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MANAGEMENT SCIENCE IN VEDAS

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Extensiveness of Vedas

Vedas, as the name implies, are pure knowledge, a gift of God to human beings—revealed alongside the creation of the universe for the benefit of the mankind. One has to acknowledge the eternalness of the Vedas and their revelation by God, because as the maxim goes, *'something cannot come out of nothing and nothing cannot produce something.'* Even now, a person is unable to acquire knowledge unless he gets it from others. As such, in the beginning of creation, unless the Creator Himself imparted the true knowledge of things, no one would have been able to acquire knowledge. The tremendous progress that the human mind has been able to make in the field of learning and knowledge, is only due to the fact that the God supreme, who is all existence, all knowledge, and all bliss, imparted true knowledge with regard to every aspect of human behaviour and activity and of all things and objects that are to be known through knowledge in the form of Vedas. Vedas, therefore, constitute the earliest and oldest book of knowledge for whom there is no parallel in the World History. They are self-authoritative and repositories of all sciences that illumine all subjects and all disciplines like a shining lamp and deal with all matters, knowable as well as knowledgeable.

No wonder, therefore, how much right was the most dynamic personalities of the 19th century renaissance, viz., **Maharishi Swami Dayanand Saraswati**, when he categorically proclaimed that 'Vedas are treasurehouse of all true knowledge, and the efficient cause of all true knowledge and all that is knowable through knowledge, is only God Almighty.' Swami Dayanand's statement was further fortified by **Yogiraj Aurobindo Ghosh**, who in his writings stated—"the ancient civilisation did possess secrets of science, some of which modern knowledge has recovered, extended and made rich and precise, but others are even now not recovered. There is then nothing fantastic in

Dayanand's idea that the Vedas contain truths of science and truths of religion (dharma). I will even add my own conviction that Vedas contain other truths of sciences, the modern world does not at all possess, and in that case, Dayanand has rather understated than overstated the depth and range of Vedic wisdom." It is in this context, that an attempt has been made herein to trace and elucidate the concept of 'management science' and 'leadership' in the light of Vedas. My own understanding about Vedas is that all sciences meant for the good of mankind have emanated from Vedas. Vedas deal with every aspect of human behaviour and activity and provide basic clues for working out right solutions to all problems that human beings face or might face in their multifaceted roles, in all times, and at all places.

God—A Management ideal of par excellence

World over, there is ongoing search for excellence, more so in the field of management and leadership. Vedas point out several attributes of God. He has been stated as personification of eternal existence, eternal intelligence and eternal bliss. He is formless, endless, beginningless, incorporeal, immortal, incomparable, infinite, all-pervading, all-powerful, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent and imperishable. He is an ethical ideal, because he is an embodiment of purity, love, benevolence, mercy, justice, impartiality, fearlessness, righteousness and dexterity. But God is also a management ideal of par excellence, because functionally, God is the promoter-creator, sustainer, ordainer and controller of this entire creation.

Creation in essence, means the organised conjunction of separated substances into various forms and species, animate and inanimate. *As creator, sustainer, ordainer and controller, God in relation to the creation has been performing essentially, the management function, because in all His activities, one finds lot of purposefulness, lot of objectivity, lot of planning, lot of co-ordination, lot of orderliness, and lot of immaculately perfect control systems to keep everything going on with all checks and balances.* Laws of nature operating in this universe speak volumes of God's creativity because He alone is the promulgator of these laws. Control action in management involves two inherent powers with the Controller, viz., (a) power to integrate or co-ordinate, and (b) power to disintegrate or liquidate, depending upon the circumstances and situation in each case. God, not only possesses these powers, but also exercises them without fear or favour. *God, therefore, is a management ideal of par excellence.* Without understanding God, his qualities, attributes and functions, the way He invisibly operates His systems and laws, maintains checks and balances and exercises control, the science of management would itself remain incomplete—incomplete as it is even now after years of management research and management innovations.

Infinitesimality of Man and Modern Management practices

Man constantly feels himself to be infinitesimal in the vast infinity around him. He also feels that though he has freedom of action, the results are not in his hands. He finds himself in some bondages or other, which he finds are neither of his choice nor he can be free from them of his own accord. The more he discovers his own helplessness, his own limitations, the more he finds that he cannot be the master of all, that he surveys. In this situation, modern management practices require him to achieve best results through others, largely, men, material and money. The management decisions that he takes, sometimes prove conducive, but at times prove fatal. It cannot be denied that most of the corporate failures that the world has witnessed over centuries have been largely due to the management failures.

About modern management practices, one observation, which is not unfounded, is this, that in heydays, when the going is good, whatever management practices one may follow, the results are not only good, but sometimes better. It is in difficult times, during the period of stresses and strains,



all management practices evolved so far, come under the severe test, and very often miserably fail to give the desired results.

