

Bhagavad Gita philosophy and Management

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Abstract

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. The spiritual philosophy and management lessons in this holy book were brought in to light of the world by many great Indian saint's effort and they call the Bhagavad-Gita the essence of Vedic Literature and a complete guide to practical life. It provides "all that is needed to raise the consciousness of man to the highest possible level." Maharishi reveals the deep, universal truths of life that speak to the needs and aspirations of everyone. Your followers in your establishment are continuing the mission by keeping this lantern burning always knowing the wishes of the modern generations. Arjuna got mentally depressed when he saw his relatives with whom he has to fight. (Mental health has become a major international public health concern now). To motivate him the Bhagavad-Gita is preached in the battle field Kurukshetra by Lord Krishna to Arjuna as counseling to do his duty while multitudes of men stood by waiting. Arjuna face the problem of conflict between emotions and intellect. In almost all of the cases, emotions win. Only a very few people have a conflict-free emotion and intellect. Emotions are required, for, without them, one is a mere robot. They make life pleasant as long as they are sensible and within limits. It has got all the management tactics to achieve the mental equilibrium and to overcome any crisis situation. The Bhagavad-Gita can be experienced as a powerful catalyst for transformation. Bhagavad-Gita means song of the Spirit, song of the Lord. The Holy Gita has become a secret driving force behind the wisdom of one's life. In the days of doubt this divine book will support all spiritual searches. This divine book will contribute to self reflection, finer feeling and deepen one's inner process. Then life in the world can become a real education—dynamic, full and joyful—no matter what the circumstance. May the wisdom of loving consciousness ever guide us on our journey? What makes the Holy Gita a practical psychology of transformation is that it offers us the tools to connect with our deepest intangible essence and we must learn to participate in the battle of life with right knowledge?. It shows us the path to handle the situation with equipoise mind irrespective of what comes our way and reminds us time and again, that what the right action is. Developing mindfulness of the connections between mind and body is a form of intelligence just as important as IQ, EQ (emotional intelligence), or social intelligence. As awareness deepens, bodily sensations provide feedback and guidance about every aspect of your life—from nurturing relationships to enhancing effectiveness at work. By acting on this information you can reduce stress, balance your life, and maximize your innate potential for health, creativity, and spiritual growth.

The Bhagavad Gita contains the essential ideas and governing principles of our cultural life and deal with man's search for eternal which is the source of truth and joy. Body, life and mind are not to be despised they are the instruments of the life of spirit in man. There is a responsibility laid on man as an individual to integrate his life to relate the present to the past and the future, to live in time as well as among the eternal energies. The man of spirit, those filled with serenity, wisdom and joy are lovers of humanity. Arise awake and approach the worthy ones and learn to realize the truth. Narrow is the path and difficult to tread, sharp the edge of a razor. But success sure to those dare and do.

Indian Vedic contribution is a reservoir of Vibrant Information and Harmonious Creativity. May the womb of nature embrace all with tranquil blessings from this day forward. Let this attract one's attention affecting them positively. It is a Sanctuary of the Self a Creative Venue which serves as an Enduring Expression of Lightness, where a peaceful Atmosphere with Sunlight Flows and serene atmosphere prevail.

In the storm of life we struggle through myriads of stimuli of pressure, stress, and multi problems that seek for a solution and answer. We are so suppressed by the routine of this every life style that most of us seem helpless. However, if we look closely to ancient techniques we shall discover the magnificent way to understand and realize the ones around us and mostly ourselves. If only we could stop for a moment and allow this to happen. May all beings be happy (Loka Samastha Sukhino Bhavanthu)

The ancient Hindu philosophy of keeping mind and body for the well being has entered the managerial, medical and judicial domain of the world. Today it has found its place as an alternative to the theory of modern management and also as a means to bring back the right path of peace and prosperity for the human beings. Let me bow to Indian Maharishi Veda Vysa with folded hands, who helped in removing the impurities of the mind through his writings on Vedas, impurities of speech through his writings on puranas, and impurities of body through his writings on other sacred texts.

The Holy Gita is the essence of the Vedas, Upanishads. It 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. It brings peace and solace to souls that are afflicted by the three fires of mortal existence, namely, afflictions caused by one's own body (disease etc), those caused by beings around one (e.g. wild animals, snakes etc.), and those caused by the gods (natural disasters, earth-quakes, floods etc). Mind can be one's friend or enemy. Mind is the cause for both bondage and liberation. The word mind is derived from man to think and the word man derived from manu (Sanskrit word for man).

"The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone's heart, O Arjuna, and is directing the wanderings of all living entities, who are seated as on a machine, made of the material energy."

There is no theory to be internalized and applied in this psychology. Ancient practices spontaneously induce what each person needs as the individual and the universal coincide. The work proceeds through intellectual knowledge of the playing field (jnana yoga), emotional devotion to the ideal (bhakti yoga) and right action that includes both feeling and knowledge (karma yoga). With ongoing purification we approach wisdom. The Bhagavad-Gita is a message addressed to each and every human individual to help him or her to solve the vexing problem of overcoming the present and progressing towards a bright future. Within its eighteen chapters is revealed a human drama. This is the experience of everyone in this world, the drama of the ascent of man from a state of utter dejection, sorrow and total breakdown and hopelessness to a state of perfect understanding, clarity, renewed strength and triumph. May the wisdom of loving consciousness ever guide us on our journey? What makes the Holy Gita a practical psychology of transformation is that it offers us the tools to connect with our deepest

intangible essence, and we must learn to participate in the battle of life with right knowledge.

