SCALING NEW HEIGHTS

Value-Based Management

Ordinarily, a man's life is on the lower plains of materialistic possessions and sense gratification. Listening to the call of the Gita, he slowly climbs to the heights of understanding the emotions of himself and of others. Deeper the Gita goes into him, the higher he rises to see clearly the long-range needs of himself and of humanity. Scaling new heights in his study and meditation, he reaches the peak of Self-knowledge where his life shines as an example of flawless management.

"Time-management is a misnomer; the right word is self-management," observes Stephen R. Covey, the author of the best seller, "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People." Right perception of the situation, clear sense of priorities, and adequate self-control in ourselves are the bedrock of able management, be it of time, finance, people or any other department of our complex life. In professional and other areas, the crux of the issue is “who has the problem?” more than “what is the problem?” This may seem an exaggeration, but even the medical science has now come to increasingly believe that the patient is as crucial as the nature of his disease when it comes to predicting the cure. His perception, self-confidence and reactions are factors that affect the process of regaining normal health.

A simple definition of management runs as, “getting things done.” When an instrument is employed to do a job, the quality of the instrument and the skill with which it is used are both important. Swami Chinmayanandaji often called our body, mind and intellect (BMI) as the 'equipment' through which life functions. Ordinarily, the science of management teaches us various outer skills for our BMI to deal with a challenge. Gita teaches us how to bring about a tremendous improvement in the quality of our BMI. 'Mind is the doer,' remarked Gurudev and exhorted us to mind our mind.

Balance in Life

Lord Krishna says that we attain perfection when we are moderate in eating and sporting, work and rest, sleep and staying awake (6.17). Overdoing something is as bad as not ding at all. The so-called hardworking people perhaps

have harmed the society more than the lazy ones! Carried away by their own ambition or ideology, they put so much pressure on others' minds. Workaholics are no less an ugly mark of the face of life than idlers and escapists. Gita calls for doing justice to the whole of life. We have to find out our *svadharma* (right role) in domestic, professional and social contexts and have to strive to live by it. Slow and steady wins the race! Slow down and achieve more! Do not hurry up in climbing the ladder, only to find it was leaning against the wrong wall!

Detach and Attach

The beauty of life is we are given opportunities, again and again, every moment to choose the higher and reject the lower. Life is so patient with us, it never gives up on us. It is a very interesting game. We come face to face with many temptations, prospects of petty gratification even as we are set to achieve a goal. "Duty before pleasure," goes the wise saying. Sri Krishna teaches, "The senses are habitually attracted towards gratifying objects; you should not be carried away by their attachments" (3.34). Even an ability to delay (if not reject) an egoistic gratification goes far in better self-management. Look before you leap! Deciding rightly becomes second nature to us when we have enough alertness to guard against useless distractions.

Stress Reduction

Someone wisely observed, “Stress is the natural outcome of pretending.” If we project an image of our own, we move away from the reality and it is stressful to protect that image. Why not be ourselves? Being honest to ourselves and sincerely striving to understand and perfect ourselves brings about true and healthy growth in us. To cling to an imaginary status of ours is the essence of egoistic living. Gita says that we are just not bound when we act without a trace of ego and with inner detachment even when our work is of gigantic proportions (18.17). Lord Krishna himself was an incomparable manager who moved mountains and yet remained calm always. The first step is to give up the pursuit of personal gratification, the appeasement of the "I, me, and my". This is renunciation of fruits of work (*phala-tyaga*). This naturally implies putting others first or service mindedness. This *karma yoga* is praised as freeing us from agitations. "Though working, he is not bound!" (4.22). "Though engaged in work, he (as though) does nothing" (4.20). "Though acting, he does not incur sin" (4.21).

All these point out the wondrous fact that Gita reveals to us, which is, "It is not work that stresses us, but certain false expectations and notions." When we give them up, we can do more work and suffer less (or no) stress.

Relationships

Human relations play a major role in shaping management of any issue. The vision of Gita has no room for bitterness in any relationship. *Become better, and not bitter*. Centered in selflessness, the worker in us has no reason to envy or hate anybody. We do not covet somebody else's possessions nor are we greedy in any manner. Our priority is to find out how we can contribute rather than how we can make profit." We do not compete with each other; we rather complete each other. We are not aggressive; we understand and we are inspired by a higher vision. Our perception of others is not divisive; it is unifying. Lord Krishna points out, "That is the highest knowledge where we see the oneness in all beings and where we perceive the undivided amidst the divided!" (18.20). Would my tongue be ever angry with my teeth because they bite it? In the same way, true spirituality leaves no scope for any revenge. The more we abide by the Self, all the negativities like lust, greed, envy etc., evaporate. All our relationships will have the stamp of spontaneous friendliness. We reach out to each other and help each other to grow further.

Efficiency

Personal anxieties drain away our energy in ordinary life. The brooding over pleasures, seeking attention, wanting to be talked well of etc., form a part of the human psyche usually and people rarely suspect these to be against our true nature (called in Vedanta the Self). An analogy in physics is of conducting materials in which electricity flows. Usually there is quite a bit of loss on the way. Research has found now 'superconductors' where no losses take place. All the energy at one end reach the other. In the same way, a karma yogi of the Gita permits no loss of energy in himself. All the love and knowledge that God has given him flows in their entirety to the field of his work!

In summary, the spiritual awakening the Gita gifts to us amounts to a fundamental change in the very way we see our problems. This change of perception - of ourselves and the world - heralds a significant improvement in all our management.