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WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY AND FULFILLMENT

Consciousness- Based Leadership and Management, Volume 1

*Vedic and Other
Philosophical Approaches
to Oneness and Flourishing*

Edited by
Anil K. Maheshwari

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Palgrave Studies in Workplace Spirituality and Fulfillment

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Anil K. Maheshwari
Editor

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Dedicated to
Traversing the Fastest, the Most Direct, and Most Inclusive Paths to
Deep Peace and Effortless Flourishing for
The One Extended Family, the Whole Universe

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the phenomenon of consciousness has emerged as central for the future advancement of several fields such as those of physics, artificial intelligence (AI), medicine, neuroscience, and management (e.g. Penrose, 1994; Hartley, 2021). In physics, it is essential to understand the influence of conscious observers on physical systems; in AI, to determine if machines of the future will be conscious; in medicine, to find the role the mind plays in the effectiveness of a therapy or a drug; in neuroscience, to find how awareness arises in the brain; and in management, how to access creativity and leverage it for the good of all.

These problems are now recognized in the scholarly world and represent new challenges for scientists and scholars; they also point to the necessity of making consciousness central in a new approach to leadership suited for our post-industrial information age.

But will future computers become conscious and complicate the problem of management? This possibility is contested and I, for one, don't believe it will come to pass (Kak, 2022). Nevertheless, AI machines will replace humans at most jobs, and leadership and management in such an environment will create unprecedented problems that can only be addressed by a proper understanding of how consciousness works in us.

There are speculations that a marriage of sorts between AI and brains will occur so that, someday, technology will make it possible for humans

to become “posthuman,” transcending the limits of the human condition. There are others who believe that the only way to make sense of scientific facts is to take reality as a simulation, an idea that is used by Hollywood in movies, such as *The Matrix* and *Watch Gamer*.

One must distinguish between computation and awareness of the computation within the brain. There are cognitive tasks where the individual does not have a sense of subjective awareness. Such cognitive tasks can be emulated by the machine with great speed and reliability. It is in tasks where one has to think out of the box, as in creativity, and where awareness plays an important role that will forever remain beyond the capabilities of machines.

In our intuition, consciousness is a category that is dual to physical reality, and we apprehend reality in our mind and not in terms of space, time, and matter, which is why this experience varies based on brain states. It is significant that in our conscious experience we are always outside of the physical world and witness ourselves as apart from our bodies (Kak, 2016). Even in scientific theory, the observer is apart from the system, and there is no explanation of the observer within the theory.

The Vedic view considers consciousness to be primary (e.g., Kak, 2021), and it uses the analogy of the one sun getting reflected in a million different pots of water as little suns is provided to explain the empirical consciousness of the individual. In this view, there is a single consciousness that gets manifested in the minds of sentient beings. The mind is an instrument consisting of the complex of ego, intelligence, and memory. Without the inner lamp of consciousness, this instrument cannot have awareness. The different awareness states depend on the clarity of the surface of the mind.

The Vedic model speaks of 5 inhering systems, *koshas*, that are like Russian dolls, each subtler than its predecessor: *annamaya kosha* (physical body), *pranamaya kosha* (life currents in the body), *manomaya kosha* (mind), *vijnanamaya kosha* (knowledge), and *anandamaya kosha* (happiness and wisdom). In turn, these are informed by the consciousness that transcends the five. The mind includes elements such as ego (the sense of the autobiographical self), memories, intelligence, and awareness; it is the inner processor that performs operations associated with different cognitive capacities in a systematic manner.

A dynamic society must ensure that education facilitates the development of each of these *koshas*. Spirituality is associated with consciousness

and it, therefore, provides a top-down view that is complementary to the bottom-up materialistic view.

The West has had its own ways of being informed by the spiritual perspective until the unprecedented material prosperity of the current age led to a *zeitgeist* in which people see themselves primarily as bodies. Hyper-specialization that sets people apart in silos, and the need to conform to the rhythms of the machines have alienated humans from their own nature. A radical materialist view has become dominant in education and entertainment, and it focuses mostly on the bottom three *koshas*, with knowledge creation left to the domain experts. In this understanding, happiness is mainly body-centric, to be obtained by ersatz means and ingested substances. No wonder, there is addiction and despair, and in 2020 over 90,000 people died in the United States of drug overdose (CDC, 2021).

