



LIFE SKILLS IN RAMCHARITMANAS

Bharti Rathore

Assistant Professor, Waymade College of Education, Vallabh Vidyanagar

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Abstract

Life Skills refer to the ability to maintain the state of mental and physical well-being while interacting with others within the local culture and environment. It refers the skills required to live life happily without any stress and tension. This seems to be a new word to intellectuals but it is surprising and amazing to know that our ancestors and forefathers were more farsighted and knowledgeable as there is sufficient description of life skills in our epics which enable a person to live life smoothly, happily and blissfully without any tension or stress. In Ramcharitmanas, Goswami Tulsidas has illustrated the life skills by providing exemplary instances of the ideal and model characters of Sri Ram, Sita, Laxman, Shatrughan, Bharat, Hanumanji and Urmila. Key words: Sundar Kand, Interpersonal Skills and environment savvy.

Keywords: Life skills, Ramcharitmanas, tulsidas, value education

Life Skills refer to the ability to maintain the state of mental and physical well-being while interacting with others within the local culture and environment. It refers the skills required to live life happily without any stress and tension. This seems to be a new word to intellectuals but it is surprising and amazing to know that our ancestors and forefathers were more farsighted and knowledgeable as there is sufficient description of life skills in our epics which enable a person to live life smoothly, happily and blissfully without any tension or stress. In Ramcharitmanas, Goswami Tulsidas has illustrated the life skills by providing exemplary instances of the ideal and model characters of Sri Ram, Seeta, Laxman, Shatrughan, Bharat, Hanumanji and Urmila. All these model characters if studied properly provide us opportunities to live life fruitfully in this world. To live life in such a way that the pure and virtuous life becomes a source of not only moral and spiritual progress but also provides opportunity for social upliftment. That is why the researcher has selected Ramcharitmanas to find out the life skills followed by our great persons which made them immortal and ideal in the eyes of all Indians.

Research Questions:

- What are the life skills presented in Ramcharitmanas?
- What are the problem solving skills presented in Ramcharitmanas?
- What are the management skills presented in Ramcharitmanas?
- What are the Interpersonal skills presented in Ramcharitmanas?
- What are the skills required to control oneself as presented in Ramcharitmanas?
- What are the organisational skills presented in Ramcharitmanas?
- What are the environment savvy skills presented in Ramcharitmanas?
- What are the decision making skills presented in Ramcharitmanas?

Objectives

The researcher has studied the famous scripture with following objectives: To study the life skills presented in Ramcharitmanas. To study the problem solving skills presented in Ramcharitmanas. To study the management skills presented in Ramcharitmanas. To study the interpersonal skills presented in Ramcharitmanas. To study the environment savvy skills presented in Ramcharitmanas. To study the decision making skills presented in Ramcharitmanas. To study communication skills presented in Ramcharitmanas.

Methodology Adopted

The researcher studied the holy book with full concentration and noted quatrains and couplets related with life skills. After that the researcher again studied the pious and holy scripture and noted them according to different life skills. The researcher noted following life skills in the famous book.

Problem Solving & Decision Making Skills

These skills help us to solve our problems and we can find our own way from miserable and difficult uncertain conditions. They show us how to solve the problems just like Hanuman and take appropriate decision. In Sundarkand when Hanuman goes to Lanka for search of Sita, he faces so many problems in his way but he kills Sursa, the lady demon through his cleverness as he first enlarges himself then minimizes himself and thus comes out of the mouth of the lady demon like a mosquito:

जस जस सुरसा बदन बढावा। तासु दून कपि रूप देखावा।।
सत जोजन तेहि आनन कीन्हा। अति लघु रूप पवनसुत लीन्हा।।
बदन पडिठि पुनि बाहेर आवा। मागा बिदा ताहि सिरु नावा।।
मोहि सुरन्ह जेहि लागि पठावा। बुधि बल मरमु तोर मै पावा।।

Skill of living in harmony with nature

Lord Ram dutifully accepts his father's wish to go to forest and stay there for fourteen years away from the luxuries and amenities of life due to him being the son of a great king of powerful empire. He says that due to the blessings of his father there will be all types of comforts even in the

forest. Staying in a small cottage surviving only on fruits and vegetables Ram presents a perfect example how a person can enjoy the perfect bliss in the soothing surroundings of nature far away from the mundane realities of this world. The great poet Tulsi Das with his master-stroke exhibits the peace and joy experienced by the great Lord amid the peace and serenity of nature. Guha, the boatman who helped Ram to cross the river tells Bharat that surrounded by beautiful trees laden with leaves and fruits, Ram's cottage made up of tree leaves exists. Existing near flowing river, this cottage is surrounded by plants and trees planted by Sita and Luxman. A sitting place is also constructed by Sita under the shadowy banyan tree.

