

BACHELORS IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Semester I

Foundation Course I - Indian Ethos in Management

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LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION

Leadership is an important attribute of an organization. The achievement of excellence in an organization is dependent largely on the abilities of a leader. It is a leader's ability to convey the vision, enthusiasm and focus and motivate the team to march towards the organization's goal.

Today's leader is expected to be someone who can communicate in various forms to a team that could be a mix of various traditions, religions, philosophies or political preferences. The leader can no longer be focused only on the final objectives. This is because the continuously changing business environment can change the direction of the entire business. Hence the successful business leader is someone who can anticipate the future trends and proactively start preparing the organization while the going is still great.

मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः ।

आगमापयिनोऽनित्यास्तांस्तितिक्षस्व भारत ॥ 2.14॥

mātrā-sparśhās tu kaunteya śhīto h a-sukha-du kha-dā

āgamāpāyino 'nityās tans-titik hasva bhārata

Synonyms

mātrā-sparśhā —contact of the senses with the sense objects; tu—indeed;

kaunteya—Arjun, the son of Kunti; śhīta—winter; u h a—summer; sukha—happiness;

du kha—distress; dā —give; āgama—come; apāyina —go; anityā —non-permanent;

tān—them; titik hasva—tolerate; bhārata—descendant of the Bharat

Translation

O son of Kunti, the contact between the senses and the sense objects gives rise to fleeting perceptions of happiness and distress. These are non-permanent, and come and go like the winter and summer seasons. O descendent of Bharat, one must learn to tolerate them without being disturbed.

Meaning

Arjun's mental breakdown is a result of his relationship conflict. Further Krishna's advice to Arjun to separate emotion from doing his duty is one of the important leadership lessons. Krishna's advice to Arjuna as he faces the dilemma of leading his troops into catastrophic battle, the Bhagwadgita offers timeless answers to all of these questions. Every leadership challenge may not be a life or death crisis, but Arjuna's battle is a powerful metaphor for the daily choices we all face and Unity, Duty, and Equanimity can provide a rich and meaningful frame for organizational communication.

The format as well as the scope of communication has evolved. The various collaborations to improve the competitive positioning or to simply optimize the performance require understanding of various ideologies as well as culture and attitudes even while communicating. Human reactions are often deeply impacted by relations. The leader has to understand the above and incorporate that understanding in own communication and also convey the same to the team as well.

The leader has to have the ability to face, tolerate, absorb and endure the world of duality which may unfold all the time. The leader should understand that even the best results cannot guarantee goods results as some else may just barge in at the last moment and reap the benefits of the efforts by the organization. The business is currently very dynamic and vast. The market dynamics can change suddenly and the demand may totally change in a short period. The leader has to hence work on psychological build-up of self and of team to develop tolerance. This capacity of leadership is the function of titiksha or endurance as is described in the verse 2.14.

To reach the stage of **titksha**, the leader needs to understand the principles of unity, duty and equanimity as explained in Bhagwadgita.

Unity, Duty and Equanimity:

○ Unity

As Krishna explains to Arjun that God is present in everything, the good and the bad: for example, the cause of an illness and also the medicine to cure it. Hence each being is a part of the large universe. As each being comes with a lifespan, the universe is continuous.

In the verses 9.16-9.19, Krishna explains to Arjuna, I am the ritual and the worship, the medicine and the mantra, the butter burnt in the fire, and the flames that consume it. I am the father of the universe and its mother, essence and goal of all knowledge, the refiner, the sacred Om, and the threefold Vedas. I am the beginning and the end, origin and dissolution, refuge, home, true lover, womb and imperishable seed. I am the heat of the sun, I hold back the rain and release it; I am death and the deathless, and all that is and is not.

Unity is obviously a useful theme for inspiring traditional management functions like building a team or planning collaborative work-flow, but the Gita asks us to look further. Co-workers and competitors, for instance, are not to be set apart as distinct others. Instead division is an illusion and all are equal manifestations of the One.

The leader who identifies with all, even unto seeing oneself in a competitor and seeing the competitor in oneself, can act with inspirational levels of nobility and justice. Too often, unethical leaders attempt to deny their connections to the whole and attempt to act for simple selfish gain. But the consequences of our actions can never impact a single self. In the worst cases entire industries are harmed when leaders cannot see that co-workers and competitors all constitute one another. You are in me and I am in you so “impartiality” and “equality” are not mere cultural catchwords, they are social reality itself.

For example a manufacturer of any item when he/she manufactures the product as if it for his/her own self, he would obviously take utmost precaution and design the best product with optimal utilization of resources. This is applicable to any service provider or care provider too or simply any kind of business.

Within the Bhagwadgita **unity** is more than a meaningful theme for interpersonal and social action, it is also a supreme goal at the personal level. Here discipline and mental focus replace chaotic thoughts driven by strong sensations and desires.

○ **Duty –**

Faced with an extreme leadership crisis, in the verse 6.34, Arjuna laments that the “mind is restless, unsteady, turbulent, wild, stubborn; truly, it seems to me as hard to master as the wind”.

The Pandava leader is far from alone with his difficulty in getting his thoughts together under pressure. Our fast-paced media age has created a generation of information overloaded multi-taskers so Krishna’s ancient call to focus may be needed more today than ever before. Arjuna eventually learns that single minded focus and concentration can indeed be achieved, and that the process of perfecting this mindset is the path to enlightenment.