The situations stated above do necessitate a thorough understanding of God's management practices and the management knowledge that He has so generously passed on to mankind in the form of Vedas. In God's management, firstly, there is nothing 'by chance' or 'accidental'. If the man starts carefully looking at the universe around him, he would find that there is always an orderliness instead of chaos. One can realise how much meticulous planning and preparation God would have done during the period of 'Brahma Ratri' on the expiry of which he created this vast universe.

Now, for understanding God's management techniques, one need not explore the universe; rather one can look to his own body. After all, as the maxim goes 'यद् ब्रह्माण्डं तद् पिण्डं' (whatever is in cosmos, is reflected in this 'pind' i.e., body as well.) See, how much meticulous planning, orderliness and perfect co-ordination exists in human beings' anatomical structure. And with what dexterity everything, every organ and every part of the body has been so well planned and well set; and all during the period it was in an embryo form in the mother's womb. The whole process right from conception to delivery is automatic. God always acts silently, steadily, meticulously through automated processes and never deviates from his accepted norms and accepted patterns. Change for the sake of change, is not in God's nature. Everything is *ÖäÄêÛü* (as it was earlier). This leaves many clues for modern management, which can be briefly stated as under: Automation to the maximum extent possible is a must. All processes including the work flow should be automatic. Paper-less office and machine-less plant should be the ideal to be achieved by the management. For improved productivity and efficiency, hierarchical system is no good; a flat organisation, keeping involvement of people at intermediate level to the barest minimum, is the best. Management must have vigilant eye to see whatever goes on under its control. Change for the sake of change, is no good; if everything is going on well.

Even the present creation by God Almighty is in the same form as it was in the previous 'kalpa'. There is diversity, and yet there is unity in diversity. And then, as the man's knowledge advances, he finds that this diversity is not accidental, it is pre-determined and has a purpose, because everything in this huge system is meant for him. *The whole objective in creating this universe by God is not to earn name, fame or profit, but to provide all possible means and instruments to the innumerable finite souls for their advancement and progress and to make them to enjoy the fruits of their action.* The mission is to serve so that the souls by their noble deeds could have the beatitude ('paramananda') of the highest order, which they lack, but have capability to attain. Does it not provide the clue, that the management's objective and mission in corporate bodies should be to serve the people, so as to make their life and living better as well as comfortable.

Another thing, which is so fundamental in God's

management, is the concept of 'design'. Though one unitary law pervades the pluralities, man is simply astonished to see the wonderful design or pattern, each being distinct from the other around him. Every petal, every leaf, every flower, every human body, and for that matter every thing in this cosmos, has the same system, same order, same shape, but then each has a design distinctive of each other. Features are the same but the designs are different so that each one gets its own identity. The clue for the modern management is there. In this age of world wide competition, the product may be the same, but for survival and sustenance on long term basis, management intelligence must always pave the ways for improved designs and distinctive brands.

God being unchangeable and formless is omnipresent and always lives in present. For Him, past and future are meaningless, because He is always existent in present. This again leaves an important clue for a successful management technique. A successful Manager should neither live in past, nor worry for future; he must endeavour to make his present an outstanding success. He should remember that past is like a stale cheque, the future is a post-dated cheque, only present is a valid cheque, that can be converted into ready cash. *The successful management technique is to make the optimum use of the present to have the optimum results, and, not to waste energy in brooding over past, or, unnecessarily worrying for future.* Only to-day's results are going to shape tomorrow, when tomorrow becomes ultimately today.

It is true that Man, being finite, can never become even equal to God, who is infinite, omnipotent and omnipresent. But to the limited extent, if man, by having a through understanding of God's management practices, is able to imbibe them to the extent possible, he can certainly benefit a lot while handling his day-to-day management problems. After all, the recipe for a good management decision is 90% of reliable information and 10% of intuition. While information undoubtedly has to be gathered from various sources external to the Manager, the intuition is entirely an internal affair. And wherefrom this intuition comes? It comes from within only, the bottom of the heart, where the soul and God reside. When the soul has unflinching faith in God, seeks God's advice in a contemplative mood with utmost humility and total dedication, God inspires; and that inspiration from within, in effect, is intuition. God given inspiration and intuition never fails; it brings only laurels to the management.

Management in Vedas

This is a quote from 'Yajurveda', Chapter 23, Mantra 52. In simple terms, it means that every *ÖÄêŁáÓ* (human being) is personified in five facets. These pertain to (i) Self, (ii) Family, (iii) Society (including societal organisations), (iv) state, and (v) World. All the five bear considerable influence upon him, and in turn, get influenced by him as human being. That is why, the same Mantra further states *İæ·Ø·İÑ ÄêŁááðüŸÄüİæçÜÐ*. These five are dependent upon him. The important aspect is the interrelationship of the human being with Self, Family, Society, State and World. Therefore, management in Vedas refers to—



- i) Management of Self;
- ii) Management of Family;
- iii) Management of Society (including societal organisations)
- iv) Management of State (including strategic and Defence Management)
- v) Management of World Affairs.

