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# **Management, Change, Strategy and Positive Leadership**

## **Series Editors:**

### **Satinder Dhiman**

School of Business  
Woodbury University  
Burbank, CA, USA

### **Joan Marques**

School of Business  
Woodbury University  
Burbank, CA, USA

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Satinder Dhiman • A. D. Amar  
Editors

# Managing by the Bhagavad Gītā

Timeless Lessons for Today's Managers

 Springer

*Editors*

Satinder Dhiman  
School of Business  
Woodbury University  
Burbank, CA, USA

A. D. Amar  
W. Paul Stillman School of Business  
Seton Hall University  
South Orange, NJ, USA

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*Dedication by Satinder Dhiman*

श्री कृष्णार्पणमस्तु

**Śrī Kṛṣṇārpaṇamastu**

त्वदीयं वस्तु गोविन्दः

तुभ्यमेव समर्पये

*tvadīyaṁ vastu govinda*

*tubhyameva samarpaye:*

*O Lord! I offer unto Thee*

*What is really Thine only!*

*I dedicate this book to my esteemed mother*

*Shanti Devi*

*the embodiment of peace and selfless service*

*whose love and blessings have been my*

*strength.*

*Dedication by A. D. Amar*

*I dedicate this book to my respected mother, Kaushlya Devi Shakir, for starting me on the Bhagavad Gita when I could barely read; to my revered father, the late Prem Dutt Shakir, Esq., who fascinated me by instilling in me the teachings of the ancient Indian writings led by the Bhagavad Gita. I also dedicate this to my beloved wife, Sneh Lata Amar; our caring sons, Harpriye Amar Juneja and Januj Amar Juneja; and my best gifts from my parents, my seven siblings, Mrs. Amrit Bala Mendiratta, Dr. Mrs. Mohan Bala Chitkara, Mrs. Urmil Devi Chawla, Professor Dr. Gobind Krishan Malik, Mrs. Veena Madaan, Mr. Gopal Krishan Juneja, Esq., and Mr. Bhupesh Kumar Juneja for putting up with me, always giving me the highest priority, and being company, coplayers, partners and supporters.*

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## Preface

The Bhagavad Gītā, a philosophical poem par excellence, has been extolled as “the scripture of scriptures” within the corpus of Indian spiritual texts. Its unusual battlefield setting, highly practical orientation, and deep philosophical import have endeared it to people from all walks of life looking for guidance in both the sacred and secular realms. While there are many books that aspire to present spiritual truths in practical terms, perhaps, there is no other book which presents such an integral vision of attaining the ultimate purpose of life (*mokṣa* or liberation) while fully engaged in the activities of life.

The Bhagavad Gītā is as pertinent in the boardrooms of the twenty-first century as it was on the battlefields of ancient times. Within the compass of eighteen dynamic chapters, it unfolds the whole spectacle of human drama full of challenges met, fights won, and freedom attained. It teaches us how to emerge from a state of utter apathy, gloom, sorrow, and dejection to a state of perfect engagement, understanding, clarity, wisdom, renewed strength, and triumph. The Bhagavad Gītā (a part of the great Indian epic—the *Mahābhārata*) can be approached as a powerful tool for management and as a catalyst for organizational transformation. It teaches us how to harmonize the needs of the individual with the needs of society, and by extension, how to harmonize the needs of employees and the organization. It employs an inside-out leadership development approach based on self-knowledge and self-mastery, the two highly important areas for practicing true self-leadership. It is a nonsectarian spiritual text with a universal message.

The Gītā contains timeless management and leadership lessons for the contemporary organizations. Modern leadership concepts such as vision, motivation and empowerment, self-awareness, self-mastery, excellence in work, importance of ethical means in achieving righteous ends, attaining meaning and fulfillment at work, service before self, and well-being of all beings are all lucidly discussed in the Bhagavad Gītā. Likewise, many contemporary leadership constructs such as authentic leadership, servant leadership, and values-based leadership were already discussed, albeit notionally, in the Bhagavad Gītā thousands of years ago. The message of the Gītā fosters holistic development of human personality within all of its dimensions (physical-psychological, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual) by providing guidance about the three essential spiritual practices: “training the mind,” “transforming the passions,” and “guarding the heart.”

