

Karma Yoga and Performance Management from Ancient HINDU Scriptures

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Abstract: India is place of origin of number of scriptures which has made greatest contribution not only to the people of India but whole world and human got the benefit from it. One of the greatest contributions of India to the world is Holy Gita which is considered to be one of the first revelations from God.

Geeta is full of management lessons, initially realized by great Indian sages. Management lesson as well as moral values, essential duties performed by king, public and other administrative officers have been derived from such great books and being in practice since a long time.

The Holy Gita is a universal scripture applicable to people of all temperaments and for all times. It is a book with sublime thoughts and practical instructions on Yoga, Devotion, Vedanta and Action. It is profound in thought and sublime in heights of vision. Using the karma yoga and management lessons from Geeta, this paper explains why the karma yoga and performance management is an effective tool for managers to motivate and lead people by their own example, to create a balanced working environment to foster creativity and to initiate unorthodox solutions to problems.

Keywords: Karm Yoga, Management, Performance, Ancient Hindu, and Scriptures.

I. INTRODUCTION

KARMA is the law of cause and effect, action and reaction. Karma Yoga is action performed with detachment, with meditative awareness. The Bhagavad Gita states that 'action alone concerns, never its fruits; stability in success and failure, this balance is called Yoga.' (Chapter 2, 47-48). In the New Testament, the Gospels relate the life, work, love and message of Lord Jesus Christ, an exemplary karma yogi : 'As you sow, so shall you harvest' (karma). 'Pray and work' (karma yoga).

Mahatma Gandhi, the great karma yogi of the twentieth century, was a motivator, a leader, a 'general manager' of the independence campaign in India. In The Story of My Experiments with Truth, he understated his mission in these words: 'I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and non-violence are as old as the hills.' Gandhi's life was a straight line of work and prayer.

II. THE KARMA

According to Paramahansa Niranjanananda: 'There is a very clear concept that karma arises due to the attractions and desires in life. Experiences that may have happened thirty years ago are remembered by us due to this karmic link. The event which gave birth to a karma took place a long time back, but the influence of that event has carried on. Therefore, the experience of that karma continues for an extended period until it reduces its intensity. In philosophical terms, karma means the primal seed of desire which guides the destiny, thought, actions and behavior of every individual. Karma, by the nature of action, is physical or mental and originates on different planes of our being, including inherent primal seeds as well as samskaras. Through yogic practices, karma can be reduced in intensity or positively transformed to achieve a balanced mind and personality.'

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III. THE KARMA YOGA

Yoga Darshan, Paramahansa Niranjanananda states that it can be classified as the true psychological aspect of Yoga because in the process of dynamic meditation we have to become aware of the subtle areas of our personality, which involves the awakening of latent mental faculties and new dimensions of awareness. Actions must be performed consciously and one's attitude towards the actions observed. We actions on the levels of speech, minds intellect, samskara and experiential realization.

In Karma Yoga it is not the actions themselves which are considered to be important, but the frame of mind in which they are performed. Paramahansa Niranjanananda lists the attributes of Karma Yoga as efficiency, equanimity, absence of expectation, egoless-ness, renunciation of limited desires, positive thinking, and duty or dharma. These attributes fit nicely into the profile of a good manager.

IV. THE DUTIES OF A MANAGER

A general manager has full responsibility for his operational unit. He sets targets within the framework of a long term strategic plan. He makes use of manpower and assets in the most economical way to achieve or exceed expected results. Assets are static in nature. To generate profit or growth with assets, a transformation is necessary, a process which requires imagination and creativity. Productivity and motivation of the labour force go hand in hand, and the best motivator is the example of a motivated boss.

A manager is also responsible for planning the future direction and goals of the long term enterprise, a process which requires intuition, imagination, courage and common sense. Ideally, a skilled manager will have qualities of efficiency, perceptivity, creativity, good human relations, intelligence and a healthy mind and body, as well as endurance, dedication, discipline and balance in success and failure. First and fore most will be service: love for his work and love for his people.

This super-person does not exist. We are all human beings with deficiencies which is exactly where yogic practices can help us to improve. A balanced mind will mean improvement in speaking, listening, commanding attention, understanding, retaining i information, formulating ideas, doing the right thing at the right time in the right place, communicating and problem solving. Therefore, Karma Yoga is the ideal time-saving practice for the manager in his workplace.

V. KARMA YOGA AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

One cannot become a karma yogi overnight. It is a long term process of self-discipline, maturing and expanding the awareness. One have to make a personal commitment to take up the path of Karma Yoga. You have to begin by becoming consciously aware of your positive and negative qualities. Initially it took some courage in the office to change patterns, for example, to counter aggression with non-violence. But the results would be positive and as respect from subordinates, superiors and customers began to rise slowly but steadily, some people began to copy you. This defusing of tension resulted in a more balanced and relaxed office atmosphere and better team work, and I began to introduce another positive experience. The key to success is detachment, regularity, discipline and endurance. Karma Yoga is not without setbacks but a balanced mind makes it easier to handle frustrations.

In any organization, meetings are necessary to inform, motivate, coordinate, plan, budget, etc., and follow-up; they are also an excellent tool for the manager to influence and motivate people, as well as tapping their ideas and creativity. However, in many large corporate structures, meetings are often too frequent, too long and badly prepared. The manager's personal problems may also constitute a 'hidden' agenda. In my experience, careful preparation of meetings with a proper agenda increases interest, reduces meeting time substantially and improves efficiency.

One 'noble' duty of a manager is to give orders to subordinates. In strong, hierarchical organizations, orders are given by power of authority, for example, by posting a notice on a notice board, a procedure which creates a distance between the managers and subordinates. Giving orders is akin to a moving meditation. It involves the delegation of authority, motivating and ensuring that the job is understood and within the capabilities of the subordinate. To give a proper order is a process of thinking, communication and teamwork. The caring manager will also follow-up and will not criticize.

Sooner or later, a manager's heart will request him to disobey the orders, rules and regulations of his superior, for example, when human rights would be violated or life endangered. This requires courage and the ability to face the

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consequences which are virtues of a mature karma yogi. Gandhi was, of course, the master of disobedience.

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, while performing the daily duties of a senior manager you could experience fruitful developments by practising Karma Yoga. The key to success is regular practice, discipline and endurance. Make work fun - collaborators will appreciate a happy and charismatic boss. Sankalpa and diksha will definitely support the process. Conviction and good ears to listen to the 'Guru in the heart' are important as well

In a much broader sense, Swami Sivananda's message was that Yoga is the path for developing a healthier and better human society. Swami Satyananda took up the task to spread Yoga from shore to shore. Managers of all ranks are key people in worldly society, and to convince them to take up the path of Karma Yoga in the workplace would speed up the process of Sivananda's vision significantly.

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