बताना छायाँ बेदिका बनाई । सियँ निज पानि सरोज सुहाई ॥
नील सघन पल्लव फल लाला । अबिरल छाहँ सुखद सब काला ॥

The forest has the blessing of a holy river which destroys sins of all those who take bath in it. Fresh ever-flowing river water and slow air flows at the Kamadgiri hill where Ram stays-
राम सैल बन देखन जाहीं । जहँ सुख सकल सकल दुख नाही ॥

झरना झरहि सुधासम बारी । त्रिविध तापहर त्रिविध बयारी ॥

Ram's spiritual interpretation of the universe coupled with a rich and yet delicate appreciation of the beauties of the physical world is really exhilarating. It invariably presents Ram's desire to protect and appreciate nature and human beings in unadulterated form, devoid of all artificiality. Ram presents his inmost self and his pathetic state after the kidnapping of his beloved and devoted life-partner Sita by contrasting his mental state with the joy and happiness of nature. Even at the time of his extreme sorrow when Ravan takes away Sita deceptively Lord Ram does not denounce the forest for all his sufferings but tries to seek solace amidst natural surroundings. The sad and poignant words uttered by Ram to express his unfathomable sorrow at the separation from his beloved wife Sita presents how Ram is able to perceive similarities between animal kingdom and human-beings. After all it is the same God Who has created both.

श्रीफल कनक कदलि हरषाहीं । नेकु न संक सकुच मन माहीं ॥

सुनु जानकी तोहि बिनु आजू । हरषे सकल पाइ जनु राजू ॥

Noble, eloquent and superb imagery well expresses the poignant grief at the heart of the Lord. It also presents a close bond and affinity between man and nature.

हमहि देखि मृग निकर पराहीं । मृगी कहहि तुम्ह कहँ भय नाही ॥

तुम्ह आनंद करहु मृग जाए । कंचन मृग खोजन ए आए ॥

In his later years Ram establishes Ramrajya which can be rightly considered as a sort of model or ideal kingdom where not only human beings but also birds and animals live happily and blissfully under the paternal shelter of one of the most admired, loved and admired Lord.

लता बिटप मार्गे मधु चवहीं । मनभावतो धेनु पय स्नवहीं ॥
ससि संपन्न सदा रह धरनी । त्रेताँ भइ कृतजुग कै करनी ॥

Skill of Empathy

Though born to a king, prince Ram heartily appreciates the simple tribal folks and accepts simple presents from them as it is described in the holy book. roaming in the forest. Not only birds, plants, trees and animals are lovely but simple and rustic tribals with simple characteristics have chaste tenderness and freshness devoid of undue disadvantages of artificial ornamentation of civilized life. Kol, Kirat, Bhil (Names of different tribes) bring tasty honey, roots and fruits. They offer humbly and modestly different types of tasty food and do not accept anything in return. Ram accepts their offers with love.

सबहि देहिं करि बिनय प्रनामा । कहि कहि स्वाद भेद गुन नामा ॥

देहिं लोग बहु मोल न लेहीं । फेरत राम दोहाई देहीं ॥

The words spoken by simple rustic tribals show their boundless love and affection for Ram and in turn also Ram's unadulterated regard for these simple, unassuming rustic people. His sympathies are truly democratic as he loves these simple humans with elemental and primal qualities.

यह जियँ जानि सँकोचु तजि कैर छोहु लखि नेहु ।

हमहि कृतारथ करन लागि फल तून अंकुर लेहु ॥

With his breadth and vigour of imagination, the great poet has presented the simple forest people with wonderful psychological insight. Their description is realistic as well as shows their real status in society. They feel so blessed in the presence of Lord Ram that they have no hesitation in frankly accepting their weaknesses and faults also. They experience a sort of divine blessedness before the Lord and feel a transformation in their lives because of his influence which can redeem all their sins.