"Freed from attachment, fear and anger, absorbed in me and taking refuge in me, purified by the penance of knowledge, many have attained union with My Being." (Gita 4:10)

Mind is very restless, forceful and strong, O Krishna, it is more difficult to control the mind than to control the wind ~ Arjuna to Sri Krishna

Introduction

In this modern world the art of Management has become a part and parcel of everyday life, be it at home, in the office or factory and in Government. In all organizations, where a group of human beings assemble for a common purpose irrespective of caste, creed, and religion, management principles come into play through the management of resources, finance and planning, priorities, policies and practice. Management is a systematic way of carrying out activities in any field of human effort. Management need to focus more on leadership skills, e.g., establishing vision and goals, communicating the vision and goals, and guiding others to accomplish them. It also assert that leadership must be more facilitative, participative and empowering in how visions and goals are established and carried out. Some people assert that this really isn't a change in the management functions, rather it's re-emphasizing certain aspects of management.

Management is creative problem solving. This creative problem solving is accomplished through four functions of management: planning, organizing, leading and controlling. The intended result is the use of an organization's resources in a way that accomplishes its mission and objectives.

Socio technical systems approach Technical systems such as production and office operation have great effect on social system such as personal This concept places importance on labor and lower-level office work and ignores other managerial knowledge. In this concept managing is treated as a mathematical processes. It is viewed as a purely logical process and is expressed in mathematical symbols and relationships. Managing is not a pure science and hence cannot be completely modeled.

Just as human body is formed of different interdependent systems so is also an organization. A change in any one of these systems may affect all or some other systems to varying degrees. This 'ripple effect' influences the effectiveness of the organization. To understand the interactions and the consequences between the various systems of the organization the managers should posses the ability to get a perspective view. Treating an organization as formed of different Systems is known as systems approach. Systems theory was first applied in the fields of science and engineering. It also has found wide acceptance in the practice of management. A system can be defined as essentially a set or assemblage of things interconnected or interdependent, so as to form a complex unity. Cars, computers, television and radio sets are some examples of systems. There are two major types of systems: closed and open. A closed system has definite boundaries; it operates relatively independently and is not affected by the environment outside the system. Stand by generator is an example of a closed system. With its different systems working together in perfect harmony the generator continues

to supply power as long as it has sufficient fuel supply without much regard to the external environment. An open system as the name implies, is characterized by its interaction with the external environment. Clearly, an open-system model that includes interactions between the enterprise and its external environment must describe any business or other organization.

Its task is to make people capable of joint performance, to make their weaknesses irrelevant, says the Management Guru Peter Ducker. It creates harmony in working together - equilibrium in thoughts and actions, goals and achievements, plans and performance, products and markets. It resolves situations of scarcity, be they in the physical, technical or human fields, through maximum utilization with the minimum available processes to achieve the goal. Lack of management causes disorder, confusion, wastage, delay, destruction and even depression. Managing men, money and materials in the best possible way, according to circumstances and environment, is the most important and essential factor for a successful management.

The Bhagavad-Gita was delivered by Sri Krishna to boost Arjuna's declining morale, motivation, confidence and to increase his (Arjuna) effectiveness due to his (Arjuna) intra-personal conflict, which was to fight or not to fight the war at Kurukshetra Sri Krishna gave not only spiritual enlightenment but also the art of self management, conflict management, stress, anger management, transformational leadership, motivation, goal setting and many others aspects of management which can be used as a guide to increase HRM effectiveness. Unlike the western approach to HRM, which focuses in exploring the external world of matter and energy, the Bhagavad-Gita recommends a HRM approach, which focuses on exploring the inner world of the self.

Transformational Leadership After hearing 575 verses from Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita, Arjuna was motivated, energized and acted according to Sri Krishna's instruction. This is transformation management (leadership), as quoted by Narayana (1998) who explained what happened after the Bhagavad-Gita. He (Arjuna) stood steady on the ground with bow and arrow in hand. He lifted his arms ready to fight the war. Sri Krishna demonstrated transformational HR leadership qualities in developing and guiding Arjuna to victory in the war. Transformational leaders (HR managers) exhibit charisma, encourage followers to question their own way of doing things, and treat followers differently but equitably based on follower need.

Modern HR managers and consultants can benefit from the philosophy of Bhagavad-Gita, which can serve as a guide in HRM. Mere imitation of western HRM approaches may not be appropriate in the Indian (Asian) context due to differences in the cultural environment. Many new western HRM approaches will continue to emerge, however the Bhagavad-Gita has remained and will remain to be relevant and continue to contribute to HRM for many centuries to come.

Management guidelines from the Bhagavad Gita

Employee and individual benefits:

- Performance
- Motivation
- Decision-making
- Realistic self-confidence
- Self-awareness
- Perseverance
- Balance
- Personal integrity
- Self-regulation skills
- Relaxation potential
- Self-care skills
- Clarity and focus
- Physical and mental health

Old truths in a new context

The Bhagavad-Gita, written thousands of years ago, enlightens us on all managerial techniques leading us towards a harmonious and blissful state of affairs in place of the conflict, tensions, poor productivity, absence of motivation and so on, common in most of Indian enterprises today – and probably in enterprises in many other countries.

