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Spirituality and Management

From Models to Applications

Springer

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Preface

The human society has undergone a rapid transformation at a very fast pace. The uncertainties of our times, highly volatile environment, and digitization of lives and businesses give rise to their own set of perplexities. Technological advancements are inevitable, but so then should be the wisdom that tells us where to draw the line. Scientists have been exploring and experimenting on how to ensure the right and the most appropriate way of dealing with environmental ambiguities. A sustainable business model can be possible only if its foundation is rooted in following business ethics. Anything that lacks value will not be a long-term prospect. With the rapid changes being experienced in the different walks of life, particularly the workplaces, individuals experience extreme stress and lack quality-of-life. Interestingly, human life is not just hedonic in nature but is more eudaimonic. It is also about the search for meaning, purpose, inter-connectedness, and growth. This is where spirituality helps management retain its essence for long-term sustainable goals.

The essence of spirituality is achieved through the development of an all-encompassing self that transcends limitations of everyday reality, brings together individual and common human identity with the broader understanding of our thinking patterns and conflicts for the better coordination of global well-being. This transformed and extended self is quintessential for overcoming challenges and applies wisdom to optimize technological advancements and their applications.

This book attempts at clarifying the conceptual foundations for a viable crossover of spirituality and management and to discuss models that can be applied in daily working life. It covers a variety of interrelated subjects addressing the possibilities for integrating spirituality and management. Chapters 1–3 are introductory in nature discussing the concept of spirituality and the Indian worldview; Chaps. 4–9 discuss the different models and frameworks on spirituality; Chaps. 10 and 11 provide the link to understanding the relation between spirituality and management; Chaps. 12–15 discuss how the concept of spirituality can be applied to the discipline of management and talk about workplace spirituality and related aspects; and Chaps. 16–18 discuss the concept of spiritual leadership and its effectiveness.

We hope that the readers will enjoy reading this book and that it will contribute toward their intellectual pursuits as it attempts to provide an authentic, research-based, and contemporary perspective on spirituality and management and ancient wisdom connected with contemporary management, and day-to-day life. This book is an attempt toward profound insights on creating a life you love and live powerfully, purposefully with peace, effectiveness, and bliss—it equips one with the knowledge and tools to help focus on the holistic development of people and organizations.

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Acknowledgements

Arise! Awake! Stop not until the Goal is reached.
—Swami Vivekanand

This book is an attempt to bring to the fore aspects of spirituality embedded in the language and methods of science to enable the understanding and significance of such concepts and how they can lead individuals and organizations toward exploring meaning and purpose in what they do. This book is a cumulative effort of many, and we, as the editors, would take the opportunity to extend our heartfelt appreciation for them.

We wish to accord our humble and sincere thanks to our esteemed founding Chancellor of O. P. Jindal Global University, Mr. Naveen Jindal, for his philanthropic endeavor of establishing this university. It is because of his vision and encouragement in creation of a congenial environment that promotes intellectual pursuits and rigorous academic endeavors, this book has been possible. We wish to extend a special note of thanks to our founding Vice Chancellor, Prof. C. Rajkumar, for his incessant support and encouragement for all JIBS endeavors.

We would like to duly acknowledge the efforts of our JIBS staff, Mr. Gerard Thomas, Mr. Sunil Kumar M. V., and Mr. Deepak Kaushik, for their unending support at different stages, which goes even beyond office hours. A very special thanks to Ms. Tanni Choudhury, Lecturer, at Jindal Institute of Behavioural Sciences for her unparalleled and dedicated efforts in assisting with the book at all stages.

We wish to place on record our sincere thanks and appreciation to all our contributing authors. Their intellectual acumen has shaped the book to what it is in its current form. We wish to express our deep appreciation for our reviewers

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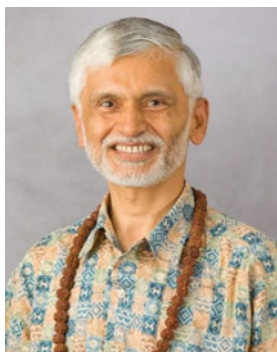
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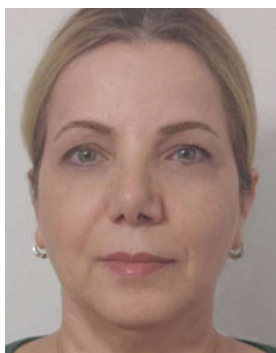
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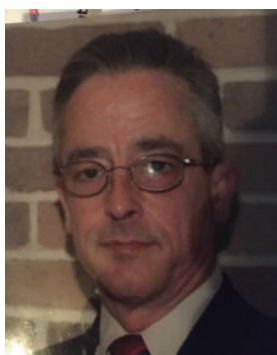
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Chapter 1
Enlightened Management: Reflections on Spirituality and its Significance for the Future of Work

