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Spiritual Teacher Forum

Integral Management

By Rohit Puri



Spiritual Teacher Forum

# Integral Management

The School of Management Theory

Using Spirituality & Mindfulness

Presence to help, support

and encourage, Business and Management

Spiritual Teacher Forum

Edited & Authored by

Rohit Puri

## Chapter 2

### Work and Ideals

Dr. Desh Raj Sirswal

**"You certainly have the right to do your duty but not the claim over the fruits whenever; never sees yourself as the cause of the results as you should never let attachment accompany a religious duty.**

-The Bhagavad Gita

#### Introduction

Peoples often question the relevance of spiritualism in their modern life. They want to know why they should know what they are within and why should they bother to change themselves. With rapid changes in the socio economic aspects of life all over the world, peoples are under intense pressure, and are seeking something, which will help them to successfully deal with union with the universal and transcendent existence. Today many people are shifting to spiritual approach to life but relevant number does not know how. We all desire a work experience that can fit neatly with our personal lives. We all seek balance. Too often however people's work life overpowers the rest of their life. And when that happens, we can very easily find ourselves struggling to keep up in all areas of our lives. Life is not all-play -no -work. Neither it is all-work-no-play. It has its own course of mixed actions. Work culture also plays an important role in human life. It means work-related activities and the meanings attached to such activities in the framework of norms and values regarding work these activities, norms and values are generally conceptualized in an organization. Understanding this chemistry and accepting the facts as its, is the starting point of a better life. When this happens the

discussion has developed into a full-fledged philosophical one. And we come to ethics or moral philosophy and spiritualism. In this chapter we will study the philosophical outlook of work as a moral ideal in the form of karma.

#### The Moral Ideals

Ethics is a branches of philosophy; it is moral philosophy of philosophical thinking about morality, moral problems, and moral judgments. Moral principles are the guides to actions and make public life worth living. Describing moral ideal Frankena said that, "Having a moral ideal wants to be a person of a certain sort, wanting to have a certain trait of character rather than others, for example, moral courage or perfect integrity. That is why the use of exemplary persons like Socrates, Jesus, or Martin Luther King has been such an important part of moral education and self-development, and it is one of the reason for writing and reading of biographies or of novels and epics in which types of moral personalities are portrayed, even if they are not all heroes or saints."<sup>1</sup>

Morality is an attempt discover the nature of the good life and then to live by it. The task of morality is to seek those principles which enable men to live at their best in their personal lives and community relationships. The moral thinker tries to reflect and understand the ways of living and the principles which enable men to live life best in their personal and inter related lives with others. Our thoughts and actions shape our lives. They have an effect on the quality of our lives. A great extent individual ways of acting, feeling and thinking are controlled by the group. What is customary becomes the habit of the individual; morality makes the habit of the individual. Morality makes us who we are as individual and as a society.

#### Work in Indian Tradition

In traditional Indian literature a lots of discussion is made on how to work and wok better. The popular idea Bhagavad-Gita's ideal of anaskata karma or karma yoga. It is performance of a profession as a

yajna (a yajna of totality). A yajna is a collective ad corporate enterprise for the sake of universal well being. This is the message of Isavasyopanishad and the Gita. Every profession is to be undertaken as a yajna. It is not to be done for agent's selfish ends. Every existence is part of the corporate whole and is integrally related to the whole and its remaining parts. There is fundamental unity if all existences. The basis of yajna is satya (steadfastness in truth) and dharma (regulated order and virtuous conduct). The conception of Loksangraha is also associated with this conception as it is a conception related to the welfare of the people of public welfare, or collective good. It may also convey the sense of doing actions for the sake of other people's welfare, because in the context of this concept, Gita asks us to renounce selfish interests and so do actions for others. Therefore, it is a clear indication of making distinction between selfish acts and altruistic acts, between selfishness (svārtha) and altruism (paramārtha). As, "There is no point in merely saying we are all a family. We have to beloved it, we have to show it, we have to behave, and we have to walk the talk."<sup>2</sup>

We can say that according to ancient thinking the yajna, a mean to save the worldly creatures from natural hazards in Vedic period because a way to attain heavenly position.

These two are rooted in Rta which is at the base of cosmic process and sustains it. The law of which Varuna is the custodian is called the Rta. Rta literally means "the cause of things". It stands for law in general and the immanence of justice. This conception must have been originally suggested by the regulation of the movements of sun, moon, and stars, the alternations of the day and of night, and of the seasons. Rta denotes the order of the world. Everything that is ordered in the universe has Rta for its principles. It corresponds to the universals of Plato. The world of expression is a shadow or reflection of the Rta, the permanent reality which remains unchanged in all the welter of imitation. The universal is prior to the particular and so the Vedic seer thinks that Rta exists before the manifestation of all phenomena. The shifting series of the world are the varying expression of the constant Rta. So Rta is called the father of all.<sup>3</sup>