The Bhagavad Gītā teaches that only the knowers of Self are truly wise and ever free from grief. It removes sorrow by removing the self-ignorance that is causing it. According to the Gītā, all our existential problems ultimately stem from self-ignorance—not knowing who we truly are. The *Gītā* teaches that one who acts with knowledge and devotion, without desire and unattached, is liberated already. Therefore, by all our seeking, let us seek Self-Knowledge.

The Gītā says that nothing can give you real happiness except your Self (*ātmany evātmanā tuṣṭaḥ*: BG, 2.55).

The Gītā teaches renunciation *in* action, not renunciation *of* action. Renounce desire and attachment, not action, states the most important verse on Karma Yoga in the *Gītā* (2.47). It teaches us to let go of the sense of me and mine and work selflessly for the common good. In the Gītā's view, serving others is serving the Divine. The sage leader outwardly does all activities like others, inwardly unattached. This is the essence of Karma Yoga of the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

Wise leaders do everything without selfish motive, remaining equanimous in success and failure, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow—offering their work as a loving service to the Supreme. They work for the purification of their mind (*ātmasūddhaye*: 5.11) and act with a view to set an example to the masses, so the unwary do not go astray (3.26). They strive for the well-being of all beings (*sarvabhūtahite*: 5.25, 12.4) and for bringing the communities of people together (*lokasaṃgraham*: 3.20, 3.25). This is the entire teachings of the *Gītā* on life and leadership.

Given that all the pronouns used in the Gītā are masculine, the translation of its verses has retained the masculine pronouns wherever a neutral term was not possible without sounding linguistically awkward. It purely reflects a convention and not authors' gender bias. The teachings of the Gītā are equally applicable to men as well as women.

Few books can be called both “whole” and “holy.” The Gītā is one such book. Whether one is able to benefit from the great books of humanity depends entirely upon the intensity and purity of one's search. Used wisely, they serve as milestones. They also serve as benchmarks and guard against self-reference and mind's great power to delude itself. Acting as mirrors, they are only as good as their reader.

This book presents the contribution of management scholars and practitioners who have embodied the message of the Gītā in their personal and professional life. A part of the initiative to bring out this book began when Professor Amar, one of the editors, along with a number of the authors of this book, organized and presented a symposium on how to apply the messages of the Bhagavad Gītā to the practice of management at the 2016 Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management, held in Anaheim, California, titled “Looking into the *Bhagavad Gītā* for Managing Organizations to Become Meaningful.” The interest of the Academy in this ancient Hindu scripture for redefining management in the twenty-first century encouraged us to broaden the message by bringing out this book.

For the editors, this book represents continuation and solidification of their life-long association with the Bhagavad Gītā.

Professor Dhiman, one of the editors of this book, has completed a translation of the Gītā into English titled, *Sahaja Gītā*. He has also conducted several Management and Leadership Development Programs around the world featuring the Gītā as a foundational text and has co-organized, moderated, and presented at international conferences dedicated to the Bhagavad Gītā besides publishing journal articles regarding its application to management and leadership.

The appreciation for the message of the Bhagavad Gītā of one of the editors of this book (Professor Amar) increased tremendously when the faculties in his university, Seton Hall University in New Jersey, USA, a Catholic comprehensive research university with ten colleges and schools, made the Bhagavad Gītā a mandatory reading for all its undergraduate students. They saw universal value in the Gītā that goes beyond secularism and national boundaries.

In its final form, the book, *Managing by the Bhagavad Gītā*, has authors who come from the different parts of the world, with different faiths, and different professions, each of them picking one or some aspects of the Bhagavad Gītā and turning it into a practical lesson for the manager. Our endeavor has been for this book to come out so that every manager, at any level in the organizational hierarchy, in any industry, in any country would find something useful that she or he can take to her or his work and apply it to the job.

We have brought out this book with the understanding to bring the learning of the Bhagavad Gītā for the benefit of the managers of organizations, as we believe that the Gītā is so rich that any manager, in any situation, can find messages for use in almost any aspect of the management function whether it is planning, organizing, leading, or controlling. One just has to have the sight to see the answers and interpret them to apply in real world situation. On a few management topics such as leadership, while a lot has already been written and is well covered, there is still a lot to study and narrate. A number of chapters in this book do it, some in good depth. However, Bhagavad Gītā also has enough on other management functions, and we cover them in this book as well.

We take Bhagavad Gītā as a know-all book. It indeed does cover everything, sacred and secular. We can see reflection of answer to any problem on any subject in the Bhagavad Gītā. All we need is to be able to understand what we see. It was with this goal in mind that we invited many well-known management and the Bhagavad Gītā scholars to write for the sake of our readers what messages they can get from the Bhagavad Gītā.

