

THE YOGA OF MANAGEMENT

Swami Bodhananda

Spiritual Founder and President
The Sambodh Society Inc. USA, and
Sambodh Centre for Human Excellence
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Email: swami.bodhananda@gmail.com
Web: sambodh.us, sambodh.org, bodhini.com

Management is the science of optimal utilization of material resources for human satisfaction. Yoga is the discipline of organizing human resources for individual fulfilment. A healthy individual, well integrated in body-mind-spirit, alone can contribute maximally to teamwork, and pursue excellence. Yoga and management are interchangeable words.

The discipline of management started with managing physical resources and moved on to incorporating management of financial assets and finally to encompass management of human potential. Change, innovation and productivity are critical factors in the present knowledge driven economy and all those are directly connected with individual human beings.

The central challenge that corporate management faces today is motivating individual workers to cope with changes brought by global competition, technological innovations and changing human needs and aspirations. These days, in an ever changing, complex, connected, flat world, all types of organizations, not just business, but political, religious, service and philanthropic are run on corporate models.

Individuals as workers and consumers are the main focus of management. Yoga discipline helps the individual become a better worker with flexible and healthy body, balanced mind, sharp intellect, and well rooted in the spirit. Self-sufficient and self inspired individuals alone can become quick learners and better team players. If efficiency is mastery of a set of technical skills, effectiveness is mastery of one's emotions and sensitivity to other's feelings and needs. Daniel Goleman named it 'emotional intelligence' and Bhagavan Krishna termed it 'samatva buddhi' (B.Gita: 2-48). Patanjali defined yoga as management of mind, 'chittavritti nirodha'(YS: 1-2).

Ultimately, management deals with human emotions. Though economists base their theories on the assumption that man is a rational choice maker, hardly any decision is made purely on rational grounds. Almost all human decisions, especially in crisis situations, are influenced by emotions. Run on banks, panic buying and selling of shares and emergency shopping for groceries are some instances of emotional decisions based on fear and anxiety. Emotions created by somatic conditions and innate tendencies in turn determine intellectual activities,

physical actions and social events. Patanjali's concept of 'chitta vritti' or cognition is a conjoined product of memories, emotions and sensations — what phenomenologists call 'embodied action'.

Over and beyond hard skills management emphasizes the soft skills for successful work performance. Those skills are -- empathy, clarity, character, punctuality, team spirit, integrity, imagination, passion, communication, decisiveness, firmness, humility and courage. But according to Patanjali the most important skill in managing emotions and relationship is 'detached focus' or 'samyama'(YS: 3-4)

Detached focus is accessing diverse factors while focused on the task at hand. This also means accessing the spiritual energy while focused on work and relationship. Thus detached focus works bi-directionally. According to Patanjali 'samyama' is the cumulative effect of 'dharana' — concentration , 'dhyanam' — application, and 'samadhi' — mastery (Y.S: 3-1,2,3). The practitioner becomes a virtuoso in the particular domain of choice. Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita introduces three stages of development beginning from 'kausalam' — efficiency, 'samatvam' — effectiveness and 'samadhi' — fulfilment (Bhagavad Gita: 2-48,50,53)

Self-confidence based on self-knowledge is the key to management practice. There are two levels of self — the empirical, that is, 'prakriti' and, the transcendental, that is, 'purusha' (B.Gita: 13-19). The empirical includes the complex of memories, emotions, desires, thoughts and states of egos, and the transcendental is the witnessing pure consciousness. According to Yogic intuition, consciousness is bliss and is eternal. The manager managing people and scarce resources has to function without losing touch with the consciousness dimension of embodiment. Detached focus, 'samyama', means this Yogic skill.

The ultimate purpose of management is the satisfaction of a healthy, well integrated individual. Profit, market share, GDP and per capita income are poor indicators of human satisfaction. The production of goods and services has to factor environmental and health aspects as inputs. The health and safety of the consumer and the environment should be uppermost in the producer's mind. I would call it 'ethical production' and 'green products'. Similarly the safety and health of the worker is of paramount consideration. Worker is no more considered as hands and head but as organically whole persons. Consumers are not just addictive gluttons, unconsciously indulging in appetites injurious to health. The separation of producer from the consumer creates room for greed and malpractices. If producers consume their own products then there will be significantly less dissatisfaction and exploitation. This does not mean that man is incapable of self-destructive activities, like making drugs, liquor and tobacco for self consumption. But they are individual aberrations and not upscale multinational corporate activities.

