



A Servant Leader, by Vinoba Bhave

To progress, society doesn't need 'leaders' anymore. This doesn't mean that we won't have great men amidst us. I think great men will come and they will be vital for progress of humanity, but they will be so great that they will refuse to take up this position of leadership. People will not follow the great men, but will listen to their thoughts, philosophies and views and through their sharing, society will find its way forward.

Take a look at the Bhoodan (Land Gift) Movement, for example. Because it was entirely executed while walking, there was never any centralized leadership. If you think about it, the Buddha too, walked on foot for thousands of kilometres with a few simple thoughts. Yet, because those thoughts were worthy, and he lived in complete harmony with those thoughts, they have spread across the world and are valid even two and a half millennia later.

Any change, any revolution for the people always occurs in one place, but the winds carry them far and wide. Similarly, because we walk, the leadership that is created is always local. In fact, I would like to restate it and say that we aren't creating local leaders, but local servants.

When we approach people as their servants, we appeal to their hearts and they are moved to gift land to their brothers. In fact, our real strength lies in the fact that we are servants. The divinity in each and every person can be witnessed and reached, only when you approach them as a faithful servant.

Think of how the various organs and limbs come together as servants to our body. If somebody tries to strike your head, the hand comes forth to protect it. It does not do so out of an expectation or out of fear. It does it because it sees itself as part of the whole and therefore works out of a sense of duty.

When we will all see our role in society as servants, we will all light up the sky together like countless stars on a dark night. Don't think of society as the sky on a full moon night. The moon's harsh light blinds us to the true and humble work of the stars. But on a moonless night, the true servants shine forth, as though they are connected invisibly in this vast and infinite cosmos.

--Vinoba Bhave

