

CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF ROBIN SHARMA'S FABLE *THE LEADER WHO HAD NO TITLE*

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Abstract - Robin had been sharing his experiences with Fortune 500 Companies. He could discover the powerful system and the strategy behind the success of world's richest people and companies like Nike, FedEx, Microsoft, and so on. His blockbusters like *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari* and *The Greatness Guide* has accredited him with one of the most respected leadership advisors in the world. In a survey of 22,000 business people, he was ranked in the Top 5 leadership gurus worldwide. He affirms that one can be a superstar if one seizes every opportunity, brings about intense innovation, adopts ways to become physically and mentally strong, and ultimately transforms his life and the world around him. He feels that one has to be a 'merchant of wow' with his customers to be a great leader. Darren Hardy, publisher of SUCCESS Magazine says 'If you want to operate at the level of 'WOW', be an exceptional leader, and live life 'full out', buy this book.' The book preludes remarkably that "each of us is born into genius. Sadly, most of us die amid mediocrity." "Leadership is for everyone. And in this period of dazzling change in business and society, it really is the single most important discipline required to win." (p.27). The foundation principle is self-discipline which forms the basis of this book. He beautifully says, "We all need to lead where we are planted and shine where we now find ourselves" (p.17).

Acronyms -

- LWT Leadership without title
- SEW Seriously exceptional work
- BIW Best in the world
- SHINE See clearly, Health is Wealth, Inspiration matters, Neglect Not your Family, Elevate your lifestyle
- SPARK Speak with Candor, Prioritize, Adversity Breeds Opportunity, Respond versus React, Kudos for Everyone
- HUMAN Helpfulness Understanding Mingle amuse Nurture

He also emphasizes on attaining a balance in between Personal and Professional life which is an essential trait in a good leader. Everytime he talks of a post or a position which does not count at all in attaining success of a person. Sharma generates positivity by saying that tough times build great leaders. Basically one needs to be a great person, only then one can be a great leader. One who gives his best, irrespective of his post or position, is a leader. Such a person unleashes his energy to the utmost and becomes successful. He excellently says that leadership is not the privilege of a few individuals. Neale Donald Walsch rightly claims that "Life begins at the end of your comfort zone."

Robin Sharma is International Best Selling Author whose books have 1.5 Million Copies Sold in India. His books are based on his fifteen years of research, his experience as legal advisor to many renowned companies like Nike, IBM, Microsoft, and many other esteemed organisations like American Red Cross, Yale University, and so on. The author wishes to bring about a revolution in ideas, productivity, and customer satisfaction. He acts as an advisor not only to individual's professional life, but even to their personal life. The commendable thing is that he guides them to maintain a balance in between the two. Robin appears to be a great admirer and supporter of Dr. Martin Luther King who believed that one should perform his duty so well, irrespective of one's designation, that others would pause to say,

like Luther said about a sweeper, "Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well."

Robin Sharma's fable 'The Leader Who Had No Title', has inspired millions to lead in one's Profession without having a title. Such a personality according to the author, cannot only inspire but rule the whole world. This signifies one's dedication and commitment to work, his love for his profession and the organisation and the group which he serves. Such a person can even make those jealous who are superior and have title, and enjoy the privileges. Such leaders have passion for work and do not crave for money or material pursuits. Without the title, and the expectation to be rewarded, they proceed in life towards success and spiritual attainments. Finally, they prove themselves to be real heroes with a lot of credentials and laurels. Sharma vehemently asserts in the first chapter which is titled "Leadership and success is one's birthright" (Sharma, p.1), that no one can stop an individual for being in his best form, if one is committed to work. One would like to refute Sharma's viewpoint on the basis that if a person does not have a title, then why others would pay heed to him. If one is without title, it can be presumed that one is powerless. Then he may not be in a commanding position. And so the question arises if a person is not a man of chair, why he will be listened to, and for how long. But this he refutes as his findings are based on his 15 years of research, that too, in world class companies. But a critic may also base his readings on real-life experiences. The narrator