The modern (Western) management concepts of vision, leadership, motivation, excellence in work, achieving goals, giving work meaning, decision making and planning, are all discussed in the Bhagavad-Gita . There is one major difference. While Western management thought too often deals with problems at material, external and peripheral levels, the Bhagavad-Gita tackles the issues from the grass roots level of human thinking. Once the basic thinking of man is improved, it will automatically enhance the quality of his actions and their results. The management philosophy emanating from the West is based on the lure of materialism and on a perennial thirst for profit, irrespective of the quality of the means adopted to achieve that goal. This phenomenon has its source in the abundant wealth of the West and so 'management by materialism' has caught the fancy of all the countries the world over, India being no exception to this trend. My country, India, has been in the forefront in importing these ideas mainly because of its centuries old indoctrination by colonial rulers, which has inculcated in us a feeling that anything Western is good and anything Indian, is inferior. Gita does not prohibit seeking money, power, comforts, health. It advocates active pursuit of one's goals without getting attached to the process and the results.

The result is that, while huge funds have been invested in building temples of modern management education, no perceptible changes are visible in the improvement of the general quality of life - although the standards of living of a few has gone up. The same old struggles in almost all sectors of the economy, criminalization of institutions, social violence, exploitation and other vices are seen deep in the body politic.

The source of the problem

The reasons for this sorry state of affairs are not far to seek. The Western idea of management centers on making the worker and the manager more efficient and more productive. Companies offer workers more to work more, produce more, sell more and to stick to the organization without looking for alternatives. The sole aim of extracting better and more work from the worker is to improve the bottom-line of the enterprise. The worker has become a hireable commodity, which can be used, replaced and discarded at will. Thus, workers have been reduced to the state of a mercantile product. In such a state, it should come as no surprise to us that workers start using strikes (gheraos) sit-ins, (dharnas) go-slows, work-to-rule etc. to get maximum benefit for themselves from the organizations. Society-at-large is damaged. Thus we reach a situation in which management and workers become separate and contradictory entities with conflicting interests. There is no common goal or understanding. This, predictably, leads to suspicion, friction, disillusion and mistrust, with managers and workers at cross purposes. The absence of human values and erosion of human touch in the organizational structure has resulted in a crisis of confidence. Western management philosophy may have created prosperity – for some people some of the time at least - but it has failed in the aim of ensuring betterment of individual life and social welfare. It has remained by and large a soulless edifice and an oasis of plenty for a few in the midst of poor quality of life for many.

Hence, there is an urgent need to re-examine prevailing management disciplines - their objectives, scope and content. Management should be redefined to underline the development of the worker as a person, as a human being, and not as a mere wage-earner. With this changed perspective, management can become an instrument in the process of social, and indeed national, development.

Now let us re-examine some of the modern management concepts in the light of the Bhagavad-Gita which is a primer of management-by-values.

Utilization of available resources

The first lesson of management science is to choose wisely and utilize scarce resources optimally. During the curtain raiser before the Mahabharata War, Duryodhana chose Sri Krishna's large army for his help while Arjuna selected Sri Krishna's wisdom for his support. This episode gives us a clue as to the nature of the effective manager - the former chose numbers, the latter, wisdom.

Work commitment

A popular verse of the Gita advises "detachment" from the fruits or results of actions performed in the course of one's duty. Being dedicated work has to mean "working for the sake of work, generating excellence for its own sake." If we are always calculating the date of promotion or the rate of commission before putting in our efforts, then such work is not detached. It is not "generating excellence for its own sake" but working only for the extrinsic reward that may (or may not) result. Working only with an eye to the anticipated benefits, means that the quality of performance of the current job or duty suffers - through mental agitation of anxiety for the future. In fact, the way the world works means that events do not always respond positively to our calculations and hence

expected fruits may not always be forthcoming. So, the Gita tells us not to mortgage present commitment to an uncertain future. Some people might argue that not seeking the business result of work and actions makes one unaccountable. In fact, the Bhagavad-Gita is full of advice on the theory of cause and effect, making the doer responsible for the consequences of his deeds. While advising detachment from the avarice of selfish gains in discharging one's accepted duty, the Gita does not absolve anybody of the consequences arising from discharge of his or her responsibilities. Attachment to perishable gives birth to fear, anger, greed, desire, feeling of "mine" and many other negative qualities. Renounce attachment by regarding objects for others and for serving others. Depend only on God (not body, nor intellect), and the dependency on the world will end. Renouncing attachment is the penance of knowledge, which leads to His Being - Truth, Consciousness and Bliss. (Bhagavad-Gita 4.10) Thus the best means of effective performance management is the work itself. Attaining this state of mind (called "nishkama karma ") is the right attitude to work because it prevents the ego, the mind, from dissipation of attention through speculation on future gains or losses.

Motivation – self and self-transcendence

It has been presumed for many years that satisfying lower order needs of workers - adequate food, clothing and shelter, etc. are key factors in motivation. However, it is a common experience that the dissatisfaction of the clerk and of the Director is identical - only their scales and composition vary. It should be true that once the lower-order needs are more than satisfied, the Director should have little problem in optimizing his contribution to the organization and society. But more often than not, it does not happen like that. (" The eagle soars high but keeps its eyes firmly fixed on the dead animal below.") On the contrary, a lowly paid schoolteacher, or a self-employed artisan, may well demonstrate higher levels of self-actualization despite poorer satisfaction of their lower-order needs.