Anthony Cullen and Paridhi Singh

Abstract This chapter explores the import of spirituality for the theory and practice of management. The first part focuses on how spirituality is defined, providing context for the discussion of its significance in the world of work. The second part addresses workplace spirituality, its evolution and importance to the future of work. In doing so, it considers the impact of technological disruptions, issues of employee well-being, and changes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The third part highlights the role of spirituality in this context and the potential for a shift in praxis as a means of facilitating a more holistic approach to the development of people and organizations.

Keywords Spirituality · Management · Law · Transcendence · Religion · Meaning

Introduction

This chapter explores the import of spirituality for the theory and practice of management. The chapter begins by first exploring how spirituality is defined. It then considers its significance in the fields of law, business, and management in light of the evolving nature of professional and legal services and challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Highlighting the role of spirituality in employee well-being, the potential for a shift in praxis is discussed as a means of facilitating a more holistic approach to the development of people and organizations.

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Defining Spirituality

As noted by Raysa Geaquinto Rocha and Paulo Gonçalves Pinheiro, spirituality appears in "management studies from three main perspectives: individual spirituality, spirituality in the workplace, and organizational spirituality" (2020, p. 1). This section explores how spirituality is defined from the perspective of the individual. Informed by the concept of spirituality developed here, Sect. "Workplace Spirituality" addresses spirituality in the workplace. For the purposes of section, Sect. "Defining Spirituality" particular attention will be given to the role of connectedness, transcendence, and meaning in life in defining what spirituality consists of (Weathers et al., 2016). Before doing so, it is important to distinguish the concept of spirituality from that of religion.

Distinguishing "spirituality" from "religion"

There is an increasingly well-recognized distinction between the concepts of spirituality and religion. Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead state that "in recent years the emergence of something called "spirituality" has-increasingly-demanded attention. Survey after survey shows that increasing numbers of people now prefer to call themselves "spiritual" rather than "religious"" (Heelas and Woodhead, 2005: p. 1). Spirituality is often distinguished from religion as being much broader in scope. Johnathan Rowson states

> While the terms 'spirituality' and 'religion' were previously undifferentiated, modern conceptions tend to see them as either polar opposites, or as one (spirituality) being a core function of the other (religion). The observed shift has paralleled an increased public and academic interest in spirituality. The number of citations in the psychological research literature with the word "religion" in the title doubled between 1970 and 2005, while the number of citations with the word "spirituality" in the title experienced a 40-fold increase over the same time period (Rowson, 2014, pp. 18–19)

Commenting on popular interest in spirituality in contrast to religion, the philosopher Paul O'Grady states that

> It is obvious that 'spirituality' is a word very much in vogue at the start of the twenty-first century. Bookshops stock numerous volumes with the word 'spiritual' somewhere in the title. Radio and TV programmes are devoted to the topic and interviewers are not afraid to ask celebrities about their spiritual views (and they are not averse to responding) … People who otherwise would have nothing to do with religion are happy to subscribe to some notion of spirituality (O'Grady, 2004, p. 5).

O'Grady refers to the "gradual collapse of faith in institutional religion" in the West, resulting in a strong emphasis on "the distinction between religion and spirituality" (O'Grady, 2004, pp. 11–12). However, as noted by Holly Nelson-Becker, "Religion and spirituality have many meanings" (Nelson-Becker, 2003: p. 86). She observed that "Some are personal, such as forming a relationship with a transcendent

power. Others are social, such as giving or receiving support in the context of a religious fellowship. Just as there are different types of intelligence and learning styles, individuals respond differently to components of religion and spirituality" (Nelson-Becker, 2003: p. 86). Reporting on the meaning attributed to religion and spirituality by African American and European American Elders, Nelson-Becker stated that "Religion was described primarily as beliefs, while spirituality was primarily identified as a feeling in the heart" (Nelson-Becker, 2003: p. 86).

Reviewing both the theoretical and empirical literature pertaining to spirituality, Elizabeth Weathers, Geraldine McCarthy, and Alice Coffey identified connectedness, transcendence, and meaning in life as three defining attributes of the concept. The following definition was posited on the basis of these attributes: "Spirituality is a way of being in the world in which a person feels a sense of connectedness to self, others, and/or a higher power or nature; a sense of meaning in life; and transcendence beyond self, everyday living, and suffering" (Weathers et al., 2016: p. 93). The sections which follow explore these attributes as a way of unfolding the concept of spirituality.