After the emergence of Rta as a cosmic order it is also supposed as the settled will of supreme God, the law of morality ad righteousness as well. Even the gods cannot transgress it. We see in the conception of Rta a development of physical to the divine. Rta originally meant the "established route of the world, of the sun, moon and stars morning and evening, day and night." Gradually it became the path of morality to be followed by man and the law of righteousness observed even by gods. "the dawn follows the path of Rta, the right path; as if she knew them before. She never oversteps the regions. The sun follows the path of Rta." The whole universe is founded on Rta and moves in it. The conception of Rta reminds us of words worth's invocation to duty.<sup>4</sup> By this conception of Rta, the law of karma originated and accepted by most of Indian philosophical systems. There are some concepts we generally use to highlight universalistic applicability of ancient Indian thoughts which are related to man, society, living creatures and ideal conception of human life. In this ideal life conception we can use varna-dharma, purusartha, niskama karma, savadharna and loksangraha. Within these conceptions mostly are related to teachings of Srimad Bhagavad-Gita.

While discussing important conceptions of Bhagavad Gita we should have in the mind of the relevance of Upanishadic thoughts. It may be said that, "...the entire Upanishadic literature tries to de-condition the human mind from negative ideas and induces the positive attitude and ways of thinking by making the person aware about moral and ethical practices. Need of the hour is that we must understand the message of Upanishads about living a healthy life. It is only in this manner that the problem of aggression and violence of the human personality can be solved in a positive sense."<sup>5</sup> While discussing all these we should have in the mind about practical aspects of every conception.

### Philosophy of Work

The Bhāgavad-Gita is a book of light and love, but it is also a book of life. Here we can find Jnana, Bhakti and karma together. The word

karma is connected with the Sanskrit root *Kri*, which means we can find in the English words "create" and "creation". Karma is work and work is life. The word karma means also "sacred work" and is connected with the sacrifices of the Vedas, the ritual of religion. This meaning has to be considered in reading the Gita. Karma, work or action is often contradicted in the Bhagavad-Gita with *Jnana*, or contemplation with inner spiritual life. The way the great spiritual change that took place in the Upanishad from external ritual they went into inner life. This contrast is also found in the Gita, but in the Gita the word karma has acquired a deep meaning and this leads to one of the most sublime conceptions of man. All life is action, but every little finite action should be a surrender to the infinite, even as breathing is seems to be the receiving of the gift of life and the breathing out a surrender into the infinite life. Every little work is life, however humble, can become an act of creation and therefore a means of salvation because in all true creation we reconcile the finite with the infinite.<sup>6</sup> Hence the joy is the essence of every creation. When vision is pure and creation is pure there is always joy. We can have a look on the Gita's conception by following points:

### The Method of disinterested Action

The Gita focuses more on the right approach to the performance of karma rather than running away from karma. "No action can be isolated from finitude. The vibration set up by every finite individual or entity is the action thereof. We are made up of various layers of personality and every layer is vibrating with a tendency to overcome the limitations of finitude, with an urge to move onward, forward, for the realization of a wider finitude, a more comprehensive one, with the final intention of a total abolition of all finitude by an establishment in the Infinite. Until we are established in infinitude, we shall be active and, therefore, there is nothing in the entire universe that can be regarded as really inactive. Inaction is a misnomer, and the absence of initiative in action in a physical form cannot be regarded as inaction."<sup>7</sup>

The Gita says that one should do the duties performing to one's class and stage of life. This definitely settles the question as to what the

duties of man are; but there remains another question as to how these duties are to be discharged? What should be the spirit of a man while doing his duties? The Gita differentiates between two types of spirit of doing actions: viz. (i) interested spirit (*Sakamata*) and (ii) disinterested spirit (*Nishkamata*). Similarly, Immanuel Kant distinguishes between two mode of doing action, one for the sake of the consequences of the action and another for the sake of action itself. The Gita's interestedness means a spirit of doing action in life for achieving certain results therefore. The desire to obtain definite fruits of action is one motive of action which is interestedness. But if the motive of doing an action is to do it simply, because it is right or it is duty without having any concern as to what sorts of results is shall produce, it is called disinterested spirit (*Nishkamata*). This spirit means doing duty for duty's sake and not for the sake of certain expected resulting from that duty. The Gita clearly prefers the disinterested spirit of doing one's duty to the interested spirit.<sup>8</sup>

### The Way to Disinterested Spirit

It is easy to praise the disinterested spirit of doing one's duties in life, but it is most difficult task to have such a spirit of doing one's duties in life, but it is most difficult task to have such as spirit. This is exactly is the problem before the Gita. As a matter of fact every man is inclined to grab the fruits of his actions and even his mental constitution impels him to do so, even on meeting failures rapidly in this way, he is not able to overcome his desire for fruits of actions. Frustrations and miseries too dampen the human spirit, but fail to change it the Gita says that a definite internal transformation of human nature is needed to generate a spirit for true disinterestedness and almost all the paths discussed in the Gita, are directed to achieve it. There are various disciplines suggested by the Gita which are capable of changing human nature and producing the necessary spirit of doing duty for duty's sake. Among these disciplines which are called *yogas*, the path of knowledge, devotion, mental equipoise, concentration and renunciation are worth mentioning here. Every path is meant to bring about an internal transformation in man which makes him fir to achieve his goal.<sup>9</sup> It is said that, "When the mind establishes itself in

the state of detachment, what remains is a process which builds up energy without leakage. The more loose and natural you are about the world and its affairs; greater will be your energy content. It's not the involvement in the world but it's attachment to your own fixed ideas which is the source of energy loss. When you lose energy, you get typically involved in the vicious cycle of fighting for energy in the outside world as if it exists in the outside world."<sup>10</sup>