Motivational Factors

Over the years, there have been many studies examining staff motivation and here are just a few examples of what employees feel are their motivational needs or factors:

- ❖ The working environment - poor or inadequate equipment or work facilities
- ❖ Working Conditions - too hot, too cold, no breaks, long hours
- ❖ Social Interaction - isolation, socialisation discouraged etc
- ❖ Job Security - redundancies, feeling not part of company etc
- ❖ Skill or intellectual use -inability or discouragement to use intellectual or skill
- ❖ Promotional prospects and job title - lack of promotion, others promoted but not them
- ❖ Responsibility - not allowed to work off own initiative
- ❖ Recognition and appreciation - lack of praise or recognition for achievement
- ❖ Trust and respect - treated as a machine
- ❖ Participation in decision making - not allowed to get involved with company

- ❖ A sense of belonging –
- ❖ Salary - pay poor for job they are doing
- ❖ Management issues - conflicts with management, etc

This situation is explained by the theory of self-transcendence propounded in the Gita. Self-transcendence involves renouncing egoism, putting others before oneself, emphasizing team work, dignity, co-operation, harmony and trust – and, indeed potentially sacrificing lower needs for higher goals, the opposite of Maslow. "Work must be done with detachment." It is the ego that spoils work and the ego is the centerpiece of most theories of motivation. We need not merely a theory of motivation but a theory of inspiration. The Great Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941, known as "Gurudev") says working for love is freedom in action. A concept which is described as "disinterested work" in the Gita where Sri Krishna says, "He who shares the wealth generated only after serving the people, through work done as a sacrifice for them, is freed from all sins. On the contrary those who earn wealth only for themselves, eat sins that lead to frustration and failure." Disinterested work finds expression in devotion, surrender and equipoise. The former two are psychological while the third is determination to keep the mind free of the dualistic (usually taken to mean "materialistic") pulls of daily experiences. Detached involvement in work is the key to mental equanimity or the state of "nirdwanda." This attitude leads to a stage where the worker begins to feel the presence of the Supreme Intelligence guiding the embodied individual intelligence. Such de-personified intelligence is best suited for those who sincerely believe in the supremacy of organizational goals as compared to narrow personal success and achievement. Indian theorists, of course, have a wide range of backgrounds and philosophies. But many of the most influential acknowledge that common themes pervade their work. One is the conviction that executives should be motivated by a broader purpose than money. Another is the belief that companies should take a more holistic approach to business. The seemingly ethereal world view that's reflected in Indian philosophy is surprisingly well attuned to the down-to-earth needs of companies trying to survive in an increasingly global, interconnected business ecosystem. While corporations used to do most of their manufacturing, product development, and administrative work in-house, the emphasis is now on using outsiders. Terms such as "extended enterprises" (companies that outsource many functions), "innovation networks" (collaborative research and development programs), and "co-creation" (designing goods and services with input from consumers) are the rage. In our day to day life, whether you are working for an organization or are doing your own business or are responsible for your household work, the most common thing many times is that you get depressed while doing your work. Depressed employees in any organization are a common sight. Dejected employees, depressed employees, unmotivated employees, desolate employees, morose looking employees are very harmful to any organization as they not only decrease the productivity but they also create an atmosphere in which other colleagues may also feel de-motivated & dejected. Similarly if you run your own business & remain depressed while doing your work, certainly you shall not achieve that much in your business if you would have been highly motivated & energetic. Now, De-motivation, Depression, Dejection, Desolation all these

D-words relates to your mind or relate to your mental position. It's only your MIND that gets depressed, dejected. You may be physically fit with blood oozing in your nerves, but if you are not well with your MIND then you are certainly not going to perform to your full potential. Mental health is where the key to success lies. If you are mentally supercharged then you can achieve any milestone in spite of having any physical inadequacy. Now, how to get out of this depression, de-motivation & how to increase the productivity at work is where the great teachings of "Bhagwat Gita" come into play, now for those who do not know about "Bhagwat Gita". "Bhagwat Gita" is an ancient religious book of the "Hindus" & in this book are great philosophies of Hinduism. These philosophies teach you all about, how you should do your duty, how you should lead your life etc. This "Bhagwat Gita" teachings were given by "Lord Sri Krishna", God Himself, to his disciple "Arjuna" on the battle field of Kurukshetra in Haryana state of India in ancient times. "Arjuna" was involved in a war against his enemies (some of them his own relatives too) but he refused to do his duty of fighting a righteous battle as he got infatuated & started thinking of his enemies as his own near & dear ones. He told his master "Lord Sri Krishna" that he is going away from the war & do not want to fight on the battle field. Arjuna's mental health became weak & he got deeply depressed. To overcome his disciple Arjuna's depression & to motivate him to fight a righteous war, "Lord Sri Krishna" gave the great teachings of "Bhagwat Gita" to his disciple "Arjuna". After listening to all these great teachings, Arjuna's mental health became well & he became motivated & energetic to fight the war. Now many of us & many of our employees in our organization find themselves in the same state of mind, as that of "Arjuna". Their de-motivated, depressed state of mind can be changed to motivated & energetic one by these teachings of "Bhagwat Gita". Through these teachings, mental equilibrium of any depressed person can be overcome & he can come out of any crisis situation. The teachings of "Bhagwat Gita" can simply transform a person. Now Bhagwat Gita teaches about "Mind Control". Mind is that makes the personality of a person. De-motivated mind makes a person depressed one & a motivated one makes a person cheerful. If one's mind is in one's control & he/she can concentrate deeply on one's work, then that person can do wonders at work. Mind is very powerful one & to control it, to keep it in one's control is very difficult. It just wanders like wind here & there & it takes enough of self discipline & practice of meditation to control it, to get it concentrated on any job or activity.

As per "Arjuna" to "Lord Sri Krishna" in Chapter Six verse 34:

**"chanchalam hi manah krishna
pramathi balavad drdham
tasyaham nigraham manye
vayor iva su-duskaram"**

(Bhagwat Gita: Chapter Six verse 34)

"Arjuna said: For the mind is restless, turbulent, obstinate and very strong, O Krishna, and to subdue it, to control it, I think, is more difficult than controlling the wind."

