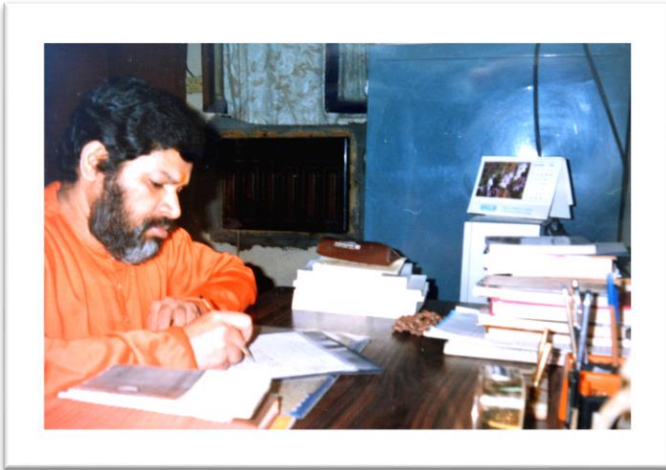


Values for Corporate Leadership

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There is a fear among many that we might be swept of our feet in the process of integrating our economy with the global economy. The challenge before us is how do we globalize and march into the forefront amongst the best in the world while retaining our Indian-ness and preserving our culture.

THE CHALLENGE is of competitiveness with roots.

THE MIND-SET is to have a shared philosophy that is energetically alive and continuously evolving.

THE REQUIREMENT is one of historical relatedness with contextual sensitivity.

THE ISSUE IS to retain Indian-ness, preserve our culture while we globalize, and to evolve a system of effective and collaborative advantage.

In this context, it would be appropriate to refer to the three fundamental principles of effective management:

1. Relationship between the individual and his/her work-world (the organisation) must be of the nature of progressive evolution. Beyond the immediate reasons (of physical

sustenance) an individual has, for entering an organisation, and of the organisation's entertaining him/her, both should perceive strong sensibility.

Thus may the employer and the employee look at each other with the eye of friendliness: *mitrasya chakshusha ekshamahe*. This stays equally true for global alliances amongst organisations located in different parts of the world.

2. The employer-employee or the organisation-individual relationship should be more than a mere exchange, of getting something in return for the efforts made. Their relationship should involve collaboration, of creating a new value altogether. Their relationship is to be not only of expression but also of expansion for both the players.

This thought has been very beautifully expressed in Chapter 3 of the Bhagavad Gita:

devan bhavayetanena te deva bhavayantu vah
parasparam bhavayantah sreyah paramavapsyatha

Bhagavad Gita 3:11

"You cherish the organisation with your effort and the organisation will cherish you, and together you attain greater prosperity".

3. Though related to this is the principle that to effectively globalize, a narrow opportunistic view of relationships will not help us launch as international players. We need to step into the world of international business strengthened by strong internal infrastructure of cultural belongingness (Indian-ness) while exploring and experimenting with other systems the world over.

Thus the suggestion is 'to keep looking inwards and examine yourself while functioning in the outer world':

avrtta chakshuh (Katopanishad 11:1.1). The suggestion is to stay related to your cultural roots.

With the discovery of difference among cultures or what many term as 'cultural diversity' the effort to evolve a set of values for corporate leadership becomes multiplex--a task which is both complex and has multiple issues interspersed. Let us attempt to identify some of these values:

- a. The corporate leaders are no longer centers of excellence in themselves.

Instead they strive to build organisations that are centers of excellence. Thus, by 'multiplier effect' excellence nurtured and cherished promotes higher and higher order of excellence.

This cycle of excellence is set into motion only when the motives of CEOs are positive (to pursue future opportunities) and not negative (to mask weaknesses or escape a difficult situation).

The corporate leaders, therefore should exemplify the thought: panditah na anusocanti - 'leaders should not buckle under pressure, but happily invite challenges'. Enjoy uncertainties and remain undaunted by unknown situations [which are faced in today's transcultural environment].

- b. There is the understanding that the sum is more than the parts.

There is a worldview of mutual relatedness and interdependence. The approach is to do yajna karma - team work and collective effort for the realization of higher goals. The Bhagavad Gita also reinforces: svadharme nidhanam sreyah paradharmo bhayavaha - the assertion is that no individual can work independently. Instead he should contribute his share to the collective effort and thus enhances his value.

Further, Vedanta says Tattvamasi: you are infinitely powerful; you have the power within you. Corporate leaders who choose to empower the employees within organisational framework thus provide them the means to use their energies for organisational advantage.

- c. Both corporate leaders and their employees should enter into a pact of excellence by following the maxim of: yajnarthat karmanonyatra (Gita 3:9)-to do work as a yajna. When you change your attitude towards work and continue to do your work you will be able to unfold your inner potential. That is freedom. That is happiness.

Reinforced by such value system, the corporate leader of today could step into global business world of critical competitiveness and yet be able to lead a happy and fulfilled life.

yetra yogesvara krisna yetra partho dhanurdharah
tatra srirvijayobhutir dhruvanitir matir mama

Bhagavad Gita 18:77

Whenever you have your consciousness rooted in divinity and whenever you act in this world from that consciousness as a self-giving worker, not for any gross benefit, but just to express, just to be yourself, such work brings prosperity, peace and well-being.

If we can modify our thinking to bear a parallel to the work values discussed here, we could evolve work systems and work places to become centers of creative togetherness.

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