We got a lot in response to our call. Several authors and scholars gave us their interpretations of messages guiding management and leadership functions from the Bhagavad Gītā. We are sure that managers and leaders will be able to use them in understanding work, workers, organizational behavior, qualitative analyses, social and community responsibility, economic environment, and investment management. Nevertheless, we also learned that conveyances and meanings of the Bhagavad Gītā are so deep that it is impossible to separate theology, philosophy, and spiritualism from the study of the Gītā, no matter how strong the intent. That is why we got a lot on these subjects and through them we sensed management and leadership lessons.

While practical application has driven the effort for this book, we have made sure that the authenticity of the Gītā and its message remain. We really feel fortunate to bring together so many scholars and practitioners of the Bhagavad Gītā and business management in helping us achieve this ambitious goal. We express our sincere gratitude to all of them.

We also thank Springer Publishers, New York City, and its editorial staff for their assistance in improving the presentation of this work.

Due to the varied specialties of contributors to this work, their opinions or interpretations may not be always in agreement. In addition, to make the discussion rich, we did not work to create forced unanimity in all statements. Contributors are responsible for their content.

If the readers find something worthwhile in these pages, the credit goes to our teachers in life and spirit; nevertheless, we remain responsible for all the errors and omissions of fact and interpretations.

Burbank, CA, USA  
South Orange, NJ, USA

Satinder Dhiman  
A. D. Amar

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## About the Editors



**Satinder Dhiman** Recognized as a lead thinker for his pioneer contributions to the field of spirituality in the workplace, workplace well-being, sustainability, and fulfillment in personal and professional arena, Professor Dhiman is a sought-after keynote speaker at regional, national, and international conferences. In 2013, Professor Dhiman was invited to be the opening speaker at the prestigious TEDx Conference at College of the Canyons in Santa Clarita, California. He has given more than 15 invited keynote and commencement addresses over the last 5 years, nationally and internationally. He has published more than 60 papers and book chapters and made more than 100 presentations at various international conferences, universities, and venues.

With an instructional and research focus on leadership and organizational behavior—and with specific concentration on sustainability, workplace spirituality, and well-being—Professor Dhiman holds a PhD in Social Sciences from Tilburg University, Netherlands, an EdD in Organizational Leadership from Pepperdine University, Los Angeles, an MBA from West Coast University, Los Angeles, and a master’s degree in Commerce from Panjab University, Chandigarh, India, having earned the Gold Medal. *He has also completed advanced Executive Leadership Programs at Harvard, Stanford, and Wharton.*

Currently, Professor Dhiman serves as the Associate Dean, Chair, and Director of the MBA Program; and Professor of Management at Woodbury University, Burbank, California. He has also served as the Chair for a special MBA Program for the Mercedes-Benz executives, China. He was invited as Distinguished Visiting Professor at the Tecnológico de Monterrey, Guadalajara campus, Mexico, and has served as

E-Commerce curriculum lead advisor, Universidad Francisco Gavidia, El Salvador, and coordinator for LA Fieldtrip for MBA students from the Berlin University for Professional Studies (DUW). Professor Dhiman serves as the President of [International Chamber of Service Industry \(ICSI\)](#).

Professor Dhiman has translated over seven spiritual treatises (including the *Bhagavad Gītā*; and *Ādi Śankarācārya's Vivekacūḍāmaṇi—with Br. Pranipata Chaitanya*); authored, co-authored, and co-edited over 20 management, leadership, and accounting related books and research monographs, including most recently authoring [Holistic Leadership](#) (Palgrave 2017), [Gandhi and Leadership](#) (Palgrave 2015), and [Seven Habits of Highly Fulfilled People](#) (2012) and co-editing and co-authoring, with Joan Marques, [Spirituality and Sustainability](#) (Springer 2016), [Leadership Today](#) (Springer 2016), and [Engaged Leadership](#) (Springer, 2018).