**"sri-bhagavan uvacha
asamsayam maha-baho**

**mano durnigraham chalam
abhyasena tu kaunteya
vairagyena cha grhyate"**

(Bhagwat Gita: Chapter Six verse 35)

"Lord Sri Krishna said: O mighty-armed Arjuna, it is undoubtedly that mind is very difficult to curb & is restless, but it is possible by suitable practices of meditation and by detachment."

**"asamyatatmana yogo
dusprapa iti me matih
vasyatmana tu yatata
sakyo 'vaptum upayatah"**

(Bhagwat Gita: Chapter Six verse 36)

"Lord Sri Krishna said: For one whose mind is unbridled, uncontrolled, self-realization is a difficult work. But he whose mind is controlled and who strives by appropriate means is assured of success. That is My opinion."

So in the Bhagwat Gita, "Lord Sri Krishna" first of all asks one to do his DUTY. If a person does his/her duty then half of the problems of that person are solved. Not doing one's duty is very harmful as it produces negative results only in one's life, like frustration, depression, de-motivation etc. If one does at least his/her duty, then such negative factors affect that person to a lesser degree or do not affect at all. As per "Lord Sri Krishna", doing one's prescribed duties, even though faultily is better to have a better Mental Health.

**"sreyan sva-dharmo vigunah
para-dharmat sv-anusthitat
sva-dharme nidhanam sreyah
para-dharmo bhayavahah"**

(Bhagwat Gita: Chapter Three verse 35)

Lord Sri Krishna said: "It is far better to discharge one's prescribed duties, even though faultily, than another's duties perfectly. Destruction in the course of performing one's own duty is better than engaging in another's duties, for to follow another's path is dangerous."

Another teaching of "Bhagwat Gita" is to do one's work for the sake of work only without caring for the fruit arising out of that work. That simply means to get deeply involved in one's work or to just think single mindedly about performing the best in one's job without thinking about the results arising out of those actions performed while doing one's work or duty. Just concentrate on your work, that's it. Below verse of "Bhagwat Gita" explains this.

**"karmany evadhikaras te
ma phalesu kadachana
ma karma-phala-hetur bhur
ma te sango 'stv akarmani"**

(Bhagwat Gita: Chapter Two verse 47)

"Lord Sri Krishna said: You have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but you are not entitled to the fruits of action. Never consider yourself the cause of the results of your activities, and never be attached to not doing your duty." Another below verse of "Bhagwat Gita" explains that one should do one's duty equi-poised or to have the equanimity of mind, without caring & renouncing all attachment to success or failure. If one does one's duty efficiently & with single minded devotion, without any fear of success or failure in his/her Endeavour, then certainly that person shall succeed in his/her work, as he/she is doing that work without any fear of success or failure. His/her mind shall be at peace & ease while doing such work without any fear of success or failure. Any person whose mind is at peace, certainly works effectively.

**"yoga-sthah kuru karmani
sangam tyaktva dhananjaya
siddhy-asiddhyoh samo bhutva
samatvam yoga ucyate"**

(Bhagwat Gita: Chapter Two verse 48)

"Lord Sri Krishna said: Perform your duty equi-poised, O Arjuna, abandoning all attachment to success or failure. Such equanimity is called yoga." So if a person is dedicated to his work & works for the sake of work only without any fear of success or failure, then that person is going to be certainly successful in his/her carrier. By doing meditation & other yoga techniques, one can control one's mind & a disciplined mind can be made to concentrate on one's job better, producing better results. So by following the teachings of "Bhagwat Gita" one is certainly going to excel in his/her job & in life.

Work culture

An effective work culture is about vigorous and arduous efforts in pursuit of given or chosen tasks. Sri Krishna elaborates on two types of work culture – "daivi sampat" or divine work culture and "asuri sampat" or demonic work culture.

- Daivi work culture - involves fearlessness, purity, self-control, sacrifice, straightforwardness, self-denial, calmness, absence of fault-finding, absence of greed, gentleness, modesty, absence of envy and pride.
- Asuri work culture - involves egoism, delusion, personal desires, improper performance, work not oriented towards service. Mere work ethic is not enough. The hardened criminal exhibits an excellent work ethic. What is needed is a work ethic conditioned by ethics in work. It is in this light that the counsel, "yogah karmasu

kausalam" should be understood. "Kausalam" means skill or technique of work which is an indispensable component of a work ethic. "Yogah" is defined in the Gita itself as "samatvam yogah uchyate" meaning an unchanging equipoise of mind (detachment.) Tilak tells us that acting with an equable mind is Yoga. (Bal Gangadhar Tilak, 1856-1920, the precursor of Gandhiji, hailed by the people of India as "Lokmanya," probably the most learned among the country's political leaders. For a description of the meanings of the word "Yoga", see foot of this page.) By making the equable mind the bed-rock of all actions, the Gita evolved the goal of unification of work ethic with ethics in work, for without ethical process no mind can attain an equipoise. The guru, Adi Sankara (born circa 800 AD), says that the skill necessary in the performance of one's duty is that of maintaining an evenness of mind in face of success and failure. The calm mind in the face of failure will lead to deeper introspection and see clearly where the process went wrong so that corrective steps could be taken to avoid shortcomings in future. The principle of reducing our attachment to personal gains from the work done is the Gita's prescription for attaining equanimity. It has been held that this principle leads to lack of incentive for effort, striking at the very root of work ethic. To the contrary, concentration on the task for its own sake leads to the achievement of excellence – and indeed to the true mental happiness of the worker. Thus, while commonplace theories of motivation may be said to lead us to the bondage or extrinsic rewards, the Gita's principle leads us to the intrinsic rewards of mental, and indeed moral, satisfaction. Putting the accent on "sticking to ethics in the workplace", all organizations should attempt to instil the values of honesty, moral virtues of hard work and diligence as preached in the Bhagavad Gita, which has now emerged as a guidebook for motivating numbers-driven managers. So to help enhance the spiritual quotient of the employees and to ensure that they steer clear of dishonesty and vice, there are frequent yoga lessons, talks and lectures by motivational gurus and a handbook with relevant messages.

