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Context to the nugget conversation

Raghu speaks about the notion of being Dharmic and how it can be simply defined using three filters – 1) How is it enlivening you? 2) How is it enlivening the person you are interacting with? 3) How is it enlivening the wider context you are in? He goes on to speak about how he has discovered his Dharma in his journey.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): And cutting to today Raghu you work with a lot of people on.... one of the things that struck me when I was doing the research for this conversation as in your website to define your dharma as helping people becoming a better version of themselves. Can you talk a little bit about just this just to understand the language when you say dharma, what do you have in mind when you say that, and how did you get here in your journey?

Raghu Ananthanarayanan (RA): See, the word dharma is actually a very simple word. It gets complicated but it's a very simple word. The word the way I am translating it is when I am doing something, I have to ask myself three questions. First is, how is it enlivening me, how is my action enlivening me. How is it enlivening you or whoever I am interacting with and how is it enlivening the context that all of us depend upon, which might be the Earth which might be a larger context. Now, if all three are yes simultaneously, it's dharmic.

DJ: And when you say enlivening can you expand on that?

RA: Because I am quite simple, you make cosmetics and you push somebody to wear cosmetics because the brown colour will become white; this is not that dharmic. It might increase your profitability but you are creating in the person who's using it a self-deprecating mind. Half the stuff that is put in there is bad chemicals, might even give skin problems, how is this dharmic? Whereas Aravind Eye Clinic, obviously dharmic, the way they serve people, the way they work within themselves, it's a fabulous way of doing business. So, any action you can ask this question, it's not a difficult question to ask, but it's a difficult question to answer. And it's very obvious that the Earth, all the crises that we are facing today is because enough number of people have not asked the dharmic question.

DJ: And in your journey, Raghu, how have you gotten to defining what is your dharma which is in line with...

RA: See, there are two three parallel lines that I have been following in my life. The underlying question has always been how do people work, what makes them tick and things like that, because I

was interested in that question for myself. And like I told you when I went into work the first thing, I hit was a turnaround situation. What I found there was that the mindset was impacting the business much more than the actual dynamics of the business; how things were understood. Now, after this, I got into a series of consulting assignments most all of which were turnarounds. So, I worked with Parry Sugar, that was a turnaround situation. I worked with a yacht making company, again, turnaround. Everywhere it's very, very clear that the psyche of the person, how they look at business, how they understand the world impacts the whole culture and that is very critical. So, that was a very important question when I went into organisations. Now, the Dharampal thing had also triggered a whole set of engagement with craft and with grassroots work. We have done a fair amount of work with Dalit Groups and with various developmental things. So, everywhere you go finally people are using resources or people are reacting to situations. So, you have to ask the question how can each of us be the best that we can be? And that includes the dharma question. You cannot believe that you are doing something honourable, and you are doing the best without saying whether what I am doing is dharmic or not so... and I think it's a natural thing. Most people tend to be compassionate; most people tend to think of larger things. I think there is a current discourse which is pushing individuality and pushing self-centeredness, because when I meet people, there is a tension inside them. When they are doing something which is self-centred, they know and they pay a price through hell, through relationship issues; one way or the other they pay a price.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: Thank you for listening. If you want to know more about how different leaders have found their Dharma, you might like to go to the Curated Playlists section and look up the one on Social Impact.

End of nugget transcription

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About Deepak Jayaraman

Deepak seeks to unlock the human potential of senior executive's / leadership teams by working with them as an Executive Coach / Sounding Board / Transition Advisor. You can know more about his work [here](#).

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