Duty helps us find out exactly what each of us needs to focus on. What is not so obvious is exactly what leaders should focus on. *In Western management theory there is a great deal attention directed toward results—goal setting, outcomes assessment, and productivity metrics all set up external future objectives that workers must strive to reach. Unfortunately the many stresses that accompany this “make your numbers” philosophy are frequently counter-productive.*

According to the Bhagwadgita all of these problems can be credited to excessive desire. **Goal-directed thinking prioritizes product over process, an end over means philosophy that can justify unethical tactics or inspire a pervasive fear of failure and eventual employee burn-out.**

Instead of perpetually striving to force an uncertain future into certainty, focus on the moment as it unfolds. Get your mind out of the future and focus on the now. As Krishna explains in the verses 2.31 and 2.32, know what your duty is and do it without hesitation. For a warrior, be it a there is nothing better than a battle that duty commands. *For example, blessed are the soldiers who give up even their lives while performing their duty.*

A meaningful sense of duty is essential for successful organizational cultures, and one’s duty cannot simply be assumed as a given based on a social position or job

title. Instead every member of the team must know their task and receive the support and training required to fulfill this function with precision and skill.

In spiritual terms we are all warriors like Arjuna; our battle is fought every moment and the gates of heaven are immediately before us, right here and right now. Each person in the organization needs address the reality of the task immediately at hand, rather than think about potential payoffs or losses.

In the Gita's terms, the "wise man lets go of all results, whether good or bad, and is focused on the action alone. Yoga is skill in actions"(verse 2.50). When work becomes skillful process the worker merges with the moment. Any outcomes simply take care of themselves as the eternal now continually progresses into the future. *For example, a sportsperson may or win in an event. When the focus is on the process, the sportsperson will concentrate on what was right in his /her performance in the event and try to further perfect the game. However the person who focuses only on the result, will on losing be frustrated or depressed and will also be jealous of the winner or will rejoice too much winning and may not get back to perfecting the game and be prepared for the next game with equal vigour.*

Surrendering our desires will remain a real challenge unless we stay grounded within the context of divine Unity. If we can grow beyond individualism we can let go of the ego-driven idea that our actions are for us alone, that everything is about oneself. Interpersonally and socially we may each have different and diverse duties, but ultimately everyone has the same divine nature.

According the Bhagwadgita **we can get over ourselves** if we re-orient our purposes and devote all action to the One, to God. "He who acts for my sake, loving me, free of attachment, with benevolence toward all beings, will come to me in the end" (verse 11.55). Devoting action to God means that we must work to a divine standard. **Every choice and every action is nothing less than worship itself.** In knowing that we can meet this supreme standard, and especially in feeling that we are realizing it, **our leadership becomes service that infuses the organization with self-less compassion.** With our last meaningful term, Equanimity, we see how these understandings of Unity and Duty manifest themselves in a leader's attitude.

- **Equanimity** - Leading with equanimity requires self-mastery and control. All of our inner fears and selfish impulses must be dispelled so that all of our outward practices can demonstrate purity and justice. Leadership theory often focuses on persuasive discourse, where inspirational speeches convince members of the group to contribute energy and follow directions.

The Bhagwadgita does not preclude rhetoric as a source of inspiration (the only two chapters that directly address speech, Chapters 10 and 17, are covered below), but in general it advocates leading by example. Krishna tells Arjuna to “let go of the fruits of action” in many different ways, but Arjuna continues to ask how. This is because even scriptural teaching, holy words of inspiration and grace are ultimately superfluous. Life is immediate and immanent, not linguistic, mediated, or referential.

As unnecessary as a well is to villages on the banks of a river, so unnecessary are all scriptures to someone who has seen the truth. You have a right to your actions, but never to your actions’ fruits. Act for the action’s sake. And do not be attached to inaction. Self-possessed, resolute, act without any thought of results, open to success or failure. **This equanimity is yoga.** (2.46–2.48)

Sportspersons like P.V.Sindhu, Neeraj Chopra or Mary Kom have been consistent in their performance as they never let success get to their head or failure lower their spirit.

Application Principle 1: Meaningful Leadership:

The message of the Bhagwadgita can seem like a lot to take in and even more to try and implement. Arjuna, like many of us, laments that this teaching has “bewildered my mind” (verse 3.2), but Krishna assures him that in the great karmic cycle even small attempts to grow will be rewarded; “no one who does good work will come to an evil end” (verse 6.40).

When organizations provide an atmosphere of empowerment and empathy, the Bhagwadgita’s principles of Unity, Duty, and Equanimity can be applied to show how

they can connect with traditional leadership functions. The same can lead to the application of meaningful leadership.

Gary Yukl (2006) also defines leadership as “the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives”

Leadership is about:

- **Influencing others:**
A leader needs to have the ability to influence ones subordinates, peers, and bosses in a work or organizational context. Without influence, it is impossible to be a leader. Of course, having influence means that there is a greater need on the part of leaders to exercise their influence ethically. Leadership operates in groups. This means that leadership is about influencing a group of people who are engaged in a common goal or purpose.
- **Having a common goal(s):**
Leadership includes the achievement of goals. Therefore, leadership is about directing a group of people toward the accomplishment of a task or the reaching of an endpoint through various ethically based means. Leaders direct their energies and the energies of their followers to the achievement of something together. For example, a coach helps the team to work towards the common goal.
- **Sharing objectives:**
Leaders and followers share objectives. Leadership means that leaders work with their followers to achieve objectives that they all share. Establishing shared objectives that leaders and followers can coalesce around is difficult but worth the effort. Leaders who are willing to expend time and effort in determining appropriate goals will find these goals achieved more effectively and easily if followers and leaders work together. Leader-imposed goals are generally harder and less effectively achieved than goals developed together.

The following matrix connects Gary Yukl’s (2010) famous list of effective leadership functions to their associated Gita values.

Leadership Function/*Gita* Value Matrix

<u>Yuki's Leadership Functions</u>	<u>Gita Values:</u>	<u>Unity</u>	<u>Duty</u>	<u>Equanimity</u>
1. Help interpret the meaning of events		X		X
2. Create alignment on objectives and strategies		X	X	
3. Build task commitment and optimism			X	X
4. Build mutual trust and cooperation		X	X	
5. Strengthen collective identity		X	X	
6. Organize and coordinate activities		X	X	
7. Encourage and facilitate collective learning		X	X	
8. Obtain necessary resources and support			X	X
9. Develop and empower people			X	X
10. Promote social justice and morality		X	X	X

When leaders are faced with a particular leadership challenge the associated values provide a starting point to frame the issue.