Work results

The Gita further explains the theory of "detachment" from the extrinsic rewards of work in saying:

- If the result of sincere effort is a success, the entire credit should not be appropriated by the doer alone.
- If the result of sincere effort is a failure, then too the entire blame does not accrue to the doer. The former attitude mollifies arrogance and conceit while the latter prevents excessive despondency, de-motivation and self-pity. Thus both these dispositions safeguard the doer against psychological vulnerability, the cause of the modern managers' companions of diabetes, high blood pressure and ulcers. Assimilation of the ideas of the Gita leads us to the wider spectrum of "lokasamgraha" (general welfare) but there is also another dimension to the work ethic - if the "karmayoga" (service) is blended with "bhaktiyoga" (devotion), then the work itself becomes worship, a "sevayoga" (service for its own sake.) Along with bhakti yoga as a means of liberation, the Gita espouses the doctrine of nishkamy karma or pure action untainted by

hankering after the fruits resulting from that action. Modern scientists have now understood the intuitive wisdom of that action in a new light. Scientists at the US National Institute of Mental Health in Bethesda, found that laboratory monkeys that started out as procrastinators, became efficient workers after they received brain injections that suppressed a gene linked to their ability to anticipate a reward. The scientists reported that the work ethic of rhesus macaques wasn't all that different from that of many people: "If the reward is not immediate, you procrastinate", Dr Richmond told LA Times. (This may sound a peculiarly religious idea but it has a wider application. It could be taken to mean doing something because it is worthwhile, to serve others, to make the world a better place – ed.)

Manager's mental health

Sound mental health is the very goal of any human activity - more so management. Sound mental health is that state of mind which can maintain a calm, positive poise, or regain it when unsettled, in the midst of all the external vagaries of work life and social existence. Internal constancy and peace are the pre-requisites for a healthy stress-free mind. Some of the impediments to sound mental health are:

- Greed - for power, position, prestige and money.
- Envy - regarding others' achievements, success, rewards.
- Egotism - about one's own accomplishments.
- Suspicion, anger and frustration.
- Anguish through comparisons.

The driving forces in today's businesses are speed and competition. There is a distinct danger that these forces cause erosion of the moral fibre, that in seeking the end, one permits oneself immoral means - tax evasion, illegitimate financial holdings, being "economical with the truth", deliberate oversight in the audit, too-clever financial reporting and so on. This phenomenon may be called as "yayati syndrome". In the book, the Mahabharata, we come across a king by the name of Yayati who, in order to revel in the endless enjoyment of flesh exchanged his old age with the youth of his obliging youngest son for a thousand years. However, he found the pursuit of sensual enjoyments ultimately unsatisfying and came back to his son pleading him to take back his youth. This "yayati syndrome" shows the conflict between externally directed acquisitions (extrinsic motivation) and inner value and conscience (intrinsic motivation.)

Management needs those who practice what they preach

"Whatever the excellent and best ones do, the commoners follow," says Sri Krishna in the Gita. The visionary leader must be a missionary, extremely practical, intensively dynamic and capable of translating dreams into reality. This dynamism and strength of a true leader flows from an inspired and spontaneous motivation to help others. "I am the strength of those who are devoid of personal desire and attachment. O Arjuna, I am the legitimate desire in those, who are not opposed to righteousness," says Sri Krishna in the 10th Chapter of the Gita.

In conclusion

The despondency of Arjuna in the first chapter of the Gita is typically human. Sri Krishna, by sheer power of his inspiring words, changes Arjuna's mind from a state of inertia to one of righteous action, from the state of what the French philosophers call "anomie" or even alienation, to a state of self-confidence in the ultimate victory of "dharma" (ethical action.) When Arjuna got over his despondency and stood ready to fight, Sri Krishna reminded him of the purpose of his new-found spirit of intense action - not for his own benefit, not for satisfying his own greed and desire, but for the good of many, with faith in the ultimate victory of ethics over unethical actions and of truth over untruth. Sri Krishna's advice with regard to temporary failures is, "No doer of good ever ends in misery." Every action should produce results. Good action produces good results and evil begets nothing but evil. Therefore, always act well and be rewarded. My purport is not to suggest discarding of the Western model of efficiency, dynamism and striving for excellence but to tune these ideals to India's holistic attitude of "lokasangraha" - for the welfare of many, for the good of many. There is indeed a moral dimension to business life. What we do in business is no different, in this regard, to what we do in our personal lives. The means do not justify the ends. Pursuit of results for their own sake, is ultimately self-defeating. ("Profit," said Matsushita-san in another tradition, "is the reward of correct behaviour." – ed.)

A note on the word "yoga".

Yoga has two different meanings - a general meaning and a technical meaning. The general meaning is the joining together or union of any two or more things. The technical meaning is "a state of stability and peace and the means or practices which lead to that state." The Bhagavad Gita uses the word with both meanings.