Given this cultural and moral climate of the times, leadership and management has also tended to focus on the short-term view of things. As a consequence, the United States is finding it difficult to compete with other global competitors and its own physical and educational infrastructure is in disarray. While its universities remain the best in the world, they are greatly dependent on students and researchers from Asian countries.

There are individuals who are raising the alarm about the need for sustainability, not only of the environment but also societal structures. Clearly, a new kind of leadership informed by deeper consciousness states is required for our times.

THE NATURE OF THE WORLD AND CREATIVITY

The manager of a modern organization needs to balance two complementary views: first, that the organization is mainly products and the people who work for it; and second, it is fundamental knowledge and information. The old view of the organization was that it was primarily *being*, whereas, in the view demanded by the information age, it needs to have a very significant element of *becoming*. This indicates the need for the capability to innovate on a continual basis.

The unfolding of the universe takes place in a multitude of dimensions, whereas language, which is linear, is limited in its ability to describe reality. Because of this limitation, reality can only be experienced and never described fully, and the experience of deeper states of consciousness eludes simple description.

The limits to the machine paradigm are clear when we consider the question of creativity. From what we know it appears that the creative moment is not at the end of a deliberate computation. There are many anecdotal accounts of dreams or visions that preceded specific acts of creativity. Two famous examples of this are Elias Howe's 1845 dream of the design of the modern sewing machine, and August Kekulé's similar discovery of the structure of benzene in 1862.

The life of Srinivasa Ramanujan, who died in 1920 at the age of 32, is evidence in favor of the theory that consciousness extends beyond the individual. His long-forgotten notebook, which was published in 1988, contains several thousand formulas that were well ahead of their time, without explanation of how he arrived at them. When he was alive, he claimed that formulas were revealed to him in his sleep (Berndt & Rankin, 1995).

Even if one were to dismiss accounts of creativity as nothing but coincidence, the ontic understanding of reality becomes problematic when one brings information into the mix, as is done extensively in modern physics. This is because information implies the existence of a mind, which category lies outside of the realm of physics (Penrose et al., 2011).

LEADERSHIP AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT

The consciousness-based approach to leadership and management makes it possible to deal with innovation and creativity in a skillful way. *Yogah karmasu kaushalam*, "Yoga is skill in action," is an old definition of action informed by consciousness.

Another way of looking at this is from the ecological lens. Consciousness-based management is ecological: it seeks strategies that are optimal both in the local and the global and, therefore, are sustainable. It is supportive of the environment, the needs of present and future generations, and the economy; it looks at the limiting of resource depletion, which in turn requires sustainable practices in business, agriculture, and society. At the personal level, it values decisions that help sustain immediate surroundings and the management of emotional and physical well-being.

I am very pleased that Professor Anil Maheshwari has edited this pioneering book on Consciousness-based Leadership and Management, which, I am sure, will guide future thought leaders, academics, and managers. It provides a framework to help people access their higher

consciousness states and thereby perform roles in the organization in a creative and empathic manner.

Stillwater, Oklahoma, USA

Subhash Kak

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Subhash Kak is Regents Professor at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater and Distinguished Academic Scholar at Chapman University, Orange, California. His research areas include AI, quantum computing, and the history of science. He is the author of twenty books that include “The Nature of Physical Reality” and “Mind and Self.” He is a member of the Indian Prime Minister’s Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council.

PREFACE

What is consciousness-based leadership and management, and why should you care? Leadership is about directing change for the betterment of humanity and the world. Consciousness-based leadership helps operate from an expanded and inclusive state of awareness of the self and the world, such that all of the universe is one and is accessible within ourselves.

Aligning leadership practices with the notion of unbounded consciousness, this edited collection will extend the literature on organizational culture, leadership, and sustainability, contributing to solving the grand challenges facing humanity. This two-volume set examines the need for a consciousness-based view of leadership, which emphasizes universal human flourishing, as opposed to a resource-based view, which focuses on sustaining a competitive advantage. This approach is built around three main principles: (1) Paradigm (Consciousness is primary including complementary existence of opposites), (2) Interpersonal (focusing on empathy and compassion), and (3) Individual (experiencing Oneness and expressing creativity). This book promotes consciousness as an approach to bringing humanity into a state of harmony to generate effective collective action. It includes contributions from leaders in the field of consciousness and workplace spirituality from around the world.