For instance, when facing the very practical challenge of obtaining resources and support, leaders can begin by understanding that not only is it their duty to obtain support but also that all members of the unit need that support in order to perform their own duties. On top of duty/support interdependence, the value of equanimity reminds us that balanced attitudes are essential for leaders. Whether the necessary resources are actually gained or not, leaders should engage co-workers in a calm and even spirit of equality and selflessness. *When resource requests are denied the decision-maker cannot be demonized or retaliated against; instead the next most likely support opportunity should be explored. Similarly, when requests are granted it is not an occasion for undue celebration but an opportunity to move on to the next agenda item with calm satisfaction and faith in the whole.*

Application Principle 2: Meaningful Communication

Arjuna is an archer, a warrior and a man of action, so his duty is to fight and by joining the battle he will inspire his men to follow suit. “Whatever a great man does ordinary people will do; whatever standard he sets everyone else will follow” (verse 3.21).

In adopting war as its primary context the Bhagwadgita clearly **focuses on leading by physical example, skillfully and resolutely joining the fray and achieving glory regardless of the battle's outcome.** *If this military context is approached metaphorically, it is safe to say we all are faced with challenges but while our duty may frequently call for resolve it may not always call for so much skill in aggressive actions like drawing the bow, taking aim, and firing. On many occasions our leadership challenges seem much more social and relational rather than physical and material.*

Indeed it's hard to imagine performing any of Yukl's management functions without speaking to co-workers about events, objectives, identity, etc. Successful communicating is a process that builds strong relationships and effectively coordinates work. Since communication is a crucial action for all organizational contexts, many managerial positions require frequent group meetings and nearly constant interpersonal interaction and talk. In addition to all of this day to day speech, upper management roles can call for formal public addresses to interpret events and foster shared commitment. For a final application principle we will turn to Krishna's teaching on speech to learn options for infusing organizational communication with meaning.

Speech is a **personified mode of action** within the same moral orbit as physical actions like striking a foe or fleeing a battle. Placing speech in an **embodied** physical context can **provide roots and an anchor for leaders** thrown by the paralyzing dilemmas post modernity often finds in broad generalization.

Speech can also be used to manipulate the truth. However speech is not passing or temporary i.e. the effects of speech are definitely permanent. Since speech is very much related to a person, the Bhagwadgita is clear that speech, like all action, is physically embodied with Karmic effects i.e. the effects of the speech will definitely be seen immediately or later. In keeping with Chapter 10's embodiment theme, speech cannot be separated from physical or mental action. Instead communication is central, uniting body and mind as we engage the other.

Following the same principles of Karma, a speaker therefore should avoid orienting oneself with the outcome. *For example in a brainstorming session, the leader as a speaker*

should avoid exhibiting any bias in his speech, towards any of the possible outcomes, as the same may act as a stopper to many of the participants in presenting their views.

Hence instead of **going after a specific audience response, communication like all other actions should be performed as an act of worship.** *Whether delivering an oral report on changes in client demographics, leading a brainstorming meeting to generate new ad copy, or celebrating employee appreciation day, one needs to follow a similar approach. Focusing on a particular outcome will immediately bind the speaker to the limitations of the audience, as the focus is never on the process. The audience has to reach the goal by whatever means. Hence there is hardly any importance given to let the participants develop the skills along the way. Ethics also may take a backstage. When the speaker however doesn't align with any specific goal, the participants are encouraged and empowered to develop their skills. The results of the skills developed and the path chosen by each participant eventually decide the outcome. Thus in the process, the speaker may even help the participants overcome their limitations.*

As per the Chapter 10, particularly the verse 10.19, when one understands that everything is a part of the divine energy, one's actions including speech will be more disciplined, austere, and benevolent. With no thought of outcome or reward, exhibiting skill and self-control in speech, keeping the speech grounded in spiritual wisdom and expressing the truth with kindness can unite us with God.

ETHICS OF ENLIGHTENED LEADERS

Continuing with the principle of unity and equanimity in every action inclusive of speech, the enlightened leaders understand that each and every being in this universe is a part of the divine. Focus on karma and not the goal help the enlightened leaders in continuing to do their duties irrespective of success or failure. Further the focus on the process automatically takes the leader on an ethical journey.

The view of the present chapter is that ethical performance by leaders depends upon the development of an enlightened consciousness, which manifests as personal character which will resist opportunities for selfish gain through fraud, theft, or poor corporate citizenship. This development of enlightenment is directly related to one's devotion. The timeless wisdom of the Bhagavad-Bhagwadgita presents practical tools for experience of a state in which a manager can become independent of possessions (2.45) and balanced in gain and loss (2.48) by living fulfillment in Self-realization. The result, as portrayed in the Bhagwadgita, is wise leaders who act without personal attachment, "desiring the welfare of the world" (3.25).

A main idea is that ethics is the result of enlightenment.

In the verse 2.45, Krishna instructs Arjuna **to leave the field of relativity and experience the Absolute Self** in divine realization. Then in Chapter II, verse 48, Krishna gives the formula—"Established in Yoga, perform actions". "Established in Yoga" signifies that if one is constantly awake in the Absolute Self (**as discussed in unity, duty and equanimity**), one can naturally "perform action having abandoned attachment" (verse 2.48). Application of these two key verses the Bhagwadgita will result in skill in action—action which is ethical, effective, efficient, and emancipating.

