

has agency nor a structure. This has changed the meaning of authority. Commanders like **Bismarck** to leaders like **Gandhi** had authority because masses pooled in their power into these pioneers. Democracy has institutionalized this principle by the idea of universal enfranchisement. One man one vote is built on the concept that power is dispersed everywhere.

Therefore, it is evident that command is no longer a discretionary entity. It cannot be given at the whims of the commander. The sanctity of command holds until it attracts compliance. An imperative statement becomes a decree only if people obey. Thus, to command one needs obedience.

### What is obedience?

Obedience means compliance with an order, request, law or submission to another's authority. It is behavior that is respectful and mindful of norms, rules and laws. It is a cherished value and all societies try to inculcate obedience in their members. **Obedience ensures compliance** and can ease the emergence of commanders and power structures. Lack of the same results in anarchy.

Obedience is highly admired and appreciated. It is seen as a cherished value. But, being obedient is a choice and not an obligation. It does not mean giving up one's opinions and choices. Obedience is not conforming to peer pressure. It is humping oneself to a superior figure or ideology. It is accepting the fact that there is scope for improvement via toeing the line drawn by someone else. It is humping oneself in front of a superior figure. For example, Jawaharlal Nehru did not agree with every word of Gandhiji. But he still considered him as a commander and showed obedience to his decrees.

Obedience is beneficial for all stakeholders. The satisfaction from obeying a superior's orders can be self-fulfilling and self-disciplining. This adds to the happiness and maturity of a person. This maturity and experience helps in making good decisions, comprehending issues rightly and dealing with difficult situations effectively.

This highlights how crucial obedience is for a person. It shapes one's personality in a way that they are able to be receptive about the lessons that are being taught to them. It helps one to learn from others' experiences. Obedience creates followership and as shown by **Robert Kelly in The Power of Followership**, leadership affects an organization's success or failure by only 20 percent. So, followers can influence the organization's success by as much as 80 percent. Therefore, it would be correct to say that good followers matter as much as good leaders. And to become a good follower, one needs to learn to obey.

### Followers today, Leaders tomorrow

Learning to obey is one of the core prerequisites of becoming a leader. No leader in the world has become great without being dedicated, honest, disciplined and dutiful. They all are inseparable characteristics of obedience. Most of the leaders have learned to lead by taking on the strengths and characteristics of other great leaders. **Gandhiji's source of inspiration were greats like Tolstoy and G.K Gokhale.**

Good followers have effective '**ego management**'. They are ready to be humbled by the acceptance of an existing order. They have no "I" in any achievement. They give credit to the whole group and accept the impact of the presence of an able leader on the outcome. For instance, a team might have won because of exemplary performance by a player but if they are a good follower then they will give credit to the whole team including the support staff. Such examples were exhibited by the French team which won the last Football world cup.

Effective followers are committed to a cause. It might be an Ideology, a movement or a charismatic leader. They are ready to give their full efforts for the achievement of the goal. Sometimes these followers imbibe the ideas of the leaders so deeply that they can stride on the cause without the movement being 'leaderless'. Examples of such followers are the masses that hurled on the call of the 'do or die' in the Quit India Movement.

The qualities of becoming a good follower play a crucial role in shaping one's personality. They reorient a person by providing training in qualities that are not only necessary to be a good follower but also a good leader. This makes followers of today, leaders in training for tomorrow.

### Lessons for the Commanders of tomorrow

All the aspiring leaders and commanders need to keep in mind that they need to embrace the importance of obedience and followership. They need to give it due importance throughout their evolution from