



YOGA - THE WAY FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

My Study and Practice of Yoga have impacted my understanding of Leadership. After providing an overview of the history of Yoga, this paper discusses how Yoga has informed and influenced the Leadership. The concepts of knowing oneself, being present and ethics are central to both Yoga and Leadership. Lot of money are Spent by the Corporate for Leadership Programs. The Question also arises what kind of strategic interventions are really effective. With this background, this paper aims to find out how far the Yoga intervention has brought effectiveness in Leadership.

KEYWORDS : Atma, Chitta, Manifestation, Astanga Yoga, Asanas, Pranayama, Dhyana, Self – awareness.

Introduction

The Greatest gift of India to the world is Yoga. Yoga is derived from the Sanskrit word "Yuj" which means "to unite or integrate". It is a physical, mental and spiritual discipline originated in ancient India. Yoga in essence is the integration of the body-mind-intellect with the self, individual with the family, the family with the society, the society with the nation and the nation with the whole creation. Yoga is a way of life based on the vision of oneness.

Definitions of Yoga as from our Shastras.

"Yujyate anena iti Yogah"

Yoga is a process of joining. Yoga means to join, the union of Atma with paramatma. Yoga is a practice by which one realizes that everything is One. The body is a temporary manifestation of the self. The real self is always there, unaffected, blissful and unchangeable.

"Yogaschitta vritti nirodha"

Yoga is to restrain the mind- stuff (Chitta) from taking various forms (Vrittis, thoughts, modifications). When all the clouds disappear we can see the sky – clear and ever-present. Similarly, when the chitta – Vritti, - the continuous flow of thoughts or modifications are quietened, the person rests in his own immortal, blissful state.

"Manah prashamanopayah Yoga ityabhidhiyat" (Laghu Yoga Vasistha 3-9-32)

Yoga is the way to quieten the mind. Yoga is the way to quieten the mind that has become outward-focussed due to individualism, consumerism and materialism.

Yoga as defined in the Bhagavadgita

- Atmoupamyen sarvatra samam pashyati yo Arjuna Sukham va yadi va dukkham sa yogi paramo matah (VL.32)
The one who sees everything as one's own self and thus is full of equanimity in pleasure and pain, is the highest yogi.
- Samatvam Yoga Uchyate and Yogah Karmasu Kaushlam (Chll Shloka 48 and Shloka 50)

Samatvam Yoga Uchyate - Equanimity is Yoga

Thus whatever may be the fruits; we must not lose equanimity of mind. Yoga Kamasu Kaushalam - Right choice in action that action which takes us to our higher self is Yoga

A combination of both the shlokas, reveals that Yoga is the right choice in every action with the attitude of Prasad-buddhi towards the fruits of actions. Patanjali Yoga Sutra says that gaining mastery over mind is Yoga, Dexterity involves three main points, maximum possible perfection and beautiful action, relaxation in mind while doing the action and the third is the right approach behind the action.

Yoga Focuses on the Individual's

- Physical level** : Makes the body work more efficiently by directing the energies in the most controlled fashion.
- Mental level** : Enhances the power of imagination, creativity and the will power of the mind.
- Intellectual level** : Enhances the power of sharpness and comprehensive development of the intellect with powerful concentration.
- Emotional level** : Enables to systematically sharpen and sensitize their emotions.
- Spiritual level** : Helps to move towards the casual state of mind by introspection wherein the subtle layers of mind unfold themselves and the inner dimensions of personality opens out.

Understanding Astanga Yoga

Patanjali compiled Yoga Sutra 3000 years back, he has described Yoga as "liberation from suffering and union with the Universal Energy" (Desigachar 1995). This union is the highest state and can be understood at different levels – a union of the mind, body and soul; mind and body etc. He further says how this state can't be reached effortlessly but needs certain disciplines and attitudes to progress in this endeavor. In fact he propounds eight steps that would augment a person to be in congruence with self, which in turn would enhance congruence with the environment.

These eight steps or limbs which is known as Astanga Yoga is eternal and universal that has relevance even today. In fact it is more apt today than even before due to today's life style and work culture. It talks about relationships, communications, attitudes, Personal discipline etc. all those factors pertaining to individual optimization.

The eight limbs are Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratiyaha, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi.

The commonly used three stages of yogic practices are;

1. Asanas (Posture)

A steady and pleasant posture produces mental equilibrium and stable mind. Asanas are postures. The yogi conquers the body by the practice of Asanas and makes it a fit vehicle for the spirit.

2. Pranayama (Science of Breathing)

Pranayama is control of Breath. One can control the rhythms of pranic energy with pranayama and achieve healthy body and mind.

3. Meditation (Dhyana)

According to Patanjali Yoga sutra (Ashtanga Yoga) " Meditation (Dhyana) means Full concentration of the mind focused on one of those experience" Meditation is the deep concentration, calmness and tranquility of the mind. It is the study of attaining complete control over one's mind.

Understanding Leadership

Leadership is a "Process of social influence in which a person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task"

Leadership has been defined in terms of group processes, personality, compliance, particular behaviors, persuasion, power, goal achievement, interaction, role differentiation, initiation of structure and combinations of two (or) more of these.

Effectiveness is defined as the perceived quantity and quality of the performance with satisfaction and commitment. Leadership effectiveness comes from the human – oriented activities – communication and human resource management.

Leader's style is the key to the formulation and implementation of strategy and plays an important role in work group member's creativity and team citizenship. Various theories from classical theories like trait, group, contingency, path-goal and the modern theories includes the charismatic, transformational, social learning and substitutes theory explained about leadership characteristics and styles. As for as leadership application for the social learning approach

1. The leader becomes acquainted with the macro and micro variables that control his (or) her own behavior.
2. The leader works with the subordinate to discover the personalized set of behavioral contingencies that regulate the subordinate's behavior.
3. The leader and the subordinate jointly attempt to discover ways in which they can manage their individual behavior to produce more mutually reinforcing and organizationally productive outcomes.

Different people will have different ideas of what a great leader is like. There is no single mould to craft a leader but leadership comes in all shapes and sizes. While great leaders can be found in a number of industries and walk their unique journeys to the top, there are certain traits and characteristics these great men and women often share.

Whetten and Cameron provide a more empirical derivation of effective leadership skills, the ten skills identified by them are

1. Verbal communication (including listening)
2. Managing time and stress
3. Managing individual decisions
4. Recognizing defining and solving problems
5. Motivating and influencing others
6. Delegating
7. Setting goals and articulating a vision
8. Self – Awareness
9. Team – building
10. Managing conflict

Conclusion

For an effective leader constant personal growth is needed. The art of leadership is a never – ending process of learning. There are many ways to develop our leadership qualities. Uncovering the essence of our being is important in leadership development Leader can undergo personal growth training that may involve a combination of physiological and psychological exercises. This approach is aimed at empowering participants to take greater responsibility for their own lives and ultimately their organizations. Be an effective leader, we have to be in with our own mind, yoga helps us to realize our self. It can be a great tool for improving our leadership qualities. The concept of self- awareness (or) knowing our self is central to both yoga and leadership. Learning to be an effective leader requires introspection, adherence to ethics and moral standards which is available in Yogic practices.

This paper is a concept paper and hopes to evoke interest in the academic and management community to study this Great system

which has been with us for more than 3000 years. The sheer aspect that it has survived this long shows that it needs to be explored extensively. What is known is only the tip of the iceberg and we have a long way to go to uncover the treasure underneath.

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