जब तँ प्रभु पद पदुम निहारे । मिटे दुसह दुख दोष हमारे ॥

बचन सुनत पुरजन अनुरागे । तिन्ह के भाग सराहन लागे ॥

Enriching and glorifying experience of being with the Lord seems to them the most memorable event in their lives. These simple rustic folks are really the sons and daughters of bountiful nature who have taken upon themselves the responsibility of preserving nature. Instead of distancing himself from simple tribals, our Lord Ram provides them enriching and inspiring experience to elevate them spiritually-
लागे सराहन भाग सब अनुराग बचन सुनावहीं ।

बोलनि मिलनि सिय राम चरन सनेहु लखि सुखु पावहीं ॥

Skill of Managing Human Resource

The ideal picture of Ram, his impeccable pious, moral nature and virtuous character has been a role model for Indians for generations. Almost all great writers and poets have dealt

with one or other aspect of his life. As a great poet Maithili Sharan Gupta has said—

राम तुम्हारा जीवन स्वयं एक काव्य है ।
कोई कवि बन जाये सहज सामान्य है ॥

Ram, as embodiment of all virtues also possesses a great gift to captivate and attract all human beings. He is able to inspire unflinching devotion and loyalty among all whom he meets. Selfless, egoless, humble, polite Ram believes in the modern concept of equity, equality and fraternity. These qualities make him a good manager of human resource. Illiterate, uncultured, forest tribals drawn from his pure love turn out to be his faithful followers. As presented in the book purity of heart and intentions created an aura around him making him a charismatic figure who inspires faithful loyalty from even rustic people. They are eager to accept their faults innocently before the Lord. They consider themselves lucky in being able to serve him. From the modern narrow selfish outlook it looks strange that a man having nothing as his possession can claim so much devotion and respect from the people. It might be called supreme skill of managing human beings by accepting their weaknesses, faults, drawbacks, follies and foibles. Forest folks consider this as greatness of the Lord-

तुम्ह प्रिय पाहुने बन पगु धारे । सेवा जोगु न भाग हमारे ॥
देब काह हम तुम्हहि गोसाँई । ईधनु पात किरात मिताई ॥
यह हमारि अति बड़ि सेवकाई । लेहि न बासन बसन चोराई ॥
हम जड़ जीव जीव गन घाती । कुटिल कुचाली कुमति कुजाती ॥

Ram is not only able to enchant and enthrall the tribals with his personal qualities but also influences learned rishis and munis of the forest. His meeting with great rishis like rishi Atri, Suthikshan and Augusteya could be perceived as his way of creating a support system in that dense wild forest. On the basis of mutual give and take he promises to protect the munis from the attacks of demons. It is on the positive suggestions and advice of Rishi Augusteya that Ram decides to stay at Panchvati, near Godavari river as he knows well that local people have more authoritative knowledge about that.

है प्रभु परम मनोहर ठाऊँ । पावन पंचवटी तेहि नाऊँ ॥
दंडक बन पुनीत प्रभु करहूँ । उग्र साप मुनिबर कर हरहूँ ॥

Social Skills

When Sita is kidnapped forcefully by the great demon king Ravan, Ram is pragmatic enough to seek the help of monkey clan staying in the forest. He is able to seek help and support of Hanuman and Sugriva. Both of them become instrumental in getting back his beautiful and devoted wife.

सुनु कपि जियँ मानसि जनि ऊना । तै मम प्रिय लछिमन ते दूना ॥
समदरसी मोहि कह सब कोऊ । सेवक प्रिय अनन्य गति सोऊ

Like Ram, his friend and loyal servant Hanuman is also very pragmatic and socially intelligent. He is quick to perceive that in this agnostic environment, he can garner support from Vibhishan, who has saintly characteristics—to know about the whereabouts of Sita.

राम राम तेहिँ सुमिरन कीन्हा । हृदयँ हरष मपि सज्जन चीन्हा ॥
एहिँ सन हठि करिहँ पहिचानी । साधु ते होइ न कारज हानी ॥

In fact it is Hanuman who prepares the foundation for long-lasting friendship between him and Ram. Even when some of his supporters are sceptical about Vibhishan, Ram is quick to recognize his worth and provides him not only shelter but promises him to make him king of Lanka in future.

