

Corporate Soul: The Monk within the Manager by Moid Siddiqui. 2005. New Delhi: Response Books. Pp. 300. Price Rs. 280.

Corporate Soul is a thought provoking book that is aimed at the new breed of managers who seek to blend materialism with spirituality. Encapsulating the wisdom of the finest ancient schools of thought, Moid Siddiqui correlates them to key elements that define modern management. The book which is divided into five parts talks about the application of the philosophy drawn from Chinese, Japanese, Greek, Indian, Islamic and Christian religions.

Part I deals with eternal teachings. The author starts the book beautifully, comparing the management theories rooted in Western and Eastern cultures and then describes how the teachings of saints, prophets, sages and Sufis are eternal, and are relevant to corporations that can envision a world which is not driven by narrowly focused, profit-minded motives.

Part II is about translating the truths of Confucius and Lao Tzu and how they can build our core corporate values. There are five chapters in this section. In the first chapter called 'Wu Wei – The Dance of Change' the author emphasizes the importance of intangibles in management and advocates simple vision articulation, simple communication, simple systems and simple processes. The second chapter deals with the 'Power of Purpose'. The author advocates an 'inside out' approach. The chapter discusses the power of vision, dreaming and meaning in life. The third chapter is on building values and the author through examples and anecdotes talks about how to hold values to create values. The author cites enough relevant examples from the corporate world in this regard. and very beautifully, concludes, "...Recharge yourself by living values. Learn business management from the books of ethics and scriptures". The practice of virtue is the fourth chapter of Part II and is mainly based on Chinese time-tested wisdom and its application in today's workplace in terms of creating a healthy workplace. The final chapter in Part II is "Tai-Chi-The Perfect Balance" and it is about balancing human energies with business disciplines.

In Part III the author describes the entire range of Indian mysticism: from the fuzzy logic of Buddha's argument to the teachings of the Bhagwad Gita and the simple wisdom in the parables of the Panchatantra. There are three chapters in this section. Chapter one is about the cosmic truth of Buddha. Chapter two highlights the learning from Bhagwad Gita. It discusses Vedic corporate philosophy and explains the 'law of karma' in today's business world with reference to cause and effect relationship. The third chapter in this section dwells on the Panchatantra and the messages drawn for corporate world.

Part IV treks to the divine oasis in the deserts: it traverses the wisdom pastures of the Torah, the Psalms and the Gospel, turns to the simple and pure way of life propounded in the Qu'ran, which lays down a codified set of principles for business transactions, and comes to grips with the credo of divine love sung by the Sufis who are always humble in their knowledge and ever conscious of their limitations. The author unfolds this section through three chapters.

Part V turns to the forgotten philosopher of Greece – Heraclitus. He was the alter ego of Lao Tzu in the West and they spurned him for Socrates, Aristotle and Plato because they could not comprehend his subtle truth. The book wraps up with this section in two chapters. Chapter one talks about the wisdom based on Greek mythology and chapter two links it to corporate reality.

The book is concluded by a very interesting concept “intuilogy” - that seeks to blend the intuitive wisdom of the old masters like Lao Tzu and Heraclitus with the logic and reasoning of the great masters like Confucius, Plato and Aristotle. It is an excellent book emphasizing the importance of ethics and spirituality in new age business. The author being a corporate man has initiated a new stream of thought for the corporate world.

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