Connectedness

The attribute of connectedness to self, others, and/or a higher power or nature is often mentioned as a characteristic of spirituality (e.g., Buck, 2006: p. 290; Nelson-Becker, 2003: p. 98; Rowson, 2014: p. 48). The sense of relatedness in the attribute has an implicit ethical dimension. In *Secular Spirituality*, Harald Walach states

> There is no single spiritual tradition that would not also impart some ethical norms of conduct and behavior, remarkably similar across traditions. This implication of ethics in spirituality is less an external than an internal one. One who has had a spiritual experience knows that he must not do certain things, not because they are forbidden in a general sense and by a higher authority, but because he is damaging himself. A spiritual experience often contains the element of interconnectedness (Walach, 2014: p. 25).

Connectedness (or interconnectedness) in individual spirituality conveys "a sense of belonging" in contrast to "a common background feeling of loneliness or alienation" in "normal experience" (Rowson, 2014: p. 48). According to Weathers et al., "[c]onnectedness, as defined in the literature, is said to include a sense of relatedness to oneself, to others, to nature or the world, and to a Higher Power, God, or Supreme Being" (Weathers et al., 2016: p. 83). This sense of relatedness is often referred to in conjunction with the attribute of transcendence discussed below.

Transcendence

The attribute of transcendence is closely related to that of connectedness. Weathers et al. (2016) define transcendence as follows:

> Self-transcendence has been defined as the ability to see beyond the boundaries of the self, the environment, and present limitations. Every person is said to have the capacity to self-transcend and transcend suffering. Thus, transcendence emerged in this analysis as a capacity to change one's outlook on a given situation and on life overall (Weathers et al., 2016: p. 91).

Transcendence addresses that which goes beyond the conditioning of an individual in terms of education, culture, or other more limiting aspects of human experience. Alexandrea Withers, Kimberly Zuniga, and Sharon Van refer to the "transcendence of religion" as "vital in understanding spirituality" (Withers et al., 2017: p. 234). The attribute of transcendence is thus associated with attainment of a higher, more liberating perspective. In doing so, it provides context for an individual's understanding of the meaning and purpose of life. The section which follows explores this attribute of spirituality.

Meaning and Purpose

Spirituality is often frequently cited as a point of reference for meaning and purpose in the life of an individual. The psychologist David Elkins refers to "[t]he need for meaning and purpose" as "one of the strongest human drives" (Elkins et al., 1988, p. 13). He comments that

> The actual ground and content of this meaning vary from person to person, but the common factor is that each person has filled the "existential vacuum" with an authentic sense that life has meaning and purpose (Elkins et al., 1988, p. 11).

The psychiatrist and concentration camp survivor Viktor Frankl refers to the "will to meaning" as the most fundamental of all human motivations (Frankl, 1963: p. 172). He states that the main concern of an individual "consists in fulfilling a meaning, rather than in the mere gratification and satisfaction of drives and instincts, or in merely reconciling the conflicting claims of id, ego and superego, or in the mere adaptation and adjustment to society and environment" (Frankl, 1963: p. 182). Frankl emphasizes that "knowledge that there is a meaning in one's life" may serve as the very basis of a person's survival (Frankl, 1963: p. 182). Drawing on his experience in Nazi concentration camps, he quotes Friedrich Nietzsche: "He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how" (Frankl, 1963: p. 182).

Jonathan Rowson states that the "Spiritual is more about meaning than "happiness"" (Rowson, 2014: p. 11). In this context—one relating to the conceptualization of spirituality—the attribute of meaning is understood in terms that are existential in nature. As a consequence, the concept necessarily engages the subjectivity of the human condition. Indeed, the decline of religion and the growth of interest in spirituality have been credited to the "subjective turn" of modern culture (Heelas and Woodhead, 2005). Citing Charles Taylor's *Ethics of Authenticity*, Heelas and Woodhead explain the rise in interest in spirituality in terms of the "subjectivities of each individual" as follows:

> The subjectivities of each individual become a, if not the, unique source of significance, meaning and authority. Here 'the good life' consists in living one's life in full awareness of

one's states of being; in enriching one's experiences; in finding ways of handling negative emotions; in becoming sensitive enough to find out where and how the quality of one's life - alone or in relation - may be improved. The goal is not to defer to higher authority, but to have the courage to become one's own authority. Not to follow established paths, but to forge one's own inner-directed, as subjective, life. Not to become what others want one to be, but to 'become who I truly am'. Not to rely on the knowledge and wisdom of others ('To the other be true'), but to live out the Delphic 'know thyself' and the Shakespearian 'To thine own self be true' (Heelas and Woodhead, 2005: pp. 3–4).

