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Critical Review - Governing Business and Relationships

This book brings ancient wisdom to the modern world by applying eternal principle of ancient wisdom to governing business and relationships. It talks about the role of intellect in life, time management, stress management, the science of productivity, the essence of leadership, and finally ultimate management.

Assessment and Analysis of Governing Business and Relationships

When given this book by a friend I was immediately intrigued and interested; throughout my life, I've been curious about philosophy and have had many riveting discussions based on psychology and spirituality. This book has taught me several important lessons about life as a whole, but what was predominant for me was the way it opened my mind up to absorbing and contemplating thoughts that I never knew existed. Reading the book allowed my mind to discover facets of life both internal and external that I had no concept of prior.

At first glance I was under the impression this book was about purely business, however, I came to realize that the title signifies a text closer to, how to properly govern all relationships within your life with respect to the function of the mind and intellect. The author, A. Parthasarathy, has a background in philosophy and has essentially dedicated his life to the study of the state of human beings. As a writer he is extremely critical, chastising the world as a whole as well as governments on neglecting elements of the utmost importance. He preaches about a lack of knowledge as people remain unaware of the powers of the intellect and continue to stray further away from its benefits as time goes on. He organizes the human persona into three different facets: The Body, Mind, and Intellect. Parthasarathy emphasizes the importance of basing decision-making on rationality rather than emotions. Being able to disassociate yourself from any affair and analyze it with complete objectivity is crucial to sustaining relationships throughout your life as well as finding happiness and success externally. The chapter titled "Intelligence vs Intellect" sparked my intrigue in comprehending the content of the book. As mentioned, the world today teaches kids to further their intelligence starting from birth with

classes in Science, English, Math, Literature, etc... However, developing a strong intellect is neglected in the most absolute way. I believe that teachers today are unaware of the importance of strengthening the intellect by methods of questioning, thinking, and introspecting. For this reason the impressive amount of intelligence amassed is not able to be effectively utilized within life. The Intellect is not only utilized for managing the external aspects of the world, but also finding peace and happiness within yourself. Today the world is plagued by constantly chasing material wealth and even when acquired people fail to find inner satisfaction and happiness within themselves. This inevitably asks the question, “ Why chase money if it's not going to make you happy?” I believe it to be a combination of introspection and external success that contribute to a favorable existence. Parthasarathy also discusses *subjective scientists*, “Scientists that study the subject, you”(p. 46) What I found interesting about this was how they merged the fields of analytics and science with the spiritual aspects of finding inner peace. The scientists were able to methodically study human beings and create laws pertaining to an individual. The merge of spirituality and scientific study is an extremely important discipline that has been neglected as the world trends towards gathering mere intelligence.

The Corporate world that America lives in today is riddled with the dilemma of finding a proper work-life balance. For example one of the most lucrative mainstream careers of Investment Banking compensates extremely well however causes paramount levels of stress. The entire job market is essentially structured like this, the less desirable a job is leads to a lower supply of potential labor which leads to higher paying jobs. It is simple supply and demand, but it is polluting the minds of young adults, constraining them to the belief that money equals success and high levels of money come with high levels of stress. Today stress seems a universal

constant for the world we live in. Studies show that 60 percent of students today experience “overwhelming anxiety” and 40 percent of students experience crippling depression. Mental health issues are so widespread today that people do not understand that the cure for their ailment lies within them. Introspecting and being truly honest with yourself allows your intellect to understand your mind and govern it. It is of the utmost importance to understand that having emotions is healthy, however regulating your mind to act on the direction of your intellect, the rational and analytical portion, is crucial in order to achieve a natural equilibrium of the different chemicals in the brain thus leading towards a capable and calm mind. People are only able to accept this theory on mental restoration if they believe they are responsible for their fortune and misfortune. This realization that you are the “architect” of your own life is critical to remedy mental illness. I believe that speaking with a therapist is good practice for almost anyone.

Articulating your thoughts out loud and receiving feedback often aids in the process to understand yourself better and eventually leads to inner peace. However the therapist or anyone else is not able to fix your problems for you. One must come to this understanding on their own through strife and conflict in order to truly realize the benefits of governing the impulses of the mind.

I believe this initial realization of allowing yourself to be vulnerable to your own mind grants your intellect the power to command the mind. This process is never a straight line however, the beauty of the process is that the discord of your prior experiences leads to finding the true sense of who you are. The author illustrates how those who are truly intellectual are rare, they delve into the depths of what they observe, questioning everything irrational even if it has been followed for centuries. Parthasarathy points out how, “ Above all, he could use the intellect

to explore his inner layers and get to the Core of his personality” (p. 54). Becoming rational and objective within your life is a tremendous benefit of the intellect however it is the inner peace you may obtain by truly examining yourself that is the foremost of gain. Furthermore he advances to the religious aspect of being intellectual. The way Parthasarathy depicts religion should be viewed as an allegory to every component of life; he emphasizes the importance of remaining objective, exercising religious tolerance, and avoiding fanatic attachment to a particular religion. This equation can be applied to any discipline within life, objectively view your beliefs and relationship with any idea or concept, have forbearance to others beliefs and ideals, and abstain from becoming devoted to an ideology for then you can truly satisfy the aforementioned steps.