He is the *editor-in-chief* of two multi-author Major Reference Works: [Springer Handbook of Engaged Sustainability](#) and [Palgrave Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Fulfillment](#) and *editor-in-chief* of [Palgrave Studies in Workplace Spirituality and Fulfillment](#), and editor of [Springer Series in Management, Change, Strategy and Positive Leadership](#). Some of his forthcoming titles include [Bhagavad Gītā: A Catalyst for Organizational Transformation](#); [Leading without Power: A New Model of Highly Fulfilled Leaders](#) (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018/2019); [Conscious Consumption: Healthy, Humane, and Sustainable Living](#) (Routledge, 2019); [Wise Leadership for Turbulent Times](#) (with Mark Kriger—Routledge, 2019); *editor-in-chief*, [Routledge Series on Resilient Organizations and the Sustainable Development Goals](#), and [Routledge Companion to Mindfulness, Flow and Creativity 2020](#); and [Handbook of Workplace Well-being: Reimagining Workplace Flourishing](#) (*editor-in-chief*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

Recipient of several national and international professional honors, Professor Dhiman is also the winner of the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) prestigious International Teacher of the Year Award, 2004; Steve Allen Excellence in Education Award, 2006; Woodbury University's Ambassador of the Year Award, 2015 and 2017; Most

Inspirational and Most Charismatic, MBA Teacher Award 2012, 2013/2014/2015; and Most Valuable MBA Professor of the Year Award, 2018, given by MBAA. He has published research with his colleagues in *Journal of Values-Based Leadership*, *Organization Development Journal*, *Journal of Management Development*, *Journal of Social Change*, *Journal of Applied Business and Economics*, and *Performance Improvement*.

He has also served as Accreditation Mentor and Evaluator, and Site Visit Peer Review Team Leader for the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) for more than 20 universities in America, Canada, Europe, and Asia.

Professor Dhiman is the Founder-Director of [Forever Fulfilled](#), a Los Angeles-based well-being consultancy, which focuses on workplace well-being, sustainability, and self-leadership.



**A. D. Amar**, B.Sc. Prod. E., M.S. I. M. E., MBA, MPhil, Ph.D. An expert in knowledge organization and management theory, Dr. A. D. Amar (Amar Dev Amar) received 2013 Carolyn Dexter Finalist Award of the Academy of Management and 2010 NJBIA Bright Idea Award in Management of the NJPRO Foundation of New Jersey Business and Industry Association (NJBIA) for his paper on leadership and authority, published in the *Harvard Business Review*. His papers on leadership and meditation were selected as Best Papers of the AOM Annual Meetings of 2013 and 2014. He received the 2017 Professor of the Year Award from IARC. His paper on motivating knowledge workers has been the fifth Most Read Article of 2015 and the eighth Most Read Article of 2016 of the *European Journal of Innovation Management* and has full text downloads of 17,295 since 2013 (<https://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/14601060410534366>). Full text of the article (Amar, A. D. (2004). Motivating knowledge workers to innovate: a model integrating motivation dynamics and antecedents. *European Journal of Innovation Management*, 7(2), pp. 89–101) can be downloaded at <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/action/showMostReadArticles?journalCode=ejim>.

Currently, Dr. Amar serves as a Professor of Management in the Stillman School of Business, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ 07079, USA.

Dr. Amar has served on the faculties of universities in the USA, India, Poland, Russia, and the United Kingdom. He has served as an external examiner on several doctoral committees, including the Indian Institute of Science and the University of South Australia, and has more than 20 years of research in knowledge work, more than 120 publications, and more than 100 presentations on a variety of management topics. He has delivered a number of invited, plenary and special lectures worldwide. Among his publications is a graduate-level book on knowledge work and organizations, titled *Managing Knowledge Workers: Unleashing Innovation and Productivity* (Westport, CT: Quorum Books, Greenwood Press, 2002).

Dr. Amar has headed and directed several academic and administrative offices, initiatives, and assignments. He had been the editor of the *Mid-Atlantic Journal of Business* for 12 years, 1990–2002. He serves on several journal and management boards. He has trained managers in business and public sectors. He has worked in engineering and management for Orisun Machine Tools, Teledyne Pacific Industrial Controls, and Vornado Corp. He has designed large-scale computer and automation systems for engineering, management, forecasting, supply chain, and manufacturing planning and control. Some of his consulting clients include Arkwin Industries, Hydrocraft Corporation, City of New York, State of New Jersey, General Motors, Social Security Administration, US Postal Service, Vornado—Store Decor, and VW/Audi.