Meditate and Then Act

In the Bhagwadgita, Krishna exhorts Arjuna: "Established in Yoga, perform actions". Yoga, or Union of the mind with the divine intelligence, begins when the mind gains transcendental consciousness. Yoga achieves maturity when this transcendental bliss-

consciousness, or divine Being, has gained ground in the mind to such an extent that, in whatever state the mind finds itself, whether waking or sleeping, it remains established in the state of Being. i.e. the mind stays calm and composed throughout the day (whether the person is awake or sleeping). Calm mind is able to act much better than a cluttered mind. It is to this state of perfect enlightenment that the Lord refers in the beginning of the verse when He says: 'Established in Yoga.'

Enlightened Leadership

The timeless wisdom of the Bhagwadgita has always been meant to be learned and practiced by leaders. According to the Bhagwadgita itself, its timeless wisdom was passed down through the leaders of society. Chapter 4, verse 2 says: "Thus having received it one from another, the royal sages knew it."

"Meditate and act" is a formula for integrated life that has borne fruit in the lives of contemporary business managers. This can be seen in the findings of several qualitative interview research studies of managers who had been practicing the Transcendental Meditation program of twice-daily meditation alternated with activity in responsible roles.

Spontaneous Right Action

Expressions in the Bhagwadgita such as "independent of possessions (2.45)", "balanced in success and failure (2.48)", and "casts off all desires" (2.55)" are descriptions of the experience of enlightenment. In Cosmic Consciousness one can naturally "perform actions having abandoned attachment and having become balanced in success and failure" (2.48). This is because in this enlightened state, one enjoys the eternal contentment which comes with being established in the Self.

A seasoned entrepreneur for example will know that the market will always be in a dynamic state and hence will also understand that one cannot be attached to the outcome of the business. This is because the needs of the market can change. However with the right process in place, the business will be able to respond to changes in the market conditions much faster. **i.e. spontaneous right action.**

INDIAN APPROACH TO STRESS MITIGATION AND HOLISTIC WELL-BEING

According to Bhagwadgita the source of stress can also be explained through the concept of “Karma” or deeds which influence the outcomes of various actions in one’s life. It is the bad karma or “dush karma” which adds up to dukha. Therefore, stress or dukha occurs because of a conflict between the natural pull of the ultimate goal and forces generated by the involvement with worldly affairs (klesha) and the reactions. It also occurs because an individual has to face the consequences of his bad deeds (dush karma) which produce stress either in form of increased attachment to worldly things and the fear and anxiety associated with these or in the form of sufferings and miseries. *For example when a person is focused on particular market share in the market, any drop in the market share can cause a lot of stress to the person.* However when a person understands that market conditions never remain the same, the person will be much more proactive and concentrate on understanding the customer requirement and cater to that in the best possible way.

Indian Context as an Allegory to Human Existence

We have seen till now that according to Bhagwadgita one needs to perform one’s duties without attachment to the fruits of the work. When faced with the stress and dilemma of fighting one’s own kin at the battlefield of Kurukshetra, Arjuna had to be reminded of his duty as a warrior and that it was a part of his dharma to fight whether he liked it or not. He had to overcome his internal struggle and mental/emotional stress that was disturbing and distracting him from walking on the path of karma and following his dharma.

Dharma implies “law of the universe,” “social and religious rules,” and/or one’s own individual mission or purpose (18.47). A lot of internal conflict and stress can be taken care of if one follows the right path, the path of dharma. Arjuna’s battle in Mahabharata was with his kinsmen was symbolically a battle between svadharma (one’s own duty/obligations) and adharma (injustice). There, Arjuna’s svadharma as a Kshatriya

(warrior) was to engage in a just war to protect his people and rights but he was torn between his duty as a warrior and feelings for his kinsmen.

This kind of stress is a classic example of choosing between the ethics and values. According to Bhagwadgita when there is mental stress and conflict between two dharmas (principles) the way out is follow the righteous path, as living by the conscience takes one to higher values. As we have seen earlier, the principle of Unity also conveys the same, since it talks about every living being as a part of God and vice versa. With the awareness of the presence of Divinity all around us, we would automatically be inclined towards doing the right thing.

Indian Perspective on Desires and Anchoring with Cognition, Emotion and Behavior

The verse 62 of Chapter 2 in Bhagwadgita elaborates on how anger develops and manifests in human behavior. It starts with a thought towards an object or a subject and develops an attachment to it. This attachment then manifests as a desire for the object or subject; and nonfulfillment of the desire leads to anger. *Frequent experience and manifestation of anger in high intensity spoils interpersonal relations and causes interpersonal stress in social and organizational situations.*

The desires which are fulfilled also do not guarantee happiness because once a desire is fulfilled; it leads to another thought in the mind, resulting in another attachment and then another desire. Bhagwadgita suggests that a desire multiplies upon fulfillment. Therefore, all desires end in the state of unhappiness and resentment, even if some may cause happiness for brief moments. In order to evade the unhappiness caused by the endless cycle of desires, the Bhagwadgita advocates practicing karma yoga. It helps to break the chain of desires and the subsequent unhappiness caused by them as karma yoga helps to focus only on the action undertaken by the individual without being desirous of the reward of that action.

For example, it is the desire of increased number of followers that gets people in posting videos and pictures and messages on social media. The acceptance by some soon becomes an addiction and they keep on posting more and more to get those extra thousand or ten

thousand or million clicks. Soon they stop enjoying the actual moments or the events and every pic is clicked with the intention of perfecting the picture to get those views.

Manan or self-reflection and **Chintan or contemplation** aid in the process of getting rid of the unhappiness generated through desires. Individuals can understand how their mind functions with respect to the worldly elements by reflecting upon their desires and subsequent consequences of those desires. This can lead the individuals to reason with their mind and become aware of the futility of the having desires and their insatiable and recurring nature. **Hence, these two factors of self-reflection and contemplation become catalysts in the adoption of karma yoga, for an individual and successive happiness thereafter.**

KEY MANAGEMENT MESSAGES

All of the contemporary management techniques have surprisingly been covered in Bhagwadgita.

