



Indian Institute of Management, Lucknow

**IIM Lucknow student learn important lessons of leadership from Mahabharata,
Leadership Talk Series – A session by Mr. Gurcharan Das**

Lucknow, 26th September 2011

The session brought out subtle nuances of philosophy behind Mahabharata and its implication on business in today's context.

Under the Leadership Talk series, the students of IIM Lucknow on 25th September 2011, learnt important lessons of leadership from the oldest Indian epic Mahabharata. The session aptly named “**The Difficulty of Being Good**” was taken by Mr. Gurcharan Das, an author, management guru and public intellectual. Mr. Das has graduated with honors from Harvard University in Philosophy and Sanskrit. He later attended Harvard Business School (AMP), where he is featured in three case studies. He was CEO of Procter & Gamble India and later Managing Director, Procter & Gamble Worldwide (Strategic Planning). In 1995, he took early retirement. He is the author of *The Difficulty of Being Good: On the Subtle Art of Dharma* (Penguin 2009) which interrogates the epic, Mahabharata, in order to answer the question, ‘why be good?’ His international bestseller, *India Unbound*, is a narrative account of India from Independence to the global information age, and has been published in 17 languages and filmed by BBC.

As a part of the event, copies of the book “The Difficulty of Being Good” were distributed among the audience. IIM Lucknow community members including the student and the faculty members also had a chance to have small discussion with Mr. Das.

Mr. Gurcharan Das said that intelligence is overrated in today's world and the three essential qualities a leader should have are – determination or will power, humility but not lack of ambition and integrity. Leadership is all about inspiring others through high energy, strong will power and most importantly through integrity. Leaders face moral dilemma throughout their career and what they choose and the motivation behind their decision defines their character. He drew examples of courage, dharma or doing what one ought to, loyalty or righteousness and compassion from Mahabharata. Dharma says half the punishment should be given to the person committing the crime, quarter to the allies and the remaining quarter should be borne by those who remain silent. Mr. Das opined that today this is the biggest problem of our society - our leaders remain silent when the entire nation is full of anger on so many issues.

Finally, Mr. Das talked about Yudhishtra's compassion towards a stray dog who accompanies him in his journey to heaven. Yudhishtra sacrificed heaven because

Indra does not allow a dog to enter heaven, suggesting that one should help someone who comes for refuge to you. Mr. Das ended his talk with a note that message of Dharma is act of goodness and how his latest book 'Difficulty of being Good' describes this in further detail.

This session was followed by an open house and a round of discussions with Mr. Das, where the audience asked various questions with regards to the session.

The event was well liked by the IIM Lucknow community members.

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