जदपि सखा तव इच्छा नाही । मोर दरसु अमोध जग माहीं ॥
अस कहि राम तिलक तेहि सारा । सुमन बृष्टि नभ भई अपारा ॥

Skill of management

It is due to his superb management and organizational skill that Lord Ram is able to get victory over one of the mightiest and most affluent king, Lanka which was at the peak of affluence and prosperity and has all the resources, arms, weapons and skilled warriors can not withstand the medley crowd of monkeys, bears and human beings. Lanka is thus described by Goswami Tulsidas—

कनक कोट बिचित्र मनि कृत सुंदरायतना धना ।
चउहट हट सुबट बीथीँ चारु पुर बहु बिधि बना ॥

Without any possession and support he defeats the powerful and knowledgeable king ruling over such an affluent kingdom. It might be considered as a sheer miracle or it can be said that managing resources well gives him added advantage and he is like a hermit king who amidst all trials and tribulations is able to carve out his path for success and excellence. Greatest quality of Ram is his identifying himself with the human conditions and human predicament. That is why Ram captures the Indian imagination, perhaps enslaves it, binding it with chains of love and devotion.

Skill of Controlling Self

The most important component of life skill is managing oneself. A person having good life skills should be able to manage his emotions and sentiments according to circumstances. He is not swayed by the turbulence of emotions but is able to express himself judiciously. His stoic calm at the time of great turmoil and unexpected turn of events which made the crown prince at one stroke of cruel destiny and fate an exiled hermit is really appreciable. His large-heartedness, positive attitude, perseverance and calm at the face of adversities make him a real hero.

नव गयंदु रधुबीर मनु राजु अलान समान ।
छूट जानि बन गवनु सुनि उर अनंदु अधिकान ॥

धरम धुरीन धरम गति जानी । कहेउ मातु सन अति मृदु बानी ॥
पिताँ दीन्ह मिहि कानन राजू । जहँ सब भाँति मोर बड़ काजू ॥



Even when Sita is forcibly taken by Ravan, the demon king he expresses his deep sorrow in very controlled manner-

हे खग मृग हे मधुकर श्रेणी । तुम्ह देखी सीता मृगनेनी ॥
खंजन सुक कपोत मृग मीना । मधुप निकर कोकिला प्रबीना ॥

His self-control is visible when he decides to send Angad for reconciliation. As a self-controlled person thinking of the peace and welfare of all, he does not want war even if Ravan has done great injustice with him. In spite of his bravery and boundless energy, he is polite and humble enough to even request sea to give passage to reach Lanka.

Skill of Managing Relations

Ramcharitmanas presents an ideal picture of all the relations. How should a brother behave with his brother, a son with his father, wife with her husband? An ideal picture of all earthly and worldly relations is present in this. In this century marred with tensions and strife, even relations have short life. This great book teaches us that relations can be managed even amid tribulations and turmoil of adverse circumstances. Ram though dethroned and sent to exile by his intriguing step mother does not harbour any ill will and accepts it as a part of his destiny and even expresses his happiness at the idea of being able to have the pleasure of meeting saints and seers in the forest and to have the opportunity to pass his days in the lap of nature.

सुनु जननी सोइ सुतु बडभागी । जो पितु मातु बचन अनुरागी ॥
तनय मातु पितु तोषनिहरा । दुर्लभ जननि सकल संसारा ॥

His deep love and affection for all make everyone love him boundlessly and everybody wants him to be their king. That is why even Bharat goes to the forest to requests him to come back .Sita, an epitome of ideal wife is happy even amidst the hardships of forest as she is in the company of her beloved husband..Bharat, Laxman, Shatrughan –all have characteristics of ideal brothers and are not hesitant to sacrifice even their lives for each other. Indian tradition of mutual love and respect is seen at its highest. Though having independent will and self-decision, they show utmost reverence to relations, revere the elders, love younger ones and are respectful to knowledgeable Rishis but also treat common public with utmost concern. These are really management lessons to be learnt by modern generation who though sitting at the helm of material opulence lacks proper management and thus not able to enjoy bliss of true happiness. Instead of using boring and uninteresting lessons for teaching management our forefathers were able to teach them through interesting stories.

Findings

Thus Ramcharitmanas is really a very sacred scripture enabling us to learn the life skills of problem solving, decision making, interpersonal and social skills as well as

skills of empathy and appreciating nature and environment. If we can learn even a one percent from the life of the Lord, our lives will change.

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