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## About the Contributing Authors

**A. D. Amar** W. Paul Stillman School of Business, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ, USA

**Ronak Batra** is a Research Scholar in Organizational Behavior at Management Development Institute, Gurgaon, India.

**Dr. Dharm P. S. Bhawuk** is a Professor of Management and Culture and Community Psychology, University of Hawaii at Manoa. He holds a bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering (B. Tech., Hons) from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kharagpur (1979). He earned an MBA from the University of Hawaii at Manoa (1989) as a degree participant at the East-West Center during 1987–1989 and was the recipient of the Distinguished Service Award from the East West Center (1989) and the Lum Yip Kee Outstanding MBA Student of the Year award in 1990.

He is author of the book *Spirituality and Indian Psychology: Lessons from the Bhagavad-Gita* (Springer, 2011) and co-editor of the book *Asian Contributions to Cross-Cultural Psychology* (Sage, 1996). He has published more than 60 papers and book chapters and made more than 160 presentations at international conferences and universities. His research has appeared in various handbooks and edited volumes as well as journals such as the *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *International Journal of Psychology*, *Cross-Cultural Research*, *Applied Psychology: International Review*, *Psychology and Developing Societies*, *Indian Psychological Review*, *Delhi Business Review*, *Journal of Environmental Engineering and Policy*, and *Journal of Management*.

**Dr. Charles Chow** is a Roman Catholic, yet a forever student of the Bhagavad Gita. He is the first Singaporean to be trained by the German Navy and commanded a Singapore Navy ship before starting the Police Coast Guard in Singapore. He then joined the Singapore Trade Development Board to link businesses between India and Singapore. Since 2000, he is a consultant focusing on corporate strategies and social innovations. In 2014 he published *Management Efficacy, Wisdom from the Indian Bhagavad Gita and the Chinese Art of War* with McGraw-Hill Singapore. His business focus includes recycling of food waste and hospitality training to encourage the blossoming of the “*inner firmness of purpose*” of all involved.

**Satinder Dhiman** School of Business, Woodbury University, Burbank, CA, USA

**Dennis Heaton** is Professor of Management and Director of the Ph.D. Program in Management at Maharishi University of Management in Fairfield, Iowa, USA. His research and publications are concerned with the topics of sustainability, ethics, leadership, management education, and holistic health in relation to the development of human consciousness. Maharishi University of Management offers a consciousness-based system of education in which growth of consciousness in the knower is the foundation of deep, holistic knowledge. The Ph.D. Program in Management at MUM explores the implications of higher individual and collective consciousness for creating individual, organization, and societal flourishing. Maharishi University of Management, Fairfield, IA, USA

**Kiran Korhalkar**, B. E. (Civil), LL.B. Advocate [Chandrashekhar] My surname has origin in the name of a village Korhale, near Shiridi, in the then subdistrict Kopargaon in Ahmednagar District of Maharashtra. I am a third generation lawyer. I am a practicing civil lawyer of the Bombay High Court, Bench at Aurangabad where I have settled and put in 30 years of practice. I rigidly observe professional ethics. I have great fascination for English language, poetry, and philosophy, both oriental and occidental. My book of poems “The Valley of Flowers” was published in 2003. My poem, “Near to Nature” is incorporated in a book “Tender Moments” published by the International Library of Poetry in 2001. It received “Editor’s Best Choice Award.” Consequently, I was enrolled as the “Distinguished Member of the International Society of Poets.” I have translated the Bhagavad Gita into English verse. It was released in 2012.

**Professor C. K. Manjunath** currently teaching at Justice KS Hegde Institute of Management, Nitte, India, received his MS in Information Science from Indian Institute of Science, MA in English literature from KSOU, Mysore, India, and PhD from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston. Dr. Manjunath has nineteen years of academic experience at schools and collegiate levels. He has published in the *Mentor*, Indian Academy of Sciences journals, *Nature*, *Science Exploration*, and *AI and Neural Networks* and was a series editor for Pearson Publications. He has presented papers on brain modeling, slow learners, models of learning, and ethics of teaching and learning at international conferences in the West and East. He has held senior academic and administrative positions in the education sector. His academic interests span pedagogy, mental retardation and learning, cognitive sciences, AI, English literature, leadership skills, making Maths easy for school children, and student evaluation processes.