All avenues of life lead back to one place, the intellect. As does the ability to manage yourself and be productive. Parthasarathy entails how time management is a hoax and it indeed boils down to self management. “Self management lies in streamlining one's inner personality”(p. 60). This can only be done when two parts of the human personality, mind and intellect, act in cohesion. The intellect presiding over the mind is the essence of self management, the ability to control the emotions and urges of the mind allows you to direct the brain to a certain point of application. The true core of the mind lies in stress and inconsistency, the mind is prone to worry of the past and be anxious of the future. These functions will assuredly disrupt the cognitive flow not permitting a productive effort. Consequently, it is imperative that one grants their intellect suzerainty over the mind. Only then can one have the possibility of leading a life free of the feel of overwhelming pressure of work coupled in personal and professional life. Additionally it is the intellect that determines the portion of impulse or

discretion within a person. When commanded by emotions and urges one is unable to direct the action of their own safely. Parthasarathy relates it as, “a person acting impulsively is like a drunken driver at the wheel of a car.”(p. 61). Oftentimes one does not realize the danger they are posing to themselves and others when driving under the influence, and this is identical to acting without discretion. Without discerning the function of the intellect it is impossible to conceptualize the harm in neglecting it. As aforementioned in the beginning of the paper, it is truly a tragedy of knowledge, or lack thereof, that ushers and accentuates the strife experienced throughout the world.

As much as your potential happiness is dictated by yourself and allowing your intellect to manage your mind there are numerous external factors: svadharma and paradharma, the three different mental temperaments, and the classification of aggressive and passive people, that facilitate a smooth and attainable transition.

The Svadharma and Paradharma is an ancient Indian philosophy that is continuous in the present. Sva translates to one's own and dharma to nature; the reciprocal of this is the paradharma with para translating to alien and dharma to nature. The ideology is predicated on the belief that certain people have innate qualities about their being that lead them to be naturally inclined to certain fields or disciplines. The Vasanas, or inherent nature “manifests as body, mind, and intellect.”(p.13). One with a sports vasanas will delve into sports, one with an academic vasanas will plunge into academia, etcetera. It is imperative to choose a field of activity aligned with that of your svadharma for it will be conducive for success, progress and growth. However a discipline of paradharma would constitute one to be frustrated and unproductive. Imagine Tom Brady playing soccer and Lionel Messi playing football.

Parthasarathy himself hails from an established shipping business however he found business to be alien to his nature hence he chose a field of research and study into the Vedanta philosophy. The brilliance of this ideal lies in the heterogeneity of vasanas, allowing for a wide range of careers that all contribute to the optimum of productivity and contentedness. Regularly people will elect hobbies aligned with their svadharma however as the western world propagates a life based upon material wealth oftentimes people sacrifice their ambition and interest for monetary benefits. “One’s first obligation in life is to choose a field in accordance with the basic nature.”(p.14). This principal is why the world is riddled with those who attain material success, but continue to search for inner peace; it is the chase of money that results in a cyclical pattern of greed and discontent, only when one explores that which he is innately accustomed to will he broaden his ambitions and release his trivial anxieties.

Human beings have distinct natures that fall under three different temperaments, known as sattva, rajas, and tamas. Tamas is a state of inertia, one is “lethargic, lackadaisical, indifferent, heedless.”(p.39). In this state one is bereft of the world and shows minimal emotional or intellectual expression and prowess. Rajas, is the nature of passion and agitation. One in a state of rajas, “expresses desire-ridden activities.”(p.40). Commonly rushing, hurrying and worrying constantly. Sattva is the most desirable of the three. Sattva entails a person whom remains “poised, mature, contemplative, objective.” Of all living creatures humans are the only ones gifted with intellect. Plants possess a physical presence, but no mind or intellect, animals consist of both body and mind however lack an intellect. This is the reason for the savagery seen with almost all wildlife species. The animal kingdom consists of eat or die and with no intellect animals are unable to contemplate the idea of prosperity and wellbeing beyond that of them and

their kin. These three distinctions align with the three human temperaments, plants equate to Tamas, animals equate to Rajas, and humans equate to Sattva. With the world transitioning to a scene bereft of intellect people solely rely on their mind to make decisions. This leads the majority of people into a state of rajas, Unfounded are those who appreciate the present without polluting their mind with anxiety of the future. Without the intellect to govern the mind it is inevitable that passion and emotions will control one's daily life not allowing for the nature of sattva to surface leaving one to feel as if they are continually playing catch up.