The attribution of meaning and purpose in individual spirituality is naturally reflected in the attribution of meaning and purpose in workplace spirituality. As noted by Raysa Geaquinto Rocha and Paulo Gonçalves Pinheiro, "Individual spirituality is also a component of workplace spirituality because interactions of spirituality within the organisation occur in the workplace as the members search for meaning in their work" (Rocha & Pinheiro, 2020: p. 8). The section that follows explores this further in light of the evolving nature of professional and legal services and changes arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Law, Business, and Management

Workplace Spirituality

Peter Case and Jonathan Gosling comment on the rise academic interest in workplace spirituality:

> Academic interest in the subject is following the corporate trend for workshops, seminars, culture change and corporate transformation programmes that, in many instances, are increasingly aimed at harnessing not only the mind and body of employees but also their spiritual essence or soul. Major companies, such as, Apple, Ford, GlaxoSmithKline, McDonalds, Nike, Shell Oil and the World Bank are embracing this recent drive to secure competitive advantage through what might be understood from a critical standpoint as the appropriation of employee spirituality for primarily economic ends (Case & Gosling, 2010: p. 2).

A critique of this transactional approach has been made in the context of the legal professional services industry. This industry is notorious for high rates of burnout, stress, depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues driven by a high-pressure and competitive environment (Muça, 2019). Rebecca Michalak reports that "Lawyers suffer from significantly lower levels of psychological and psychosomatic health … than other professionals" (Michalak, 2015: p. 21), and it is estimated that lawyers suffer depression at a rate that is 3.6 times greater than other professions (Port, 2018).

Ronald Purser posits that many organisations including law firms are using workplace spiritual practices to relieve the stress of employees (Purser, 2019a). Such interventions often come at the expense of introducing meaningful long-term changes addressing the causes of stress and anxiety, which are commonplace in the modern workplace.

McMindfulness: How Mindfulness Became the New Capitalist Spirituality, Purser argues that mindfulness interventions may in fact be counterproductive to the long-term health of employees. This is because the burden of maintaining employee well-being shifts almost exclusively to the employee. The expectation being that the employee should be able to cope with the difficulty of their circumstances through the adoption of spiritual practices. It is evident that this compounds the problem: The employee's environment continues to negatively impact on their well-being/mental health, *and* additionally, the employee has to cope with the situation on their own through whatever means is available to them. Meanwhile, the employer has a lesser imperative to change the prevailing *status quo* or investigate the organizational policies and ways of working damaging employee wellness.

Such a transactional approach, whether deliberate or unintended, highlights the limitations of several prevalent organizational attitudes toward workplace spirituality. To expect employees to weather silently, a steady erosion of their overall health, and to use workplace spirituality as a means not to introduce meaningful changes, negates the good of such interventions. The key question which emerges then is as follows: *How should organizations or executive leadership understand the value of workplace spirituality?* A shift away from a transactional view of workplace spirituality is needed. The reasons why are discussed below.

The Future of Work

The Industrial Revolution marks one of the most disruptive periods in modern history. The sudden shift from an agrarian and handicraft economy to large-scale machine-led manufacturing industries led to job losses as demand for craftspeople fell. Many artisans—such as handloom weavers—could not compete with the economies of scale and low costs offered by the industrial giants of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Hobsbawm, 1962, p. 37). In the twenty-first century, the Fourth Industrial Revolution led by the convergence of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, and quantum computing, has catalyzed a new wave of disruption. As noted by Morgan Frank and others, "[w]hile technology generally increases productivity, AI may diminish some of today's valuable employment opportunities" (Frank et al., 2019: p. 6531).