**Ajeet N. Mathur** an Affiliate Life Member of the Indian Psycho-analytic Society and certified “Yoga Shikshak” of the Bihar School of Yoga, is a spiritual initiate of the Adi Sampradaya. He is a Professor in Strategy and International Business concurrently affiliated with Economics and Business Policy Areas at IIM Ahmedabad. He was previously the Founding Professor of International Business, University of Tampere, EU-TEMPUS Professor of European Integration and Internationalization,

IFCI Chair Professor, Indian Council of Research on International Economic Relations, New Delhi, and Professor in Strategy and HR at IIM Calcutta. He has held visiting academic appointments at K.U. Leuven, Belgium, University of Edinburgh, Cornell University, University of California at Berkeley, University of Bielefeld, Germany, Helsinki School of Economics, Aalto University, Turku School of Economics, Royal University of Bhutan, and Fresenius University, Cologne. His publications include twenty-eight books and over one hundred and fifty papers in scientific journals and anthologies. He has been a Senior Fulbright Fellow and a Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Scholar. He is the recipient of the Prestige Award as “Professor of the Year 2014” and Academy of Management Awards in 2016 and 2017. He has been a member of the Board of Directors with Corporates in India and Europe and is consulted by businesses, governments, international organizations, and the policy research community. He served a term as the Director and CEO, Institute of Applied Manpower Research, with the rank of Secretary to the Government of India. He is a member of the Governing Board of the Global Foundation for Integrating Spirituality and Organisational Leadership (ISOL).

**Dr. Chandan Medatwal** PhD (Commerce and Management), is Management Faculty in GL Bajaj Institute of Management and Research, Greater Noida, UP. For the last ten years, Dr. Medatwal has been associated through academics with government and renowned private organizations. Her research is focused upon emerging issues in management, empowerment, organization behavior, human resources development, knowledge management, ethics, and social issues. She has presented about six dozens review and research papers in reputed international and national conferences and contributed research papers to journals of international and national repute. She has brilliant academic contributions such as cases, book chapters, reviews etc. to her credit and organized symposiums and MDPs and academic events. She has been awarded by the Government of Rajasthan for her contribution to literature and culture and was awarded “young woman researcher and scholar award” by the National Federation of Entrepreneurship Development. She has been listed in Golden Book of World Records for her achievements in yoga.

**Paul Palmarozza** is the founder and CEO of If I can...CIC, a not-for-profit community interest company, who offers online apps that provide practical guidance on how natural human values can enhance the way we think, relate to others, and act in life [www.ificanapp.com](http://www.ificanapp.com). The latest development is Ethical Entrepreneur, which shows how the application of values in the performance of nine core management functions helps build a sustainable, responsible business [www.ethicalentrepreneur.org](http://www.ethicalentrepreneur.org).

In his 54-year business career, he has managed a number of entrepreneurial ventures including founding an e-learning company in 1987 which became listed on the AIM Stock Exchange in 2001. He has co-authored a book *From Principles to Profit* and is currently a Guest Lecturer at Regents University Business School's Entrepreneurship Program.

Paul's education includes a BSc from New Jersey Institute of Technology, an MBA from Drexel University, and a PG Diploma in Education Studies from Oxford University.

**Jon Radwan** is Chair of the Department of Communication, Journalism, and PR at Seton Hall University. He earned a BA from the University of New Hampshire, an MA from Northern Illinois University, and a PhD from Penn State University. His teaching and research focus on the intersection of Rhetoric and Religion, examining how ancient traditions influence contemporary public discourse. He authored the Popular Communication and Religion entry in the *International Encyclopedia of Communication* and his work has been published in a range of professional periodicals including the *Journal of Communication and Religion* and the *Journal of Media and Religion*. In 2012 the Religious Communication Association awarded him Article of the Year for his *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* essay entitled “Contact Rhetoric: Bodies and Love in Deus Caritas Est.” He is currently working on a book analyzing late modern papal rhetoric and an article on Nelson Mandela’s early sabotage campaign.

**Professor K. Sankaran** currently Director of Justice KS Hegde Institute of Management, Nitte, received his B. Tech Honors from IIT, Kharagpur; PGDM from IIM Bangalore; and PhD from Kent State University, USA. He has several years of academic experience in India, USA, UK, Middle East, and East Asia. Dr. Sankaran has published in *Strategic Management Journal*, *Journal of Marketing Management*, *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, *Singapore Management Review*, the *International Journal of Agricultural Resources*, *Governance and Ecology*, and *Nitte Management Review*. He has presented papers at many international conferences in the USA and UK including those of the Academy of Management, Decision Sciences Institute, and the Society for Business Ethics. He has also held senior positions in management consulting and project management. His teaching and research interests span strategic management, business ethics, social entrepreneurship, knowledge management, higher education governance, and leadership.