Knowledge (Gyana)

The verses 4.37 and 4.38 state that, whatever is performed with knowledge, faith, and concentration is more effective. The same is also covered in Chandogya Upanishad: 1.1.10 as well. It states that as blazing fire reduces fuel to ashes, the fire of knowledge also turns all ignorance, and actions resulting out of it into ashes. Just as the fire brings out the true shine of the diamond or gold by destroying the impurities, knowledge too pushes away the dirt of ignorance and brings out the shine. Knowledge which is equated with the fire can thus purify the whole world.

In the business world the knowledge helps in proactively understanding the market trends and also timing the responses appropriately. The attitude of a continued learner helps in always staying updated and aware, an absolute necessity in the dynamic global business, to succeed.

For example, it was the knowledge only that has helped in so many success stories, be it Ola, OYO, Colgate, Maggi and so on. All of them had one thing in common. All of them understand their customer very well. They didn't just accept the information thrown to them. They used the fire of knowledge to remove the dust and get the priceless information within.

Doing one's duty – (Kartavya)

The knowledge gained will be wasted, if it is not used for fulfilling responsibilities. It can also be said that utilizing the knowledge responsibly will help one get closer to the ultimate realization. It is the most important lesson that the Bhagwadgita imparts and reinforces from Chapter 1 (Verse 1) to Chapter 18 (Verse 78, the last chapter). While Kartavya means doing what is right, what is ethical, this understanding of the significance comes of doing one's Kartavya comes from the knowledge.

This is where the Bhagwadgita closely intertwines with the practice of management. Managers should be guided by their duty in the execution of any of their functions that

draw from their roles in the organization. Whenever feeling confused or facing a dilemma, a manager should search for the answer by knowing what is his or her duty in that regard. The character of managers should be judged not by the outcome of their performance, but by if they performed their duty to their best ability. If we do not do anything to the best of our knowledge and ability, then, we did not execute our kartavya.

Kartavya extends to work life balance by including roles employees play towards their parents, children, spouses, relatives, siblings, friends, and neighbors, etc. It also includes doing right by helping those in need of help such as those who are suffering, injured, dying, helpless, old, sick, or hungry, etc. This responsibility arises simply from the condition of those in need of help and not for any other reason.

The Gita stresses that every time manager is making a decision, choice or selecting out of the several options, one should ask if the outcome of the action would pass the duty test.

In other words, the manager should ask would his or her action be the source of a sense that one did what one should have done, that one was expected to have done. If this test approves the act, then, the manager did one's duty. The duty test is the most important edict of the Bhagwadgita. Manager should always take this into consideration when attempting to resolve a dilemma.

Focus on process and not the outcome – (Karma)

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।

मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि॥2.47॥

Karma yevādhikāraṣṭe mā phale u kadācana,
mā karmaphalaheturbhūrmā te sa ṅgo'stvakarma i.

“Thou hast a right to action, but only to action, never to its fruits; let not the fruits of thy works be thy motive, neither let there be in thee any attachment to inactivity”
(bhagavadgita.org.in, 2018).

Karma is one of the major themes of the Bhagwadgita and it places the most

importance on “karma”. In English language, it can simply be called the “act”, or the right to act. The description of karma is associated with doing, and its applications are narrated using verbs. Because all outcomes are achieved through karma, the Bhagwadgita states that every human has the right to karma, and, then, expects everyone to be responsible for any outcome that is a consequence (phala) of one’s karma. Karma is the vehicle for the outcome. The desired outcome happens when the karma is right.

The focus of Bhagwadgita is on karma, i.e., action of working on a process, and not on its result, i.e. the focus is not on the outcome of action.

Of course, we should start with clearly understating the outcome we want from our actions, and then decide on the karma that will lead to the result. However, once the process of the action (karma) begins, then, the only focus is on the karma. If we put our best in our karma, then, for sure, the outcome, whatever it is, will be the best possible. The outcome should always be accepted it that way with jubilation.

We have the right to perform our karma and thus can control on the process that leads to the outcome. Distraction from karma will obstruct our mind, making the karma deficient and the outcome anything but the best possible (2.47). It is better to engage in karma and not achieve the outcome than not doing karma at all. The verse conveying the right to engage in karma is given later in its original. The Bhagwadgita reaffirms its statement on not doing karma for its outcome by stating that one should give up what one got—good or bad—from own karma (2.50), as quoted below.

For example, a sportsperson would begin with focuses on achieving a gold medal in Olympics. However once the goal is decided, the focus of the sportsperson while practicing should be on perfecting the sport and not the gold. Only then can the sportsperson achieve the excellence desired.

Further because karma is performed only in the present—not in the past or in the future, the Bhagwadgita places a special emphasis on the present. It advises humans to stay not stuck in the past, or regress much, as that brings regret, which

mostly causes depression and distracts from the karma that is being, or can be, performed in the present to build the future, and to undo the wrongs of the past. Paying full attention to the present could give the one an outcome that would be the best possible and hence be free of any consequential regrets, and set things up for the future.

Hence no person or organization can continue to live in the successes of the past or prospective successes of the future. Each has to continuously perform their karma to succeed and stay at the top for a long time.

Leadership

नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो नाकृतेनेह कश्चन।

न चास्य सर्वभूते षु कश्चिदर्थव्यपाश्रयः॥3.18॥

Naiva tasya k tenārtho nāk teneha kaścana,
Na cāsya sarvabhūte u kaścidarthatvāpāśraya .

“He has no object here to be gained by action done and none to be gained by action undone; he has no dependence on all these existences for any object to be gained”.

The Bhagwadgita gives a very high regard to leadership and makes the job of a leader very demanding and, hence, its selection and execution of leadership are put under very extenuating tests.