### Svadharna (One's Own Duty)

The concept of one's own duty in the Bhagavad-Gita is related to the doctrine of disinterested spirit of doing duties. Disinterestedness is only a spirit or motive of doing actions in life, but what actions or duties are to be done with this spirit, the answer of the Bhagavad Gita lies in its conception of Svadharna. Gita always recommends that one should always do one's duties, and never bother about their consequences; one should not desire the fruits of his actions, but do actions for the sake of duties; are to be done for the sake of duties and not for the sake of any fruits thereof. Svadharna consists of all those duties which are to be done by a particular person, which belong to him and none else pre-entail his personal moral responsibility. Kant advocates the principle of 'duty for duty sake'. A moral life is an autonomous life. Moral directives are directives issued by practical reason. The aim of life is virtue and not pleasure. According to Kant, goodwill is the only jewel which shines in its own light. Practical reason itself enforces moral laws upon itself. Emotion has no place in a moral life. Kant holds that it is not moral to help another one is pained by his sorrow and the help is consequent upon this feeling.

### The Ideal Life

In Vedic and Upanishadic world, man is bound by some duties and obligations. These duties are not mere boundations, but, in fact, are the real mode of social freedom. Man is to owe some debts or duties to gods, man and animals. The duties are distinguished into (i) those to the gods, (ii) those to the seers, (iii) those to manes, (iv) those to men,

(v) those to the lower creations. He who discharges them all is the good man. In all cases of evil doing, confession is supposed to make the guiltless. Asceticism is also held up as a worthy ideal, for the gods are supposed to have ideal, for the gods are supposed to have obtained divine rank by austerities, truth, godliness, honor to parents, kindness to animals, love to man, abstinence from theft, murder and adultery, were inculcated as the essentials of a good life.<sup>11</sup>

This conception directly associated with this idea that duty, obligation responsibilities are the necessary part of work-culture. It is said that, "Many people feel that they are weighed down by duties, obligations and responsibilities. They don't realize that complaining about carrying out their duties is like complaining about having to eat. Eating is not only necessary, but can be a source of great pleasure. The same is true for performing our responsibilities. We actualize our potential by fulfilling our obligations, which leads to pleasure and happiness."<sup>12</sup> To have a dedicated life style also play an important role in suffering. "Whatever has happened to cause you to suffer grief and loneliness, you can be sure of one thing; you will be led by the lord in your recovery. He will definitely let you know when you are becoming excessive or getting out of balance. If you are willing to listen to His Spirit."<sup>13</sup> The following Sanskrit verse sums up the Indian ethical ideal:

"Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah Sarve Santu Niraamayah  
Sarve Bhadrani pashyantu maakashchit Dukha bhagabhavet."

(May all be at ease; may all be sinless; may all experience happiness; none may experience suffering.) Well being not only of human beings, but of all the living creatures is the cherished goal of all Indian philosophies.<sup>14</sup>

In order to have a prosperous life and society we must do what is morally good in any instance. If moral rules are not followed, then the society would be converted into anarchy because of lack of rules and regulations. Human ends are achieved

practically and we get direction of principles will keep man away from becoming selfish and hypocritical and will guide them to ever higher level of living. However, it should be kept in mind that in exceptional specific situation the action may not be determined by such principles; for two conscientious persons may conflict with each other when complete loyalties or duties are involved; when the two sides in a dispute are balance fairly evenly. Two equally conscientious persons may take to different courses of actions.

many evil practices, vice sins arise. This calls for professional ethics, regulations, control and management.

No doubt, ethics, moral and values in business is proving essential more than just public relations posturing to the long-term success of companies in today's globalised economy. Philosophical management must teach young people self control, self-respect, self-effort, self-dependence and help building character, which has positive habits, integrated, contemplative and active life style, desire to learn, excel progress and practice what preach approach. To guide ethical conduct one can distill ethical principles and variations down to the basic values like utilitarianism, individual rights and distributive justice.<sup>15</sup> It is important to note that while we are under work load and feeling the stress, then to be a good listener also play an important role to cope with work stress. It is important that, "Effective listening is a way of showing the people in your personal and professional relationships that they have your attention and your respect. It is also a way of showing that you are interested in them, in what they have to say and in keeping your relationship alive. Your friends, your children and your students will like you for letting them talk and for listening attentively to them while they express themselves."<sup>16</sup>

In the end of this discussion we can say that every profession stands for a purposive, goal-oriented and skillful performance of an action. It has to be performed for survival, self-expression, and self-fulfillment and for social obligation. Its ultimate goal is self-enhancement and self-realization but its immediate aim is to earn livelihood. In an ideal situation there has to be a balance between the ultimate and the immediate objectives but very often the latter overtakes the former resulting in greed and amassing of wealth. As a consequence of this

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