M.P.Bhattathiri.

Let us go through what scholars say about Holy Gita.

"No work in all Indian literature is more quoted, because none is better loved, in the West, than the Bhagavad-gita. Translation of such a work demands not only knowledge of Sanskrit, but an inward sympathy with the theme and a verbal artistry. For the poem it is a symphony in which God is seen in all things. The Swami does a real service for students by investing the beloved Indian epic with fresh meaning. Whatever our outlook may be, we should all be grateful for the labor that has led to this illuminating work."

*Dr. Geddes MacGregor, Emeritus Distinguished Professor of Philosophy
University of Southern California*

"The Gita can be seen as the main literary support for the great religious civilization of India, the oldest surviving culture in the world. The present translation and commentary is another manifestation of the permanent living importance of the Gita."

Thomas Merton, Theologian

"I am most impressed with A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada's scholarly and authoritative edition of Bhagavad-gita. It is a most valuable work for the scholar as well as the layman and is of great utility as a reference book as well as a textbook. I promptly recommend this edition to my students. It is a beautifully done book."

Dr. Samuel D. Atkins Professor of Sanskrit, Princeton University

"As a successor in direct line from Caitanya, the author of Bhagavad-gita As It Is is entitled, according to Indian custom, to the majestic title of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. The great interest that his reading of the Bhagavad-gita holds for us is that it offers us an authorized interpretation according to the principles of the Caitanya tradition."

Olivier Lacombe Professor of Sanskrit and Indology, Sorbonne University, Paris

"I have had the opportunity of examining several volumes published by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust and have found them to be of excellent quality and of great value for use in college classes on Indian religions. This is particularly true of the BBT edition and translation of the Bhagavad-gita."

Dr. Frederick B. Underwood Professor of Religion, Columbia University

"If truth is what works, as Pierce and the pragmatists insist, there must be a kind of truth in the Bhagavad-gita As It Is, since those who follow its teachings display a joyous serenity usually missing in the bleak and strident lives of contemporary people."

Dr. Elwin H. Powell Professor of Sociology State University of New York, Buffalo

"There is little question that this edition is one of the best books available on the Gita and devotion. Prabhupada's translation is an ideal blend of literal accuracy and religious insight."

Dr. Thomas J. Hopkins Professor of Religion, Franklin and Marshall College

"The Bhagavad-gita, one of the great spiritual texts, is not as yet a common part of our cultural milieu. This is probably less because it is alien per se than because we have lacked just the kind of close interpretative commentary upon it that Swami Bhaktivedanta has here provided, a commentary written from not only a scholar's but a practitioner's, a dedicated lifelong devotee's point of view."

Denise Levertov, Poet

"The increasing numbers of Western readers interested in classical Vedic thought have been done a service by Swami Bhaktivedanta. By bringing us a new and living interpretation of a text already known to many, he has increased our understanding manyfold."

*Dr. Edward C Dimock, Jr. Department of South Asian Languages and Civilization
University of Chicago*

"The scholarly world is again indebted to A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Although Bhagavad-gita has been translated many times, Prabhupada adds a translation of singular importance with his commentary."

*Dr. J. Stillson Judah, Professor of the History of Religions and Director of Libraries
Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California*

"Sri Prabhupada's edition thus fills a sensitive gap in France, where many hope to become familiar with traditional Indian thought, beyond the commercial East-West hodgepodge that has arisen since the time Europeans first penetrated India. Whether the reader be an adept of Indian spiritualism or not, a reading of the Bhagavad-gita As It Is will be extremely profitable. For many this will be the first contact with the true India, the ancient India, the eternal India."

*Francois Chenique, Professor of Religious Sciences Institute of Political Studies, Paris,
France*

"It was as if an empire spoke to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene, consistent, the voice of an old intelligence which in another age and climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us"

Emerson's reaction to the Gita

"As a native of India now living in the West, it has given me much grief to see so many of my fellow countrymen coming to the West in the role of gurus and spiritual leaders. For

this reason, I am very excited to see the publication of Bhagavad-gita As It Is by Sri A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. It will help to stop the terrible cheating of false and unauthorized 'gurus' and 'yogis' and will give an opportunity to all people to understand the actual meaning of Oriental culture."

*Dr. Kailash Vajpeye, Director of Indian Studies Centre for Oriental Studies,
The University of Mexico*

"The Gita is one of the clearest and most comprehensive one, of the summaries and systematic spiritual statements of the perennial philosophy ever to have been done"

Aldus Huxley

"It is a deeply felt, powerfully conceived and beautifully explained work. I don't know whether to praise more this translation of the Bhagavad-gita, its daring method of explanation, or the endless fertility of its ideas. I have never seen any other work on the Gita with such an important voice and style. . . . It will occupy a significant place in the intellectual and ethical life of modern man for a long time to come."

Dr. Shaligram Shukla Professor of Linguistics, Georgetown University

"I can say that in the Bhagavad-gita As It Is I have found explanations and answers to questions I had always posed regarding the interpretations of this sacred work, whose spiritual discipline I greatly admire. If the asceticism and ideal of the apostles which form the message of the Bhagavad-gita As It Is were more widespread and more respected, the world in which we live would be transformed into a better, more fraternal place."

Dr. Paul Lesourd, Author Professeur Honoraire, Catholic University of Paris

"When I read the Bhagavad-Gita and reflect about how God created this universe everything else seems so superfluous."

Albert Einstein

"When doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face, and I see not one ray of hope on the horizon, I turn to Bhagavad-gita and find a verse to comfort me; and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. Those who meditate on the Gita will derive fresh joy and new meanings from it every day."

