
Book Review

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Satish Modh, *Discover the Arjuna in You: An 18 Step Guide for Self-Awareness*. Jaico, 2015. 204 pp., ₹350, ISBN: 978-8184957358

This 18-step guide to self-awareness is an enlightening self-help book by Professor Satish Modh and published by Jaico. It throws light on the significance of discovering ourselves in our journey of life to become our best selves. The author has authored several pioneering books in the field of management and has vast knowledge about the Bhagavad Gita. One can find a reflection of all his knowledge and experience in the writings of this book.

Arjuna, the character from one of the greatest epics of India: Mahabharata, is claimed to be the best archer in the history of Indian mythology. The author takes Arjuna, the best, to set the bar that one needs to become like. The author believes that everyone can become the best at what they do, the only need is the search for Arjuna (the hero) in themselves. Arjuna is characterised by his focus, dedication and integrity. In the instance of Arjuna, what made him a hero was how he dealt with an ethical dilemma when faced one on the battlefield of Kurukshetra.

The author tries to convey that just like Arjuna, all we human beings are faced with similar situations of ethical dilemmas at various stages of life. The only way to deal with it is to stay focused and determined and take decisions as deemed fit to one's principles and morals. The author advocates that to stand a strong ground in such instances, one must be aware of themselves thoroughly. Knowing one's strengths and weaknesses beforehand may provide an opportunity over the threats.

This 18-step guidebook flows smoothly from one step to another giving a new learning to take away at each step. Every step gives a deeper insight into themselves and compels one to introspect.

At every step, one can relate in some way or the other to the message given in the step, as the author has kept a very realistic approach in his process of writing. The mentioning of dilemmas and situations are based on real-life scenarios that all of us face in our life. The 18 steps one after the other answer the queries arising in the mind of the readers regarding attaining the state of being self-aware. The steps discussed follow through with each other. Each step brings us one step closer to self-discovery and knowledge of our true potential.

The author has, in each step, used the character of Arjuna very wisely. The depiction of Arjuna, the situations he faced, the dilemma he was in and his journey of resolving them and not the least, connecting all this to today's reality makes the book a good read. The quoting of texts from the Bhagavad Gita, explaining the verses, the conversations of Arjuna and Lord Krishna and small stories from Mahabharata adds

to the aesthetics of the book. Connecting all these stories to today's reality makes this book more relatable to the reader and compels them to take further interest, as they feel it is they who are being addressed through these characters.

The two major chapters that I found the most intriguing and enlightening were 'Step 2: Don't Worry about the Result' and 'Step 18: Work as Worship'.

'*Karmanye vadhikaraste Ma Phaleshu Kadachana, Ma Karmaphalaheturbhurma Te Sangostvakarmani*' translates to 'You have the right to work only but never to its fruits. Let not the fruits of action be your motive, nor let your attachment be to inaction'. This is mentioned in Step 2, the main thought of step. This chapter also talks about the human tendency to procrastinate due to various factors, the importance of a mentor, Karma, one's duty and so on. The big learning of this chapter is that one should not be driven by the results; rather, the driving force should be one's responsibility towards their duties, and action should be taken as per their role and duty.

Step 18: Work as Worship emphasises the TRIGUNA framework to designate the aspects to work into three classifications: Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic, where Sattvik is the highest order of attainment. The use of tabular representation and detailed description of each aspect in each classification provides a deep insight and base for introspection and analysis of ourselves and gives a definitive direction to reach the highest order. Worship in its spiritual nature, in the form of Yajna, charity and so on, is important, and it is equally important to worship our work. This step classifies the work into four categories and further divides it into the Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic classifications of each category. This is the step that guides us with how the work is to be done so that it is no less than worship.

The author has not limited his scope to just Mahabharata, its characters and Gita, rather he has taken into account references from other mythologies, various real-life people around us and other cultures for illustration. As a part of being from a management background, there are various instances where the author has mentioned various aspects used in management that factor in and can be utilised for self-awareness as well. The writing flows and the language is not very technical, making it easier to understand for the reader. The best part about the book is it presents an action plan after each step for us to work.

This book is highly recommended for ambitious people who aspire to excel in their lives. This is a book for people of all ages, from teens to the elderly. The reader is guaranteed lifelong learning. This self-help book is inspiring in its own way and is a helpful guide. The young minds are recommended this book, as it will have a great impact in their future building. To conclude, it is a good read, which is full of insights, experiences and guidance.

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