Aggressive and passive people. The connotation is different from that of American English though not entirely. Those that are passive act bearing of emotion whereas those who are aggressive perform based upon their intellect. Within the classification of aggressive and passive one is able to differentiate a second classification of good and bad. Thus creating four total divisions that are as follows: aggressive bad, aggressive good, passive bad, and passive good. Those who are passive “conduct themselves either way unawares of his goodness or badness. He merely manifests his good or bad impulses. His intellect is not sufficiently developed to examine the nature of his activities.”(p. 110). Contrasting the passive is the aggressive. Aggressively bad is one who, “is willfully vicious, catering to his personal interests. He plans and schemes, manipulates and maneuvers in his immoral, corrupt living.”(p.111) The function of the intellect allows those who are aggressive power and dominance over both the passive good and bad. However as all things have an equal the aggressive good is “essentially benevolent”.(p.111). When these four classes of humans are scrutinized a common influence can be identified. Those who operate at a passive level become victims to “intellectual manipulations”(p.111) of the aggressive bad. The remedy to this is developing an intellect and using it to develop into a person

of intellectual good. The matter that continuously resurges is incomprehension, “people lead passive lives and complain of malpractices and suffer at the hand of the oppressors.” He who leads a passive life does not understand that the cure to his ailment lies within himself therefore he is unable to discontinue this perennial cycle.

Perpetually throughout history the question of ethics has been brought forward. In 1760 BC the Ancient Sumerians composed the first extant law code. Parthasarathy identifies how notable pharmaceutical companies “Thrive with their antidepressant drugs.”(Parthasarathy 114). This naturally raises the inquiry, Are pharmaceutical companies unethical for profiting off of the well being, or lack thereof, of other people? If so, what incentive would researchers have if no profit could be made? The world today is so wrapped up in finances that this is the traditional line of inquiry. However when one looks past the chase for material wealth he would see the benefit in working for the sake of productivity and a higher ideal of contributing to the “greater good”. In addition to this the whole concept of incentives is what has “resulted in the decline of business acumen and production.”(Parthasarathy 142). Incentives certainly promote an initial thrust of work and productivity however as time goes on people acquire a tolerance and become numb to the same incentive, invariably requesting raises, vacation days and other perks. The corporate world today has become so dependent on incentives a widespread absence of initiative can be observed. Initiative is truly what inspires workers to perform tirelessly without the need for external stimulants. Additionally incentives generate discord within organizations, allocating proper amounts at proper times is impossible and bestows a cutthroat culture in which everyone is vying for the succeeding promotion.

The human ego is present in all realms of life. It is the “virus that attacks the character of human beings.”(Parthasarathy 96). The most habitual appearance of the ego today is in the craving to be known and idolized. With the rise of social media, living a life in which others envy is quintessential to the presence of any account. However the general ego manifests in three different ways: I am supreme, I alone exist, I am the doer. The first iteration of this is essentially just a superiority complex. One elevates himself to a higher pedestal than others and considers those below him to be inferior. In the second category of this one lives life as though all others are “meant to cater to his person.”(Parthasarathy 97). Recently a trend has emerged to call yourself the “main character”, and although this is a quip it is an excellent analogy to the way egocentric people view themselves. He who lives this way propagates his vitality at the expense of others. In the third form the ego manifests as “I do everything”. Evidently all three forms are interconnected with subtle yet distinct differences. One who suffers from the third version of the ego fails to recognize or appreciate the contribution of others towards his achievements.(Parthasarathy 97). When this manifestation takes over the mind it is often the “I” that is evident in your job and not the work.

The intellect is a complicated yet beautiful instrument furnished with the tools to fully realize self-actualization. However this is this last piece of the puzzle, evident in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, one can only contemplate his existence after his physiological needs are met. This emphasizes the importance of monetary viability. Without food on the table I would be unable to ponder these questions of ego, self, and spirit. However it is the world we live in today that places an emphasis, for too heavy, on material wealth and knowledge that contributes to the neglect of the intellect and the absence of inner peace, plaguing our society with unfounded

ultimatum. The Intellect is crucial to all facets of life: controlling emotions and urges, governing the mind, remaining objective and rational, controlling the ego and egocentric desires, maintaining concentration, etcetera... In its vacancy only stints of pleasure can be experienced followed by anguish. The German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer declared, "*It is difficult to find happiness within oneself, but it is impossible to find it anywhere else.*"