For example, it states that the leader should have nothing to gain personally from the act of leadership because it raises and eliminates the possibility of conflict arising because of it. This goes on both ends of leadership act, i.e., doing something or not doing something. In either case, the leader should have nothing to gain or lose from the act of leadership. **The Gita takes this as a qualification of the leader because it states that leader should not be dependent upon the outcomes of leadership acts for his existence.** This is again to clear any conflict in leadership deeds. The Bhagwadgita bestows the responsibility of leadership only to those who, without any conflict or

semblance of one, can execute the role of leadership. The Bhagwadgita states that the leader has to set an example for others to follow.

There was nothing that Krishna needed to achieve. Yet he continued to fulfill all his duties in the human form. He performed each and every role of ideal leader with perfection. While he was the charioteer to guide Arjun in the battlefield, he was also the mentor, the motivator, the strategist, the task master as well as the negotiator. He obviously knew the trigger points of each one and used them effectively to get the best results. He set the standard for leadership in Bhagwadgita.

यद्य दाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेत रो जनः।

स यत् प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥3.21॥

Yadyadācarati śre hastattadevetaro jana ,
sa yatpramā a kurute lokastadanuvartate.

“Whatsoever the Best [Leader] doeth, that the lower kind of man puts into practice; the standard he creates, the people follow” (Bhagavadgita.org.in, 2018).

Emphasis on Accumulating Knowledge

श्रेय ाे हि ज्ञानमभ्यासाज्ज्ञानाद्ध्यानं विशि ष्यते ।

ध्यानात्क र्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान ्तिरनन्त रम्॥12.12॥

Śreyo hi jñānamabhyāsājñānāddhyāna viśi yate,
dhyānātkarmaphalatyāgastyāgācchā tiranantaram.

“Better indeed is knowledge than practice; than knowledge, meditation is better; than meditation, renunciation of the fruit of action; on renunciation follows peace”.

Throughout the Bhagwadgita the focus has been on the process rather than the fruits. Further controlling the mind and gaining knowledge is critical for successfully performing the karma. In essence, the verse 12.12 means that having the knowledge of how something happens, works or is done is better than being able to just do it, because

codification of how to do something (explicit knowledge) can help others as it can be passed on to others. Then, thinking and researching (meditation) on how something happens, works, or is done is better than just being able to produce the codified knowledge, because meditation advances the understanding by bringing new knowledge (implied knowledge).

For example, the conscious performance of a marketing act for a product/ service after gaining sufficient knowledge .i.e. after required research and planning and prioritizing implies a definite focus on the process. The outcome may or may not be successful. However when the process is done with precision, the outcome is bound to be optimal.

The Gita emphasizes “Meditate-Act-Accept the outcome-Renounce the reward” (dhayana-karma-phala-tyaga). Giving away the knowledge you found is the best reward because it brings internal pleasure. In other words, the Gita asks us to give away our tacit knowledge that we acquired through research (meditation) and assures us that the reward, in the form of a sense of tranquility, for doing this will come intrinsically. This implies that it is the leader’s responsibilities include developing and sharing knowledge with the team and proactively working towards their development. This will prepare the next

We win over our mind and acquire knowledge to be able to gain objectivity and to do our duty, which, as we said previously, is supreme in Bhagwadgita. It shows the appreciation of knowledge because it reduces ignorance “to ashes”.

यथैधांसि समिद्धो ऽग्निर्भस्मसात्कुरुतेऽर्जुन।

ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भिभस्मसात्कुरुते तथ ॥4.37॥

Yathaidhā si samiddho'gnirbhasmasātkurute'rjuna,
jñānāgni sarvakarmā i bhasmasātkurute tatha.

“As a fire kindled turns to ashes its fuel, O Arjuna, so the fire of knowledge turns all works to ashes”.

The Gita states further on knowledge in the shloka given below.

न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवि त्रमि ह विद्यते ।

तत्स्वय ं योगसंसिद्धः कालेनात्मनि विन्दति ॥4.38॥

Na hi jñānena sad śa pavitramiha vidyate,
tatsvaya yogasa siddha kālenātmani vindati.

“There is nothing in the world equal in purity to knowledge, the man who is perfected by Yoga, finds it of himself in the self by the course of Time” (Bhagavadgita.org.in, 2018).

Conquer Your Mind

No one can control mind of the one who does not submit to its control by someone or something else. In fact, what to talk of others controlling one’s mind when one’s own self finds it so difficult to control own mind. **Nevertheless, for success, especially on difficult or unstructured tasks, one needs a very strong mind control.** The question is how to do it. This is where the Bhagwadgita comes with a message.

असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्नि ग्रहं चलम् ।

अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते ॥6.35॥

Śrībhagavānuvāca:

asa śaya mahābāho mano durnigraha calam,
abhyāseṇa tu kaunteya vairāgye a ca g hyate.

“Without doubt, O mighty-armed, the mind is restless and very difficult to restrain; but O Kaunteya, it may be controlled by constant practice and non-attachment” (Bhagavadgita.org.in, 2018).

The Bhagwadgita acknowledges that it is very difficult to control mind, however, it does not stop there and states that it can be controlled by constant practice and eliminating passion. Mind control is important in the Hindu system because of the importance the Hindus give to knowledge of any kind. It is the most sought after possession, and the one who possesses knowledge is the most revered. This is why the Gita gives great importance to controlling own mind. With the constant practice of yoga and meditation, combined with minor impositions such as vegetarianism, fasting, sacrificing, one conquers own mind, gains control over it. It is considered the ultimate victory for humans.

The Bhagwadgita goes further and says that for him who conquers his mind, the mind becomes his best friend, but for the one who fails to do this, his mind becomes his biggest foe, because it is with the mind that one achieves everything in life, in particular, knowledge and it is because of the lack of control of mind that one fails to achieve that which one would have achieved. Mind that is not in control will cause a lot of problem for the individual.