Blake Davis encounters his mentor-- Tommy Flinn, in his book-store in New York City who says: "Being your manager is the least of my dreams. Titles don't interest me at all. Doing my best work is all that matters to me..., but I've been ranked the number-one employee of this book company for the past five years straight(Sharma, p.8). Sharma signifies the role of a leader so as to enable others to be the 'rockstar' at work. One cannot aim mere at survival. Furthermore, he asserts that to get a sound sleep at night, one needs to give one's best performance. He even feels that the more challenging the situations are, the more spectacular the opportunities are. Tommy as a Mentor tries his best to advise Blake who feels astonished to see him in his book-store, which he calls to be a sinking-ship. He acts as his mentor by saying that " Don't worry, Blake, getting lost along your path is a part of finding the path you're meant to be on. Sometimes we need to get off track before we can develop the clarity to be on track. All through you've gone through...,has been preparation....Life's had to break you down so you could be rebuilt better...,you'll be the rock star of this whole book company....One of the perks of winning the Number-One Bookseller in America award, along with the cash and the trip down to the Caribbean.... people give you a standing ovation....(Sharma,p.10).What Blake logically questions is that if Tommy commits to be his mentor, and if he really feels that one would be successful in business after few setbacks, then why he himself could not even join the book-store that time as a Manager. Tommy then convinces saying that what is most important in a job is the satisfaction which he could get, he worked with the purpose of getting happiness. He could enlarge his friend circle, could be creative in his job, and solve many business problems. He admits the fact that to have a World Class Career, along with attaining complete happiness in Personal life, one needs to awaken one's natural power. Though Tommy is Seventy-Seven, he feels energetic and zestful, and enjoyed inspiring others to be successful. He feels that one can possess LWT, and can SEW, and can be BIW. It means one can have Leadership Without Title, and can perform Seriously Exceptional Work, and can be the Best in the World. Robin has beautifully used many acronyms in his book, viz., SPARK, HUMAN, SHINE and many more.

Robin defines Leadership in a novel manner. He feels that every individual has potential, has leadership qualities. And so every person's leadership has to be strengthened so as to grow and prosper the company. It signifies that every individual has worth, everyone is important to grow the company-- right from CEO to the Operatives, everyone has a crucial role to play. No level of hierarchy can be ignored for attaining growth and success of the company. What is then required is the sincerity and the seriousness to survive as well as to thrive in fast growing economy. Robin seems to change everyone's perception that only few

leaders run an enterprise. He feels that if every individual demonstrates his leadership, works to his utmost capacity, success will easily be achieved. He is inspired by Mother Teresa who said, " If everyone would sweep their own doorstep, the whole world will be clean." Robin adds to the idea that every individual is important as, "What would happen to the sound of a symphony if even one of its players was out of tune and less than superb at his art?"(Sharma, p.15).

Robin at times seems to be too much positive, which does not appear to be a real-life situation. This is more prominent in the lines when he says that, "Everyone needs to drive innovation. Everyone needs to inspire their teammates. Everyone needs to embrace change. Everyone needs to take responsibility for results. Everyone needs to be positive. Everyone needs to become devoted to expressing their absolute best." (Sharma,p.16). When everyone has become so attuned to our hierarchy, everyone tries to pull the other person to get the applause. And if one becomes Mr. Humble and benevolent to admire others, to give others a chance to show their leadership qualities, one would be left alone with no motivation, no admiration, no chance to show his talent. He will become saturated and stagnant, with no sign of progress. All his leadership qualities will be in vain, all his knowledge and confidence will not be able to survive the blow given by others. He will never be promoted to upper ladder. Satisfaction comes through the designation, because only then you enjoy the privileges which come with it. Power is worshipped, and so is the chair. A person with no chair, is with no power. And in such a case he is not given a patient hearing. An advice cannot be given, and will not be given a patient hearing unless that comes from a person who is resourceful and has power. To understand the author's words, one needs more maturity and more experience. Robin clarifies on the other hand that, " I'm not at all saying that an organisation should not have titles. They should, actually. We need the people on the executive team setting the vision, steering the boat, and holding ultimate responsibility for the results. Titles and structures maintain order and keep everything running smoothly"(Sharma,P.16). This seems to contradict with the fact that if few have to ultimately take the responsibility, if few have to be answerable, if few get the praise of the better performance, if few come to limelight of the results, why each one would be enthusiastic to be the leader and shoulder responsibility. Saying is easy, but doing is difficult. Even if one becomes a leader, tries to influence others without the title, how long would he be zealous. A time will come when he would crave for praise and admiration which accompanies designation. A person without motivation is a person without the spirit. A person without designation has no identity, a person with no aspirations for growth would be a person with no emotions. He would be without the zest for