Further, in Vedas, both 'management' and 'control' go together because 'control' is an integral part of the management aspect. Any activity can be managed properly so long as it is within the control. Therefore, when Vedas refer to management, they mean 'management and control' in relation to 'self', or 'family', or 'society' or 'state' or 'World'. Man's quest for knowledge starts when he questions 'what is it', 'Who am I' and 'Who is He'. When he is exploring everything that he sees, i.e., what is it, he is investigating the nature ('prakriti' or Matter). When he is questioning himself, he is examining the relationship of his own body with self ('Jeevatma' or Soul) and all others like him all over the World. When he is searching beyond the 'matter' and 'self', he is in the domain of 'God'. Now in Vedas, except those 'Mantras' whose subject matter is 'Prakriti' (Matter) or 'Parmeshwara' (God), almost all other Mantras out of over 20,000 deal with one or the other aspects of control and management of 'Self' (Jeevatma or Soul) in relation to (a) the individual himself, (b) the family, (c) the society, (d) the state, and (e) the World. Management Experts of West talk copiously managing either people, or personnel, or finance, or resources, or inventories, or sales, or marketing, or any other factor of production, but seldom lay emphasis on managing and controlling the 'self'. The Vedas, however, do. Vedas lay down considerable emphasis on the purity of body, purity of heart, purity of mind, purity of thoughts, purity of actions, and above all, on purity of soul. According to Vedas, if one wants to manage and control others, whether animate or inanimate—he should first manage and control himself, his time, his speech, his passions, his thoughts, his emotions, his feelings, his activities, and, his own affairs. One should first regulate his own life, his own house, his own family and achieve harmony and peace within, before he starts managing and regulating others. This approach puts the Vedic style of management on a totality different pedestal vis-a-vis the traditional western approach towards the style of management.

In all management matters, it is the leadership that counts. A successful Manager must possess leadership qualities, before he starts leading others. In essence, the management means application of leadership qualities in right dose, at right time, in a right manner, and for a right task.

Before we proceed further, it needs to be clearly understood that Ved Mantras are not only for recitation at the time of performance of certain rituals; the hidden wisdom in them needs to be properly brought out and understood in proper context. For instance, the word 'Agni' in the Ved Mantras does not always mean only 'fire'. According to Nirukta (7/14) "अग्निर्वै अग्रणी भवति" one who is in the forefront, who himself is a moving spirit and makes others to move upwards is 'Agni'—the 'leader'. Grammatically, the word 'Agni' has its roots in "अग-अगि-गतौ घातु। गति i.e. whose ज्ञान, गमन और प्राप्ति Knowledge, Activity and Achievement are the three

characteristics, is 'Agni'—the leader. We now take a few Veda Mantras which make concrete suggestions both from management and leadership angle :

Managerial Effectiveness

अग्रे (अग्रणी नायक) O' Leader in the front, i.e., the project leader, Manager or the Managing Director. (the key figure to whom everybody looks for guidance.)

उदबुध्यस्व (उठ, बोध को प्राप्त हो)

rise and be enlightened;

प्रति जागृहि (लक्ष्य के प्रति जागृत रह)

remain alert towards your goals

and objectives;

त्वम् य अयम् (तुम और ये इष्ट) you and this team of yours

इष्टापूर्ते सं सृजेथाम और पूर्त के लिये

accomplish the desired objectives

in

संसृजन करो)

a satisfying manner.

अस्मिन् उत्तरास्मिन् (हमारे इस उत्तम

In this congenial work

सधस्थस्थान में)

place of ours,

विश्वेदेवा च (विश्व के देवगण तथा

let all outside experts and the (local)

यजमानः अधि यजमान बैठें)

leader/entrepreneur/promotor/
manager

सीदत

be seated together collaborating with each other.

From this, few things are very clear. The leadership or the management of any organisation has to be enlightened. To be successful in its mission, the management and its team has to remain constantly alert and vigilant towards its objectives, targets and goals. The work place should be congenial and must have a healthy and progressive working atmosphere. The management and all experts (technical, financial, marketing, legal, etc.) must collaborate with each other in a cohesive manner.

Leadership Qualities

(अग्रे) O Leader in the front

(यज्ञस्य य रजसः नेता-भुव) You are leader of Yajnas (noblest deeds)

on this (loka) earth when you—

(यत्र शिवभिः नियुतभिः सचसे) (i) implement policies and programmes

beneficial to all;

(दिवि मूर्धानम् दधिषे) (ii) possess divine ideas, thoughts, schemes in your head;

(स्वः साम हव्यवाहम्) (iii) use your tongue for uttering

जिह्वाम चकृषे) inspiring and encouraging words motivating others for righteous deeds.