

AUM

MAN MANAGEMENT: MIND, BODY AND SOUL

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Every man has an aim in life. To achieve that aim one has to make an effort. It may be an individual aim, that is achieved individually, like attainment of Moksha, that is liberation of a soul from shackles of birth and death or a collective aim like bringing the enemy of the country to a chosen battlefield and annihilating the enemy completely. To achieve a collective aim the supreme commander has to mobilize a mass of men and motivate them to follow the leader through thick and thin. It may even mean laying down lives of many men and women for the national cause. Ultimately the collective aim is achieved, that is establishing superiority over the enemy – achieving total victory.

LEADERSHIP

A country raises an army and trains it for war. In fighting a war, the quality of gun is important. However, the Man behind the gun is more important. It is he who fires the gun and scores a hit on the enemy target. Of course, the gun is upgraded and modernized from time to time. Man who operates the gun, needs better upgradation and modernization of mind, body and spirit to be battle worthy to win the war always and every time. The commander who leads his men into battle is the leader of men who motivates the men he commands to do the most difficult things under the most adverse circumstances and even risking life and limb. However, the leader ensures that the body of soldiers he commands must achieve the predetermined aim.

The same principle and procedure are observed from the platoon level right up to the army level. The rank and file and the leader have to have a perfect understanding and a very high degree of loyalty to each other. It needs no underscoring that loyalty is a two-way traffic. The commander is loyal to the men he commands and the men are loyal to the commander under whom they mount a bayonet charge against the enemy. Loyalty and trust between the leader and the led are built over a period of time through a perfect understanding of each other's needs and requirements.

Looking after the physical, mental and spiritual needs of a soldier both in war and peace to improve his prowess in battle is called Man Management. A good commander who is indeed a good leader ensures that the factors that raise the morale of men are paid adequate attention. Of course, the leader has to take care of himself to make sure that his own morale is always sky high. It is the country that takes top priority, the men under command come next and own safety and welfare come last always and everytime For perfect battle worthiness the most modern bug bear called depression is not only always kept at arm's length but is given a decent funeral at the earliest opportunity. A strong will to live and be an achiever are the most effective

antidote to the poison of depression.

Emphasis on leadership in the armed forces is of paramount importance. What is true of war and the forces is also true of the multi-faceted industries because both are run efficiently under the guidance of a good leader. In all spheres of life many a time a leader has to lead his men, now women too, even when the latter are not willing to work for a cause and to make a sacrifice. It is under these circumstances that high quality of leadership comes into play. The leader is himself motivated to achieve the aim in the first instance and later ensures that his command is also highly motivated. It is said that leaders of high calibre are not born but are trained and made to rise to the occasion. The Second World War proved that sons of farmers and labourers drafted into the armies of different countries of Europe, Asia and America displayed a very high degree of leadership under stress because of the training they had received. Perhaps, that explains the age old saying: ``the more you sweat in peace (during training) the less you bleed in war``.

Let us be very clear of the basic qualities that go into the making of a good leader. It is both physical fitness and mental robustness. It is both wisdom and valour. There is liberty to exercise initiative and to make decisions but only a trained mind is capable of making sound decisions under stress. It may be said that leaders of high calibre with the disciplined mind and wisdom, purity of thought and action, devotion to duty and dedication to cause are able to achieve the high aim of victory even when the feeble hearted men whisper - ``impossible – just impossible``.

It is the Brave heart and a leader with a robust mind who turns `impossible` into the possible. Yogeshwar Shri Krishna was a great leader of men and women and a Motivator par excellence. Let us revisit the battlefield of Kurukshetra and see the battlefield where the warring armies of the Kauravas and the Pandavas are poised to attack each other. One just cannot imagine that the commander-in-chief of the Pandavas, Arjun casts his bows and arrows aside, goes down on his knees, perspires and in a very feeble and humble voice informs his friend, philosopher and guide Shri Krishna that he is in no position to lead his men in action. The situation was most perplexing. Arjun's morale was down in the dumps. The writing was on the wall. The defeat of the Pandavas was a near certainty.

Yogeshwar Shri Krishna was the one not to be non-plussed. He kept his cool and counselled Arjun in a very persuasive manner asking him to do his duty and lead his army into battle. It is the Dharma of a Kshatriya to fight for a national cause and not to turn tail when the chips are down. Shri Krishna succeeded in raising the morale of Arjun to a very high degree by exhorting him ``Na Dainyam Na Palayanam`` - not to exhibit fear or turn tail from battle. Indeed, one may say that Shri Krishna managed the most important man by working on his mind and encouraging him to fight. The great motivator said: ``Rise O son of Kunti! And fight with great determination``. This is what man management is all about.