Mahatma Gandhi

"In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonical philosophy of the Bhagavad-gita, in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial."

Henry David Thoreau

"The Bhagavad-Gita has a profound influence on the spirit of mankind by its devotion to God which is manifested by actions."

Dr. Albert Schweitzer

"The Bhagavad-Gita is a true scripture of the human race a living creation rather than a book, with a new message for every age and a new meaning for every civilization."

Sri Aurobindo

"The idea that man is like unto an inverted tree seems to have been current in by gone ages. The link with Vedic conceptions is provided by Plato in his Timaeus in which it states 'behold we are not an earthly but a heavenly plant.' This correlation can be discerned by what Krishna expresses in chapter 15 of Bhagavad-Gita."

Carl Jung

"The Bhagavad-Gita deals essentially with the spiritual foundation of human existence. It is a call of action to meet the obligations and duties of life; yet keeping in view the spiritual nature and grander purpose of the universe."

Prime Minister Nehru

"The marvel of the Bhagavad-Gita is its truly beautiful revelation of life's wisdom which enables philosophy to blossom into religion."

Herman Hess

"I owed a magnificent day to the Bhagavad-gita. It was the first of books; it was as if an empire spoke to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene, consistent, the voice of an old intelligence which in another age and climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

"In order to approach a creation as sublime as the Bhagavad-Gita with full understanding it is necessary to attune our soul to it."

Rudolph Steiner

"From a clear knowledge of the Bhagavad-Gita all the goals of human existence become fulfilled. Bhagavad-Gita is the manifest quintessence of all the teachings of the Vedic scriptures."

Adi Shankara

"The Bhagavad-Gita is the most systematic statement of spiritual evolution of endowing value to mankind. It is one of the most clear and comprehensive summaries of perennial

philosophy ever revealed; hence its enduring value is subject not only to India but to all of humanity."

Aldus Huxley

"The Bhagavad-Gita was spoken by Lord Krishna to reveal the science of devotion to God which is the essence of all spiritual knowledge. The Supreme Lord Krishna's primary purpose for descending and incarnating is to relieve the world of any demonic and negative, undesirable influences that are opposed to spiritual development, yet simultaneously it is His incomparable intention to be perpetually within reach of all humanity."

Ramanuja

"The Bhagavad-Gita is not separate from the Vaishnava philosophy and the Srimad Bhagavatam fully reveals the true import of this doctrine which is transmigration of the soul. On perusal of the first chapter of Bhagavad-Gita one may think that they are advised to engage in warfare. When the second chapter has been read it can be clearly understood that knowledge and the soul is the ultimate goal to be attained. On studying the third chapter it is apparent that acts of righteousness are also of high priority. If we continue and patiently take the time to complete the Bhagavad-Gita and try to ascertain the truth of its closing chapter we can see that the ultimate conclusion is to relinquish all the conceptualized ideas of religion which we possess and fully surrender directly unto the Supreme Lord."

Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati

"The Mahabharata has all the essential ingredients necessary to evolve and protect humanity and that within it the Bhagavad-Gita is the epitome of the Mahabharata just as ghee is the essence of milk and pollen is the essence of flowers."

Madhvacarya

Yoga has two different meanings - a general meaning and a technical meaning. The general meaning is the joining together or union of any two or more things. The technical meaning is "a state of stability and peace and the means or practices which lead to that state. The Bhagavad Gita uses the word with both meanings. Lord Krishna is real Yogi who can maintain a peaceful mind in the midst of any crisis."

Mata Amritanandamayi Devi.

"Karma, Bhakti, and Jnana are but three paths to this end. And common to all the three is renunciation. Renounce the desires, even of going to heaven, for every desire related with body and mind creates bondage. Our focus of action is neither to save the humanity nor to engage in social reforms, not to seek personal gains, but to realize the indwelling Self itself."

Swami Vivekananda (England, London; 1895-96)

"Science describes the structures and processes; philosophy attempts at their explanation.----- When such a perfect combination of both science and philosophy is sung to perfection that Krishna was, we have in this piece of work an appeal both to the head and heart."

Swamy Chinmayananda on Gita

"I seek that Divine Knowledge by knowing which nothing remains to be known! For such a person knowledge and ignorance has only one meaning: Have you knowledge of God? If yes, you a Jnani! If not, you are ignorant. As said in the Gita, chapter XIII/11, knowledge of Self, observing everywhere the object of true Knowledge i.e. God, all this is declared to be true Knowledge (wisdom); what is contrary to this is ignorance."

Sri Ramakrishna

Maharishi calls the Bhagavad-Gita the essence of Vedic Literature and a complete guide to practical life. It provides "all that is needed to raise the consciousness of man to the highest possible level." Maharishi reveals the deep, universal truths of life that speak to the needs and aspirations of everyone."

Maharshi Mahesh Yogi

"The Gita was preached as a preparatory lesson for living worldly life with an eye to Release, Nirvana. My last prayer to everyone, therefore, is that one should not fail to thoroughly understand this ancient science of worldly life as early as possible in one's life."

Lokmanya Tilak

"I believe that in all the living languages of the world, there is no book so full of true knowledge, and yet so handy. It teaches self-control, austerity, non-violence, compassion, obedience to the call of duty for the sake of duty, and putting up a fight against unrighteousness (Adharma). To my knowledge, there is no book in the whole range of the world's literature so high above as the Bhagavad-Gita, which is the treasure-house of Dharma nor only for the Hindus but for all mankind."

M. M. Malaviya