



Spirituality and Management/ Business: 9 Management lessons from Mahabharata

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ABSTRACT

The Mahabharata is the longest known epic poem and has been described as "the longest poem ever written" its epic narrative of the Kurukshetra War and the fates of the Kaurava and the Pandava princes, the Mahabharata contains philosophical and devotional material, such as a discussion of the four "goals of life" or purusharthas. It contains many lessons that can be implemented in the management & business. The article deals with examples & different lessons from Mahabharata & spiritual concepts that can be helpful in management & business.

KEYWORDS : Spirituality, Management, Mahabharata, Pandava, Kaurava

INTRODUCTION

Definitions of spirituality

- A number of definitions and perspectives of spirituality appear within the literature. We will next examine some of the most popular viewpoints of spirituality including the intrinsic-origin view, the religious view, and the existentialist perspective.
- According to Sri Sri Ravi Shankar "spirituality is that which enhances human values such as love, compassion and enthusiasm."
- According to Guillery's (2000, p. 33) Spirituality is a concept or a principle that originates from the inside of an individual.
- According to (Mitroff & Denton, 1999, p.86) the basic feeling of being connected with one's complete self, others, and the entire universe
- According to (Dehler & Welsh, 1994, p.19) a specific form of work feeling that energizes action.
- According to (Harlos, 2000, p.613) Secular or sacred values aimed at transcendence toward our ultimate values
- According to (Butts, 1999, p.329) Deeply held values that guides our life and work practices.
- According to (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000, p. 137) The recognition that employee have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in context of community.
- According to (Konz & Ryan, 1999, p.202) The particular way the human person in all its richness, the relationship of the human person to the transcendent, the relationship between human persons, and the way to achieve personal growth are envisioned.

Definitions of management

- According to George R. Terry, "Management Is a distinct process consisting of planning, organizing, actuating and controlling; utilizing in each both science and art, and followed in order to accomplish pre-determined objectives."
- According to Peter Drucker Management is a multipurpose organ that manages a business and manages Managers and manages Workers and work.
- According to Mary Parker Follett Management, is the "art of getting things done through people"
- According to F.W. Taylor, "Management is the art of knowing what you want to do and then seeing that they do it in the best and the cheapest way."
- According to Harold Koontz, "Management is the art of getting things done through others and with formally organized groups."

2. Literature review:

Prasad. L Kaipa(2014) says about making wise decisions: leadership lessons from Mahabharata; is to help leaders to reflect on how to make difficult decisions by developing practical wisdom based on Indian traditions.

Jayen K. Thaker(2013) This article it is tried to discover whether in Indian mythology principles of management were present or not. Famous Indian mythological books like Mahabharat, Ramayan, Bhagwat

Geeta, Ved etc. have been taken as base for the study.

David Geiglen(2012) This study documents the workplace spirituality empirical research including defining and measuring; demographics; implementation; effect on attitudes; impact on performance; and WS effect on ethical decision making. Many of the empirical studies demonstrate a positive effect of WS on job commitment, satisfaction, and performance.

David W. Miller & Timothy Ewest(2011) seeks to review the growing body of quantitative and theoretical research on the field of workplace spirituality, with particular attention to determining the nature, aims, and unmet needs specific to scale development for spirituality in the workplace and faith at work

Dr. Fahri Karakas(2010) reviewed spirituality at work literature and to explore how spirituality improves employees' performances and organizational effectiveness. Three different perspectives are introduced on how spirituality benefits employees and supports organizational performance based on the extant literature: a) Spirituality enhances employee well-being and quality of life; b) Spirituality provides employees a sense of purpose and meaning at work; c) Spirituality provides employees a sense of interconnectedness and community.

Swami Bodhananda(2010) Much of the contemporary and modern management and leadership principles are learnt from conduct of war, church organizations and royal practices. The Mahabharata is such a rich storehouse of management insights. It is the story of a deadly conflict and eventually all consuming war between two royal houses, the Pandavas and the Kauravas, of ancient India.

3. Business and spirituality

Business is to give less and take more. If a banana is worth ten cents, it will be sold for twelve. You take more and you give less in business. However, charity is to give more than you take. The backbone of business is trust. If trust is broken, business cannot succeed. Greed kills the consciousness. That's what we saw with the financial crisis. To prevent this, it is essential for companies like John Paul Mitchell Systems to grow. Paul Mitchell is an example that shows that an individual need not be unethical to be rich and successful

GDP to GDH

European Union, talking quite a bit about GDH, GDP we are moving towards Gross Domestic Happiness (GDH). Yoga is something that can aid that; it can be a very useful tool. A large percentage of our population today is suffering from depression. Just popping a Prozac or anti-depressants will not help. We need something that is so natural, as natural as our breath, that we can use and elevate our spirit and feel that much needed happiness; that pursuit of happiness that everybody is after. You are complemented, or you accomplished something you wanted to accomplish, you

will find that there is something in you that is expanding. At the same time, when we face a failure or when someone insults you, what happens? There is something in you that shrink. So, yoga is putting your attention on this something in you that seem to be expanding when you are happy, and crushing or contracting when you feel unhappy.