MIND IS THE MAN

A man whose mind is liberated and motivated gives proper signals to the body for the right action. It is the mind which has to signal the body to follow the path of righteousness. God Almighty revealed to the entire mankind the divine knowledge, Ved, wherein the Gayatri Mantra, exhorts the individual to train his mind for right action at the right time. The Gayatri Mantra is a poignant mantra prayer – to motivate the mind of the devotee – so that he or she does not go astray. A body of men and women will be able to achieve the most difficult goal by taking hazardous action and effectively tackling life threatening situation if the mind has been trained so over a period of time. Men and women who have trained their minds through prarthana and purushartha have nerves of steel. Display amiable disposition towards friends but nurture a killer instinct for the foe. Through training of minds they become high achievers both in peace and in war. They imbibe the spirit of the mantra – Dhiyo Yo Nah Pracho Dayat - achieving a very high degree of motivation through an inspired mind. As a part of the man management ,training of minds through mantras and suitable mental exercises is highly desirable.

One may be tempted to give an example of getting a difficult job achieved through the man management of the old school where punishment – just punishment - was the policy of the day. It was all stick and no carrot. It is recorded that the Great Wall of China was built by the first emperor Ch`in Shih Huang Di and other despotic rulers and satraps by mobilizing men through brute force. Indeed, the brute force achieved the aim but the dynasty perished because the men rose in revolt. Man management, as we understand today, was lacking. Mass mobilization of manpower, a quality of the Chinese nation, did achieve results but the cost in terms of life, limb and emotional health was tremendous. In any case the Mongol marauders could not be stopped by the Great Wall and the nomads ruled the civilized Chinese for a little over a century.

MANAGING MEN TODAY

The Indian Army today does not comprise men alone. Women have gained an entry into the Corps of officers since 1993. Although the Indian Army's training in man management is excellent but, of late, cracks in the monolith corps of officers is visible from far and near. It would not be correct to say that lack of suitable training is not equipping the young officers to handle their men properly. The permanent commission officers are trained for two to three years where as the short services commission officers are trained for nine months or so. Indeed, the pre commission training of women officers lasts for six months only. They are suitably trained in the field of man management. Nonetheless something is amiss somewhere. The discipline is not the same as it used to be in the good old days. There are more cases of indiscipline, and more cases of legal cases in courts of law than ever before. Loyalty, integrity and self less service seem to be receding into the background. No wonder, the cases of fratricide, fragging and suicides are ever on the rise.

Counselling at a suitable time and at a suitable level is an important ingredient

of good man management. It is the platoon commander or the company commander or in some cases the battalion commander, suitably aided by the battalion Dharm Guru who should know whom to counsel, when to counsel and how to counsel. When a commanding officer assumes the role of a counsellor, he rises higher than the father figure that traditionally he is. The army would do well to train senior level officers too in the art of counselling. It is a specialized job and should not be left to education NCOs and JCOs.

The great French general and later emperor of France, Napoleon Bonaparte, rightly said ``an army marches on its stomach``. Obviously, feeding the rank and file properly and adequately is an integral part of man management. Are those who manage the Indian Army today taking care of this basic need of this 1.3 million strong army? There is more to it than meets the eye. There are scandals galore about the procedure of purchase and quality of food stuff delivered to men both in peace and in war. Obviously the foundation of man management shakes when the men feel that someone is making money by cutting their rations or feeding them inferior rations. Somebody has to address this ever growing problem and solve it.

``An idle man's brain is a devil's workshop``. Well said. Does it mean that officers and men must be kept busy even when there is no business. Being busy without business is indeed bad business. It lowers the morale instead of raising it. The fighting man of today is a fairly educated and aware man. He reads newspapers and tunes into news bulletins. He knows what's going on around him, in the army and in the country. Therefore, transparency in dealings will go a long way in keeping him intellectually satisfied. His family's welfare including education of children and medication of dependants both young and old are being taken care of. There is room for improvement though.

SENSE OF FULFILMENT

Bread is important but man does not live by bread alone. He has to have a sense of fulfillment after he has done his day's work. Above all, it is the spiritual fulfillment that will go a long way in raising his morale and equipping him to face the enemy. If he is spiritually satisfied he may not indulge in maladies of today like fragging or fratricide. Of course, the word fragging came into currency from the Vietnam war where enlisted men who came tired and hungry from patrolling after losing their buddies to the Vietcong guerilla bullets and were received by a dressing down by well shaven, well bathed and well fed officers. The harsh words of officers were answered by enlisted men by hurling grenades at them and killing them on spot. Unfortunately, this malady has crept into the Indian Army too. Bad man management must take the major blame for fragging and fratricide.

Suicides by officers and men, not excluding lady officers, is again a direct result of poor man management and lack of communication between the leader and the led. Barking orders and not looking into the mental make up of young officers and young soldiers is the major cause of goading the feeble minded into taking their own lives. Unfortunately, ``the factor of stress`` has

been blamed beyond proportions. It will be interesting to note that in the nine-week-long Kargil war where young officers and soldiers of the army were under constant enemy fire and under stress, not even a single case of suicide, fratricide or fragging took place. Why? The officers and men were highly motivated to fight for a great Cause – Defence of the motherland.

It may be appropriate to high light the role of a commander and the comradeship, the brotherhood, the esprit-d`corps between the leader and the follower. A sharing and caring commander will have the loyalty of his soldiers. Let us share the glory, let us share the honour of victory with junior officers and jawans and look forward to a bright day when the sun will always be shining and both officers and men will ever be smiling.