**Radha R. Sharma** is Dean, Research, Hero MotoCorp Chair Professor and Professor of Organizational Behavior; and Chair, Center for Positive Scholarship for Organizational Sustainability at Management Development Institute, Gurgaon, India. An executive alumnus of Harvard Business School, she has been ICCR Chair Professor of Social Responsibility and Governance at HHL Graduate School of Business, Germany; visiting professor to EBS, Germany, ESCP-Europe, Italy, and the University of Leipzig; and guest professor to Wittenberg Centre for Global Ethics. A recipient of gold medals and several best researcher and academic awards, Prof. Sharma has Advanced Professional Certification in MBTI from the Association of Personality Type, EI certification from EI Learning System, and has certifications in Corporate Social Responsibility from British Council and New Academy of Business, UK, and the World Bank Institute. She is editor of *Vision-A Journal of Business Perspective* from SAGE and associate editor of *Frontiers in Psychology*. She has published 14 books: *Executive Burnout*, *Change Management & Organizational Transformation*, *Organizational Behavior*, etc.

Her research interests are executive burnout, well-being, emotional intelligence, spirituality, gender equity, responsible management, leadership, and competencies.

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# Pronunciation/Transliteration Key of Sanskrit Terms<sup>1</sup>

Sanskrit is written in a script called *Devanāgarī*. It is written from left to right. Sanskrit is perhaps the oldest and the most systematic language in the world.<sup>2</sup> Its vast structure, refined construction, and rhythmic compactness are hard to duplicate in any translation. For those unfamiliar with *Devanāgarī* script, and who will nevertheless like to enjoy the efflorescent splendor of the original—*albeit in Romanized version*, we provide below the transliteration key using the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST) scheme to denote words written in *Devanāgarī* script. IAST is the most widely used key:<sup>3</sup>

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## Vowels

अ a—as u in but  
ā—as a in father  
इ i—as i in pin  
ī—as i in police  
उ u—as u in full  
ū—as u in boot  
ऋ ṛ—as ri in rim  
ए e—as e in evade

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<sup>1</sup>This Pronunciation/Transliteration Key of Sanskrit Terms has been compiled by Satinder Dhiman.

<sup>2</sup>The great American historian Will Durant (1885–1981) has noted in his book, *The Case for India*: “India was the motherland of our race, and Sanskrit the mother of Europe’s languages: she was the mother of our philosophy; mother, through the Arabs, of much of our mathematics; mother, through the Buddha, of the ideals embodied in Christianity; mother, through the village community, of self-government and democracy.” Will Durant, *The Case for India* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1931), 4. In the footnote to this quote, Will Durant writes that “the first volume of the author’s *Story of Civilization* will substantiate this claim.” Highlighting the role of the language in culture, Rajiv Malhotra avers in his recent book, *The Battle for Sanskrit* (HarperCollins, India, 2016), that there is no *sanskriti* (culture) without Sanskrit.

<sup>3</sup>In the word document, inserting these diacritical marks (such as  $\bar{\sim}$ ) is quite easy. It can be done by choosing the “Insert” dropdown menu and using the “symbol” option to insert various diacritics. By saving the “symbol” option on your top menu bar, you can access these marks quite easily and efficiently.

ai—as *ai* in aisle  
 ओ o—as o in over  
 au—as *ou* in out

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## Consonants

k—as k in king  
 kh—as kh in blockhead  
 g—as g in goal  
 gh—as gh in log-house  
 n—as n in noun  
 c—as ch in chair  
 ch—as chh in thatch-hut  
 j—as j in jug  
 jh—as dgeh in hedgehog  
 ṅ—as in nut  
 ṭ—as t in tongue  
 ṭh—as in anthill  
 ḍ—as in dark  
 ḍh—as dh in God-hood  
 ṇ—as n in Monday  
 t—as t in tub  
 th—as th in thumb  
 d—as th in then  
 dh—as theh in breathe  
 n—as n in nut  
 p—as p in pan  
 ph—as ph in phone  
 b—as b in bed  
 bh—as bh in abhor  
 m—as in mother  
 y—as in yes  
 r—as in race  
 l—as in light  
 v—as v in avert  
 ś—as sh in sure (short palatal sibilant)  
 ṣ—as sh in bush (cerebral sibilant)  
 s—as s in sun  
 h—as in hall  
 ḷ—as in curl