One model applying the development of higher states of consciousness to management is found in Higher Consciousness Management (Maheshwari, 2021), described as Consciousness in Action developed by regular transcending.

Principles of High Consciousness Managers that have been formulated by modern management researchers (Maheshwari, 2021) can be related to Rām's personality traits:

1. *Paradigm—Consciousness is primary.* Rām is established in pure consciousness, he is Self-realized. At the highest development of being Self-realized, he experiences the full awareness of perceiving the Self in everything, experiencing that consciousness is all that there is (Nader, 2021).
2. *Social/Interpersonal—Love is all we need.* Rām exhibits traits that express forms of love such as being benevolent, appreciative, trustworthy, humble, and developmental. The citizens of his country love Rām, reflecting his love for them.
3. *Individual—Unboundarize oneself.* Being Self-realized, established in unbounded awareness, acting in harmony with natural law, Rām's actions are always spontaneously right for the greater good and evolution of society. His perception, having expanded to the infinite level, realizes that the essential nature of everything is his own Self.

## IMPLICATIONS

This research on the leadership of Rām has two implications. The first is to encourage leaders, scholars, and students of leadership to read the Rāmāyaṇ—not just for intellectual exploration about traits of leadership, but for personal transformation. From studying the Rāmāyaṇ one can uncover profound principles of management and leadership. Furthermore, the experience of reading this classic work is such that one feels that noble inclinations are being stimulated in oneself as one engages with the story. Sands (2014) commented on the value of applying the principles of the Rāmāyaṇ to every field of life.

The lessons of Rāmāyaṇ are not limited to general philosophies. There are ideas and principles that can be applied to any area of individual and collective behavior—to professions, academic disciplines, personal interests, and hobbies alike. Whether one is searching for answering to profound truths or seeking advice for life's daily challenges, there is a wealth of guidance available to everyone. (p. 1)

The second implication derives from understanding Rāmāyaṇ from the perspective of development of consciousness. This perspective encourages practices leading to the full development of consciousness. It is consistent with the causal model of spiritual leadership in Fry (2008), which locates spiritual practices at the core of spiritual leadership. As one becomes more Self-realized one will awaken in oneself greater degrees of leadership qualities—such as ethics, humility, benevolence, eloquence, and foresight—exemplified in the story of Rām.

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