Faith is an Important Factor in Business

Krishna says in Bhagvad Gita: 'wherever one has faith and whomsoever one has faith on, that faith is given by me'. It is the self which translates itself into faith. Faith comes from the self. So he says, 'I am the one who is giving you faith'. This is similar to what I say, even love is a gift. If you feel love for someone, don't think you can take credit for it. If you are in love with somebody, that is also a gift. Joy is a gift, time is a gift; almost everything in life is a gift, or a blessing.

Further Krishna says: 'I have given faith, and with the faith that I have given a person engages in worship, and through this worship he attains his desires. And this is ordained by me. I have ordained this natural law'. See, doctors give you medicine, but suppose you don't have faith in the doctor, will you take that medicine? No you won't. And even if you do take it without having faith, will it work? No, it will not work. Faith is a factor in every function. Any function, anything you do, faith is an important factor.

3. 4 Cs of Business and Spirituality

Commitment: We must take it for granted that people are committed. Never question the commitment of the person. If you tell someone that they are not committed enough, it is not going to help them to be more committed. You must tell them, 'Hey, you are really committed', and re-affirm their commitment. Commitment is actually there in everybody but sometimes it is covered with stress, misunderstanding, and personal issues of many types.

Connectivity: Make people connected. Throw open chances for discussions. Discussions create a sense of connectivity. Sharing your problems or issues creates connectivity. Discussions, sharing, and listening will create connectivity. Whether you follow what the opinions of others is a different thing. At least you must have the attitude to listen; listening and respecting. Some people may have completely different opinion. Sometimes you may think they are very stupid, even then you should listen respectfully. Respect people for what they are, not because they are intelligent or dumb; talented or talented. Don't you think so? Isn't this a new way of looking at things?

Just respect people. They may have the dumbest ideas, or have no ideas, but still giving them respect creates that connectivity. When people feel connected then they also feel protected. And when they are protected, their integrity level goes higher. We all want people with integrity, don't we?

Compassion: we are not machines; we are living human beings with a heart. And our expression of compassion is absolutely essential in a working atmosphere.

You don't have to be compassionate all the time, then there is a disadvantage of people taking advantage of you, and discipline may collapse. But time to time, now and then, at least you must exhibit your compassion. And make a group and get involved in activity which can invoke the compassion of the team, such as, taking up a service project (CSR - Corporate service responsibility). As a team take up some relief work, or do any activity which is not profit motivated. That is what we call CSR. Such activities bring a good bonding between the team.

Creativity: many times, an employee feels strangled in a setup. They feel that their creativity is not being utilized, or they are not able to come up with creativity. Provide some opportunity for people to express their creativity. Give employees an opportunity to come up with some creativity, they do it and it creates such a beautiful energy and a fantastic atmosphere in the organization.

Leadership has a role in promoting spirituality, or does spirituality have a role to play in bringing about Leadership. Both are true. Spirituality promotes leadership. It helps you take up responsibility.

What does Leadership mean? It means responsibility and inspiration together. It means walking the talk. It is these three things together. A good leader walks the talk, takes responsibility and inspires people around to also walk the talk and take responsibility. When you see an organization or other people doing this, then you also feel inspired to do the same and many others also feel like doing the same.

Teamwork is very essential in any organization.

The human touch is also important; though not too much of it

We need to keep in mind that emotional and ego-related issues should not enter business. When these issues creep into any organization's structure, then they slow hinder the progress of the organization. If a person in an organization thinks "This person did not invite me", or "That person does not respect me", or "This person takes all the credit", etc., then that is no good. We need to do away with these kinds of small bickering

Effective communication- You should put forth your good ideas also. It is not enough to just do good work and say, "I am so good and I do so much good work". You also have to project it; communicate your good work in the organization. There are some favorable and some unfavorable times in any organization.

4. Management lessons from Mahabharata

Preparation: you need to do proper preparation Pandavas for the war did a proper preparation & turned their weakness into their strength

For example: Arjuna set out on a mission to acquire divyastras, Yudhishthira acquired teachings from different Rishis. In management also we need to do proper preparation so as to acquire certain goals without preparation nothing can be achieved, so try to **"Turn your weakness into your Strength."**

Allies: It deals with interpersonal relationship. Maintain good relation with everyone in the organization. Also build a good network with the outsider of the organization as because you never know who will be helpful to you in future.