This Volume One is divided into three sections. The first section focuses on Consciousness-based approaches to Inclusive, Purposeful,

Quantum, and Vedic leadership. The second section focuses on leadership principles from Vedic scriptures such as Ramayana and Vedanta. The third section includes leadership principles from other scriptures such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and Thirukural. Thanks to all the authors and co-authors of the chapters in this book. Many thanks to the publisher, Marcus Ballenger, for enthusiastically signing on to this project. We appreciate the support of the production support staff at Palgrave, including Supraja Yegnaraman.

This book was developed out of research presentations and discussions at the International Conference on Consciousness-Based Leadership and Management, organized by the editor with support from Dennis P. Heaton. We wish to recognize the guidance of our incredible global board of advisors, which included Satinder Dhiman, Cathy DuBois, Chris Laszlo, Sharda Nandram, Judi Neal, and Kathryn Pavlovich. We wish to thank all the graduate students at Maharishi International University and other volunteers who helped make the conference possible. That includes Vikram Gulati, Danny Sandra, Meagen Andersen, and Natalia Fernandez. Many thanks to my wife Neerja for supporting me for many months through the preparation for the conference. Ultimate gratefulness to Maharishi Mahesh Yogi for making higher consciousness accessible, creating this university as the home of Consciousness-based Education, and pioneering the research on Consciousness.

The conference was inspired by the desire for finding the principles for the fastest and the most direct path to a peaceful and blissful world. May you feel the bliss and peace, now and forever.

Fairfield, Iowa, USA
November 2022

Anil K. Maheshwari

PRAISE FOR *CONSCIOUSNESS-BASED LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, VOLUME I*

“As the management world seeks to expand its horizons to encompass the interior development of the manager, the need for expert guidance expands apace. Anil Maheshwari, Ph.D. and Tony Nader, MD provide an important resource for just this purpose. With a Vedic perspective on consciousness as primary lens, they take us on a wide-ranging and richly engaging tour that interweaves philosophy-of-mind, cutting edge findings in neuroscience, innovative approaches to peace building and eco-sustainability, and the timeless wisdom of the wholeness of existence that could not be more timely in today’s world. Among the most compelling facets of the book is its seamless account of how the pristine silence of pure consciousness as invoked in meditation, where awareness knows only its primordial, self-referral nature, directly enhances creative and coherent navigation of day-to-day management turbulence. Mere competency in the workplace takes an evolutionary stride that defines genuine transformative leadership; enlightened managers elevate the consciousness of those around them. The notion, moreover, that collective meditation can enliven collective consciousness in society, resulting in benefits including reduced crime and accident rates, represents yet another new chapter in the emergent story of management leadership. This is a visionary book if ever there was one.”

—Ed Sarath, *Professor of Music, Founder and Co-Director, Program in Creativity and Consciousness, The University of Michigan, USA*

“This book provides a refreshingly new and concise consciousness-based framework for management as a source of world benefit. It is a much-needed resource to continue to build emphasis on Consciousness as the basis for action, in business and elsewhere. This volume presents leadership and management based on the non-dual direct intuitive ways of knowing and quantum theory and many other philosophical perspectives. It will be of great resource for the academic as well as professional audiences. Highly recommended.”

—Chris Laszlo, *Professor of Organizational Behavior, Case Western Reserve University, USA*

“Consciousness and its influence on how we lead is a topic that is more important now than ever. This book brings Vedic, Puranic, Chinese perspectives on Consciousness linked beautifully to modern leadership principles in a very readable and thought-provoking style. I highly recommend it!”

—Prasad Kaipa, *Co-founder of Center for Consciousness Studies at Indic Academy, Former Research Fellow in Apple University*

“Combining spiritual insight with intellectual understanding, *Consciousness-Based Leadership and Management, Volume I*, offers readers a set of acute observations on purposeful leadership. This accessible text is eminently readable. It offers a compelling pathway for business leaders interested in both individual flourishing and transformative business practices. I enjoyed reading it very much. This volume will offer readers a wonderful introduction to the values of consciousness-based leadership. Heaven knows, this approach is much needed in this chaotic world of ours.”

—Mary Beauregard, *Adjunct Faculty, College for Creative Studies, USA, and Co-Director, Program in Creativity and Consciousness, The University of Michigan, USA*

“Brilliant structure and synthesis of Consciousness-based Leadership and Management! I enjoyed reading it. Kudos!”

—Hari Kiran Vadlamani, *Founder of INDICA, India*

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