The complete verse is reproduced below:

बन्धु रात्मा ऽऽत्म नस्तस्य ये नात्मै वात्म ना जित ०ः।

अनात्म नस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेतात्मै व शत्रुवत्॥6.6॥

Bandhurātmātmanastasya yenātmaivātmanā jita ,
anātmanastu śatrutve vartetātmaiva śatruvat.

“To the man is his self a friend in whom the (lower) self has been conquered by the (higher) self, but to him who is not in possession of his (higher) self, the (lower) self is as if an enemy and it acts as an enemy”

How to Succeed

In Chapter 18, Shlokas 50–55 thoroughly cover who is successful and how to attain success. This section thoroughly covers what one needs to be successful, and what

qualities can predict success. Three main shlokas are reproduced below that describe these traits.

सिद्धिं प्राप्तो यथ ऽ ब्रह्म तथ ऽप्नोति नि बोध मे ।
समासेनैव कौन्तेय निष्ठा ज्ञानस्य या परा ॥18.50॥

siddhi prāpto yathā brahma tathāpnoti nibodha me,
samāsenaiḥ kaunteya ni hā jñānasya yā parā.

“Learn from me in brief, O Arjuna, how, one who has attained perfection, attains the brahman (or the self), who is the supreme consummation of knowledge”.

बुद्ध्या वि शुद्धय ऽ युक्तो धृत्यात्मा नं निय म्य च ।
शब्दा दीन्विषयांस्त्यक्त्वा रागद्वेषौ व्युदस्य च ॥18.51॥

buddhyā viśuddhayā yukto dh tyātmāna niyamy ca,
śabdādīnvi ayā styaktvā rāgadve au vyudasya ca.

“Endowed by a purified understanding, subduing the mind by steadiness, relinquishing sound and other objects of the senses and casting aside love and hate;”.

विविक्त सेवी लघ्वा शी यत वाक्कायम ऽनसः ।
ध्यानयोगपरो नित ्यं वैराग्यं समुपाश्रित ०ः ॥18.52॥

viviktasevī laghvāśī yatavākkāyamānasa ,
dhyānayogaparo nitya vairāgya samupāśrita .

“Resorting to solitude, eating but little, restraining speech, body and mind, ever engaged in the Yoga of meditation and taking refuge in dispassion”.

Success requires attaining perfection, knowledge of the self and supreme consummation of knowledge. A successful person is endowed with pure intellect. **He**

controls himself, does not seek sensual pleasures, and ends aversion and craving. He resorts to solitude, eats little and has restrain on speech, body and mind. He is dispassionate and engages in yoga of meditation.

The Gita Goes Against Extrinsic Controls

The Bhagwadgita goes against extrinsic restraint of any kind. **It states that one cannot achieve much when extrinsic controls are imposed because people behave according to their nature; that is, what is in their own control and is changed by their own initiative.** Specifically, it states that humans behave according to their nature and that extrinsic controls will not have any effect on them.

Applying that to the business world, while assigning tasks, manager should understand the nature of the person and then assign tasks to get high caliber performance without imposing any extrinsic controls.

Further we can also get from this verse that when people become aware of the extrinsic controls imposed on them, they lose intrinsic controls and that does not help in performance, especially when it comes to knowledge jobs that require mental work. This verse and its implication to the knowledge work are given below.

सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेर्ज्ञानवानपि ।

प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि निग्रहः किं करिष्यति ॥3.33॥

Sad śa ce ate svasyā prak terjñānavānapi,
prak ti yānti bhūtāni nigraha ki kari yati.

“All existences follow their nature and what shall coercing it avail? Even the man of knowledge acts according to his own nature”.

This statement has a special value in managing knowledge workers that are the main source of innovation without which organizations cannot fight competition in a knowledge economy. Not controlling employees extrinsically leaves their minds free to

create and innovate. The Gita's statement that "Beings will follow their own nature" implies that organizations while assigning tasks should take the nature of the workers into account.

The Bhagwadgita is very clear about motivation in organizations and states not to use sense-borne pleasures as motivators. They are ineffective and ultimately become a source of "pain", that is why a "wise man does not indulge in them" and, hence, such pleasures cannot be source of a motivation that is incessant, especially of knowledge workers.

ये हि संस्पर्शजा भोगा दुःखयोनय एव ते।

आद्यन्तवन्तः कौन्तेय न तेषु रमते बुधः॥5.22॥

Ye hi sa sparśajā bhogā du khayonaya eva te,
ādyantavanta kaunteya na te u ramate budha .

"The enjoyments born of the touches of things are causes of sorrow, they have a beginning and an end; therefore the sage, the man of awakened understanding, budha , does not place his delight in these".

Sense-borne motivators drive mechanical functions of human body that bring pain, whereas, motivators of the mind appease the psyche, which energizes the body because mind rules everything. Motivators for the mind work should come to the knowledge worker intrinsically. They should be based in ethics and righteousness (dharma).

For example, the Covid era has shaken up the entire world. The people who were used to work and/or study in the comfort were the most affected, as they were motivated mainly by the sense-borne motivators. They couldn't quickly adapt to the changing scenarios and hence went thru lot of physical and mental illnesses.

Human Guna or Bhava (Personalities)

In search of qualities in humans, called the guna or bhava, the Bhagwadgita recommends the one “Who hates no creature, who is friendly and compassionate to all, who is free from attachments and egoism and is balanced in pleasure and pain and forgiving”. Based on these qualities, people are divided into three categories. The following shloka sheds additional light on this.

त्रिभिर्गुणमयैर्भावैरेभिः सर्वमिदं जगत्।
मोहितं नाभिजानाति मामेभ्यः परमव्ययम् ॥7.13॥

Tribhirgu amayairbhāvairēbhi sarvamida jagat,
mohita nābhijānāti māmebhya paramavyayam.