For example: Pandavas; No wealth. No power of their own. But they had made powerful allies all over India

- Panchala through Marriage with Darupadi.
- Dwarka through marriage with Arjuna and Subhadra.
- Magadh through marriage of Shadava and Vijaya.
- Chedi through marriage of Nakula and Karenmayi.
- Kasi through marriage of Bhima and Balandhara.
- Kekaya through marriage of Yudhishthira and Devika.
- Matsya through marriage of Abhimanyu and Uttara.
- The Rakshasas through marriage of Bhima and Hidimba.
- The Nagas through marriage of Arjuna and Uloopi.

Leadership: A good example of distributed leadership is seen in war of Mahabharata, likewise if in organizations also it has been followed then it will be beneficial to both the individual as well as to the organization. A good leader will always Share responsibilities so that he/she can focus on their work & achieve the goal.

For example: Pandavas had distributed leadership. Seven commanders for the seven divisions (1 man command 1 akshouhini)

- Virat (King of Matsya).
- Drupad (King of Pancala).
- Sahadeva (King of Magadha).
- Dhrshtaketu (King of Chedi).
- Satyaki (Only warrior from Dwarka).
- Shikhandi (Prince of Pancala).
- Dhrshtadyrna — Commander in Chief.
- Arjuna — Supreme Commander.
- Krishna — Arjuna's charioteer and counselor.

Team spirit: The employees should be trained to achieve a common goal. There should be a feeling of team spirit, if it is not present in the employees than they will work individually not as a team.

For example: kauravas were not having team spirit as all of them fought their individual wars, Bhishma fought for his vow to protect the throne of Hastinapur, Karna fought to prove his mantle against Arjuna & friendship of Duryodhana

Individual motives: There should be a common goal but the individual had their individual targets, their own agendas which should become one with the teams' agenda.

For example: Pandavas had given all the individuals their goal they have decided who will try to kill whom

- Dhritsadyumna : Drona.
- Shikhandi Bhishma.
- Satayaki- Bhurisravas
- Arjuna- Karna.
- Bhima- Duryodhana and his brothers
- Sahadeva- Shakuni and his sons
- Nakula- Karna's son's

This also teach us about the selection of the person –“The Right team is made by selecting the Right Individuals. Get the right man for the right job.”

Commitment: The Mahabharata also teach an important lesson for management that is commitment, if one is not committed towards their goal than will not achieve it.

For example: Abhirnanyu, a 16 year old kid Ventured beyond enemy lines alone. This was suicide mission but he still went in alone, and took a great Part the army down with him. It took the combined efforts of the 7 Maharathis to take him down.

Ghatotkach even in death took with him almost half the army.

Yudhishthira, he knew he couldn't face Kama in War, but still went in to set an example.

Krishna took up arms twice and almost entered the War, in spite of his promise, only to be stopped by Arjuna.

The interests of the Individual should never exceed the Team interest. The best man for a Job is not the one with the best capabilities but one with the greatest commitment.

Right manager: How to become a right manager must be learnt from Mahabharata as Krishna & Yudhishthira both are said as a right manager. A right manager knows the competitors weaknesses and exploit them. Take calculated risks. Inspire, invigorate, and counsel the team in moments of need. A right manager is a person how can answer all the question of the team why, when & how e.t.c. Good managers need to analyze all the aspects and then take the action.

For example: Yudhishthira Low-key strategist on the first day of the War he played a Master game went over to the Enemy side to seek

blessings from Elders. In reality he made a covert deal with them, wherein all of them agreed to help him and unfolded the secrets of defeating them. While coming back he took a calculated risk. He made an offer to all the assembled people to change sides if they coasted to he knew very well that there is a lack of group cohesiveness among the Kauravas.

The roots: To become successful manager or a leader one need to know the ground realities, one need to know about the different ideologies & share the different ideologies known to them.

For example: pandavas spent the greater part of their lives in poverty in their childhood they lived in Himalayas foothills among rishis. They were experienced with the ground realities as they were in contact with different types of people in the society with different races of people like Rakshasas, Gandharavas, Apsaras, Nagas people from different regions Uttarkuru, Bengal etc. So they have the Sense of Sharing & sense of Brotherhood.

Women empowerment: Any team without women is unbalanced as masculine traits of aggression and dominance due to which decisions taken may get wrong so to balance Feminine traits of Harmony and Sustenance need to be there in a team decision.

For example: Kunti was the authority supreme for the pandavas & draupadi was a companion in whatever the pandavas did whereas on part of kauravas no women was there in decision making process Gandhari retreated to the Inner Chambers. Nobody listened to her.

Women = Better Half. Any team which doesn't have women is unbalanced, for the Masculine traits of Aggression and Dominance should be balanced by the Feminine traits of Harmony and Sustenance.

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