living. For majority of the people, title, I personally feel matters. With title comes a sense of responsibility, a zeal to perform to the utmost capacity. A handful may be those who don't crave for title, may be for the reason that they have already tasted the things, may be they already have enjoyed the title, enjoyed all the privileges, enjoyed all the good things of their life and career. And now their life is full to the brim, and so they wish to pause, work only for their satisfaction, forgoing others. And so become the advisors, may be at the age of sixty when one has already lived his life to the fullest, with no more wishes left to be fulfilled. The pace at which the things move in a book, the excitement which seems to be there in life bringing changes, are much more animated and interesting than what is in real life. Robin also says that the less you think of money, your personal gains, the more you work for your company and become great leaders. This seems to contradict with the human behaviour where money comes first for us, next comes our responsibility. The proverb says as we sow, so we reap. But we say what we reap if we sow. Our growth comes first, next comes the growth of the company. This human behaviour, our basic nature of selfishness cannot make us good leaders. Tommy, the mentors, wins over man's basic nature of getting money. The more he resisted getting titles, the more he denied getting money; the more he got it. In his Business Card, he used his designation as 'Human Being', which is one of the acronyms used by the author.

What Robin brilliantly says seems to be correct. The less a man thinks about salary, the more he is able to concentrate on his job, the more he reflects his leadership qualities, and the more he becomes successful. He quotes the case of Roosevelt, Mandela, Edison or Einstein, and emphasizes that they became great not because of money, but because of their passion for work. He feels that firstly one should give one's best. Automatically he would receive as per his efforts. The foundation of it all is self-leadership. If you can't lead yourself, you'll never be able to lead anyone around you. Getting up an hour early gives fresh thirty hours to a leader in a month. As life is short, the titles, net worth, and social position become unimportant at the end. Sharma mentions 10 human regrets which a man would have if he reaches his grave without exhibiting his leadership qualities. He feels that it's not worth living a life without showing dare to accept the mission of showing improvement in the world around. He strongly feels that the leader should not blame his manager for lack of his good performance. Nor can he blame his past for the same. He will have to take the responsibility for the outcome or the results achieved by him, as it was his actions and his leadership which led to the results. The mentor rightly suggests that, "Anyone can reach success if they consistently do the right things. And these little choices and small behaviours build up

over time....makes me think of a farmer....Seeds get planted....The crop gets watered, and the soil gets fertilized. Nothing seems to be happening....yet the farmer doesn't give up....The farmer has patience and trusts the process "(p.36-37). Robin supports a good proportion of emotion, energy, and passion for bringing about a sustained change. He talks about second grade marked, "The 10 Human Victories". According to him, it would be a stage in which one would attain an end full of bliss and happiness. A great leader would attain a level of excellence where one would support positive people against the ones who knock them down. Such a leader would be loved and adored and would be a "real hero". He quotes Albert Einstein, "Great spirits have always encountered opposition from mediocre minds. Just go do your work as well as you can humanly do it. The rest will take care of itself (p.51). Robin supports '4 Natural Powers', which a true hero has. This he says cannot be taken away, it cannot be lost. He admits that, "Titles do bring power, Blake. But the problem with the type of power they bring is that if the title gets taken away, the power gets lost"(p.52). He accepts the fact that the leader need to SHINE, SPARK and be HUMAN. One has to be compassionate, bold, and courageous. Such a person seems to be an extraordinary man, would be a 'true hero'. For such a leader, Robin feels that the last day of his life would be the best day of his life(p.196). Robin does accept the fact that in the era of globalisation, working with 'no title' seems to be super-scary. But he optimistically feels that the more time one spends outside the comfort zone, the more qualities one develops of a leader. He excellently quotes that, "Turbulent Times Build Great Leaders"(p.92). It seems he accepts that a person will have to undergo pain, without the title, but he does support Lance Armstrong that, "Pain is temporary. Quitting lasts forever"(p.85). He vehemently supports the great leader Gandhi who said that, "I will not allow others to walk through my mind with their dirty feet"(p.175). It seems Robin expects a person to be an ascetic who leads a life with ordinary men, but without greed, is above one's selfish motive, works tirelessly for human cause. Such a man cannot really be an ordinary man, but a saint who has been blessed by God himself.

List of References

- [1] Sharma, Robin. The Leader Who Had No Title. New York: Free Press, 2010, p.27.
- [2] Ibid, p.17.
- [3] Ibid, p.1.4 ---, Ibid, p.8.
- [4] Ibid, p.10.6---, Ibid, p.15.7---, Ibid, p.16.
- [5] Ibid, p.16.
- [6] Ibid, p.36-37.
- [7] Ibid, p.51.
- [8] Ibid, p.52.
- [9] Ibid, p.196.
- [10] Ibid, p.92.
- [11] Ibid, p.85.
- [12] Ibid, p.175.