“By these three kinds of becoming which are of the nature of the gunas, this whole world is bewildered and does not recognize Me supreme beyond them and imperishable”.

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ॥
मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतं तारन्ति ते ॥7.14॥

Daivī hye ā gu amayī mama māyā duratyayā,
māmeva ye prapadyante māyāmetā taranti te.

“This is my divine Maya of the gunas and it is hard to overcome; those cross beyond it who approach Me”.

The Bhagwadgita, rather than dividing people by traits with which they are born, divides them by their nature (bhava) and also guides how to modify the nature by developing control over their minds as we discussed previously. The following verse classifies people into three groups:

- Sattva (saintly)
- Rajas (kingly) and
- Tamas (lethargic)

Based on these classifications, the Gita goes over their likes, dislikes, tastes, behaviors, etc.

ये चैव सात्त्विका भावा राजसास्ताम साश्च ये।

मत्त एवेति तान्विद्धि नत्व हं तेषु ते मयि ॥7.12॥

Ye caiva sāttvikā bhāvā rājasāstāmasāśca ye,
matta eveti tānviddhi na tvaha te u te mayi.

“And as for the secondary subjective becomings of Nature, bhāva which are sattwic, rajasic and tamasic, they are verily from me, but I am not in them, it is they that are in Me”.

The **sattva character is full of intelligence** and imparts balance by remaining stable in every condition, whereas the **rajas is full of energy** and operates by willfully causing imbalance by tilting in favor of something or someone. The **tamas that is just substance** that creates inertia.

Typically in an organization, the sattva guna is represented by the seasoned business minds that have weathered and survived the ups and downs and have developed an intelligence owing to their experiences (e.g. Amitabh Bachchan, Boman Irani, M.S. Dhoni).

Rajas guna is represented by the younger generation of celebrities like Ranveer Singh, Karan Johar and Virat Kohli that have high energy and are doing everything possible to win and making the most of the current high popularity.

Tamas guna is represented by all those who are simply a part of the various industries for the glamour, but do not want to do the hard work.

Looking for Opportunities

या नि शा सर्वभूत ानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयम ि।

यस्यां जाग्रति भूत ानि सा नि शा पश्यत ो मुनेः॥2.69॥

Yā niśā sarvabhūtānā tasyā jāgarti sa yamī,

yasyā jāgrati bhūtāni sā niśā paśyato mune .

“That which is night to all beings, in that the self-controlled man is awake; when all beings are awake, that is night for the Muni (sage) who sees”.

Literally, this verse tells that when it is night to all beings, to the muni (sage) who has mastered truth based on self-realization rather than based on the existing facts, it is the time to wake up. And, when it is the time for the being to wake up, the self-controlled muni goes to sleep. **This is not the time for the muni to be active because everyone is so busy following the herd.** Because the wise can see through the **darkness, which represents ignorance**, and do what the beings do when it is day. When all beings are awake, that is the night for the muni who enters when the masses depart.

The Bhagwadgita from the investor point of view sets a strategic direction for how investors should pick investments for their portfolios. In business, it suggests **to look for the opportunities and avail off them when others are busy**, not looking at them, **and to back off when others are fiercely competing for them by bidding them way up** seems to have applied this message from the Bhagwadgita.

In fact, Warren Buffett, America's second and the world's third richest man, who made billions from stock market, says something that seems to have come very much from this shloka:

“When others are greedy, I am afraid; when others have fear, I become greedy.”

Don't Be Looking for Work to be Assigned to You

न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन।

नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि॥3.22॥

Na me pārthāsti kartavya tri u loke u ki cana,
nānavāptamavāptavya varta eva ca karma i.

“... I have no work that I need to do in all the three worlds, I have nothing that I have not gained and have yet to gain, and I abide verily in the paths of action...”.

The Bhagwadgita has an organizational perspective in it for everyone connected with work and management. It advises us not to be looking for others to give us work when we have finished doing what we were doing or when we have nothing to do.

We should take independent initiatives by self-picking what to do for the organization when assigned work is completed. In a way, this verse sets a reason for working even when there may be no rational reason supporting continuing to work. This verse states that we should not be looking for work to be assigned to us, but engage in work that we believe needs to be done, or look for what needs to be done.

One should always be working even when there is no prescribed duty or work for him to do.

In knowledge organizations where the work is unstructured such as in the R&D department, one has to take the initiative, look for opportunities and take the lead to avail off them for the good of the organization.

Questions

1. Explain Unity as discussed in Bhagwadgita. (understanding)
2. How does Bhagwadgita define duty? (analytical)
3. Explain how Leading with equanimity requires self-mastery and control
4. Explain Meaningful Leadership as per Bhagwadgita. (understanding)
5. Explain Meaningful Communication as per Bhagwadgita (understanding)
6. What is your understanding of enlightened consciousness? (analytical)
7. What was the symbolism of Arjuna's battle in Mahabharata? (analytical)
8. Manan or self-reflection and Chintan or contemplation aid in the process of become catalysts in the adoption of karma yoga, for an individual and successive happiness thereafter. Explain your understanding as per Bhagwadgita (understanding)
9. What do you understand about human nature—Tamas, Rajas and Sattava from BG? (analytical)
10. In the execution of management functions, why does the Bhagwadgita advise that we focus on karma? (evaluate)
11. What does Bhagwadgita say about controlling the mind? (analytical)
12. Explain who is successful according to Bhagwadgita and how to attain success as 2.48 (analytical and application)
13. Have you then experienced a completely peaceful state; a state when the mind is very awake, but quiet; a state when consciousness seems to be expanded beyond the limitations of thought, beyond the limitations of time and space (Transcendental Consciousness)? What effect did this experience have on your life? Did it effect any ethical decisions that you have made? (evaluate)
14. Lack of emotional control and anger lead to many social and interpersonal problems, how can yoga and meditation help in dealing with these problems? (evaluate)