Yoga advocates 'aparigraham' and 'asteyam'(YS: 2-30), sharing and austere living as solutions to greed and exploitation of resources for personal pelf and

power. And the reward is mental peace, health, inner strength and social harmony. Modern economy is based on trade, increasing the distance and decreasing the time between producer and consumer. As a result mindless exploitation of natural and human resources happen robbing nature and humans their essence and vitality. In the process all are losers — the exploiter and exploited, the producer and consumer, the buyer and seller. By sharing resources and by austere living the individual and community grow in wisdom and wellbeing. The new metrics of prosperity are human development index and gross human happiness. Yoga puts economics upside down from consumption to conservation.

The Yogi-manager is a well-balanced individual possessing cognitive, emotional and spiritual intelligence and is conscious of human embeddedness in nature and culture. Yogi-manager is a hands to mouth person, a Gandhian, for whom production and consumption is a seamless experience. In this world of division of labour, specialization, mass production, complex supply chains, rapid transport and communication networks, a simple product as a pin or a chip is result of the intersection of multitudinous coordinates involving the whole planet and its billions of people. No amount of data or analytical tools can possibly grasp the entirety of this snarled and chaotic complexity.

Practice of 'aparigraha' develops insight, foresight, far-sight and direct intuitive knowledge of chaotic complexity. Patanjali calls it 'janma kathamta sambodha' (Y.S-2-39), that is, the knowledge of birth, nature, function, relationship and death of things--which means that the Yogi develops a thousand eyes that sees through complexity that analytical reason cannot fathom. Yogi-manager's embodiment encompasses the entire ecosystem. By expanding awareness Yogi combines the producer and consumer in lived embodiment without compromising complexity. Yogi-manager is a cosmic hand to mouth person.

As individual becomes more self-sufficient and families and communities take on more and more economic activities, the power of nation states and corporations will decline and cities will grow more diffused and diversified — a network without dominant power centers. Monolithic corporations themselves will become diffused and center-less networks. Yoga celebrates diversity as 'purushas' are unique and many. Managing diversity and creating satisfaction for the worker-consumer will be the central management challenge of the future. Hence manger has to become invisible, just a space where a million flowers can bloom. Yogi by practicing 'samyama' on collective embodiment becomes invisible (Y.S-3-20), a silent space for others to discover their potential. Yogi-manager is mainly a facilitator.

Yogi aspires for capabilities like omniscience (Y.S: 3-16,17,18), invisibility(Y.S: 3-20), thought reading (Y.S-3-19), levitation (Y.S: 3-38), entering into other's body (Y.S-3-37) etc. By practicing detached focus adept Yogi accomplishes all those skills (siddhis). In a networked modern world decision making is a chaotic operation. In fact no individual can either access or process all the data and no decision is absolute or perfect. The whole decision making process is murky, fluid and

ambiguous. The Buddha is right in asserting that there is no soul, no one center nor any fixed entity. By 'samyama', or detached focus the Yogi-manager is able to master this chaotically evolving complexity. Yogi is the conscious embodiment of the evolving cosmos. Yogi-manager is able to levitate, become light, and enter into the body and mind of others, to empathise and factor the aspirations and dreams of all stake holders. The fulfilment of all stakeholders is a necessary condition for Yogi-manager's fulfilment. Yogi-manager's embodiment is cosmic in dimension.

'Samyama' or detached focus is bidirectional. Its gaze falls equally on the self and the other (purusha and prakriti). The linear binary problematic of zero sum game, of your gain-is-my-loss syndrome, is alien to the Yogi spirit. The Yogi-manager is a game changer and win-win player. There is no garbage, no nuclear waste, in the yoga cyclical process — everything is recycled, everything is food or manure for everything else. This is a case of the eaten eating the eater. The Yogi in embodied action harnesses both the powers of the self and the world and attains 'samadhi', bliss in dynamic relationships. Patanjali uses two significant words to describe this dynamic state: 'nirbija' (Y.S: 1-51) and 'kaivalya' (Y.S: 4-34). Nirbija means that process which leaves no waste or pollution, and kaivalya means that which has no trace of harmful toxic. Yogi-manager's decisions and actions are non-exploitative and do not invoke resistance. Yogi has no enemies and has no enmity. Yogi-manager is truly nonviolent — 'ahimsa pratishtayam tatsannidhau vaira tyaga' (Y.S: 2-35). Yogi is free from violence because of cognisance of and empathy to the insecurities and fears of others. Awareness of other's insecurities makes the yogi compassionate, open and fearless.

The ultimate test of management is pollution and waste free production, distribution and consumption, which is the state of 'nirbija samadhi'. The Yogi-manager in action is in 'nirbija samadhi'.

Subhamastu

Source: www.sambodh.us; www.sambodh.com

© The Sambodh Society Inc. USA. All Rights Reserved