The disruptive potential of AI is evident from its use in a variety of different contexts. According to Noam Brown, Research Scientist at Facebook AI Research, it is now possible to create "an AI algorithm that can bluff better than any human" (Hernandez, 2019). Together with Tuomas Sandholm (his PhD Supervisor at Carnegie Mellon University), Brown created two AI systems—Libratus and Pluribus—both of which succeeded in defeating top poker professionals (Brown & Sandholm, 2019). Poker is a game that "involves hidden information, deception, and bluffing" (Brown, 2020: p. 16). The fact the AI has been utilized in this way—to build "the most effective non-human bluffer to date" (Hernandez, 2019)—conveys something of the potential that exists for its application in other contexts. On the

potential impact of AI on the future of work, Didem Özkiziltan and Anke Hassel state that

> [E]xperts warn us that AI-driven technologies are also poised to perpetuate and exacerbate prevailing socio-economic problems, including but not limited to inequalities, discrimination, human rights violations, and undermining of democratic values. Projected into the world of work, these issues take the form of - among many others - replacement of human labour by machines, workers' relegation to mundane tasks, aggravation of disparities in wages and working conditions, invasion of workers' privacy, erosion of workers' traditional power resources, and intensification of power asymmetries between capital and labour. Taken from this perspective, the AI-driven future of work, as reflected by the scholarly work, is likely to perpetuate and aggravate work-related inequalities and discrimination, diminishing further the prospects of decent work, fair remuneration and adequate social protection for all (Özkiziltan & Hassel, 2021: p. 63).

Similar concerns about the impact of technologies such as artificial intelligence were raised by the Global Commission on the Future of Work:

> Technological advances – artificial intelligence, automation and robotics – will create new jobs, but those who lose their jobs in this transition may be the least equipped to seize the new job opportunities. The skills of today will not match the jobs of tomorrow and newly acquired skills may quickly become obsolete (Commission on the Future of Work, 2019: p. 18).

The implications for the future of the services industry are profound. In 2019, Deloitte Australia published a report on the future of work, referring to skills as "the job currency of the future" (Rumbens et al., 2019: p. 19). The report—"The path to prosperity: Why the future of work is human"—categorized skills into three types: "skills requiring our hands, skills requiring our heads and skills requiring our hearts" (Rumbens et al., 2019: p. 19). The last of the three types mentioned—"heart skills"—is of particular interest here. The significance of such skills to the future of work is explained as follows:

> The nature of work is changing. Today's jobs are increasingly likely to require you to use your head rather than your hands, a trend that has been playing out for some time.

> There is another factor at play. Regardless if jobs rely on brains or brawn, it's the less routine jobs that are harder to automate, and that is where employment has been growing.

> …

> And while today's jobs require us to use our heads, rather than our hands, this binary classification is hiding something important – the work of the heart. These are the skills that are embedded in both the work of the hands and the work of the head.

> What do we mean by work of the heart? It is the interpersonal and creative roles that will be hardest of all to mechanise (Rumbens et al., 2019: p. ii).

Interpersonal and creative work requires the exercise of skills that are distinctly human in nature. Such skills cannot be automated. Decisions requiring ethics, empathy, or emotional intelligence fall outside the scope of that which can be determined by way of artificial intelligence. As noted by Kai-Fu Lee, "[w]ith all of the

advances in machine learning, the truth remains that we are still nowhere near creating AI machines that feel any emotions at all" (Lee, 2021: p. 263).

It is difficult to conceive interpersonal and creative work without the exercise of "heart skills" such as empathy or ethics. Such skills are central to the efficacious practice of management. In this context, it is instructive to refer to the "work of the heart" as an area which should be prioritized in future:

> The shift from work of the hands (manual labour) to work of the head (cognitive tasks) will continue. But the next stage will be a move towards work of the heart. Humans are still better at being human. Interacting with others, being creative, understanding and reacting to emotions. These are all inherently human skills and focusing on these will bring the greatest benefits in the long run (Rumbens et al., 2019: p. 19).

The shift "from hands to heads to hearts" captures succinctly the past, present, and future of work (Rumbens et al., 2019: p. ii). However, it is noteworthy that "despite this demand suggesting that we should be most focused on the skills required for work of the heart, followed by head and then hands, in fact we have the most acute shortages in the areas of most demand" (Rumbens et al., 2019: p. 21). The emphasis placed on the "work of the heart" corresponds well with the human-centric focus of workplace spirituality. The values associated with spirituality—including an individual's sense of meaning and purpose—are the basis for the exercise of the "heart skills". Such values inform not only how work's creative or interpersonal dimension is approached, but also the underlying intention in other areas of work as ethnicity, religion, sex, economic comments:

> Spiritual intention arises from the deepest part of the human being, the heart, and it affects and embraces all dimensions. It is metarational and therefore not mental, although it is connected with the mind. Spiritual intention determines the purity or simplicity of heart, that is, the intensity of love, the level of communion with others, and the degree of self-giving in any human action. This spiritual intention can be present in all human actions, not only in strictly spiritual ones, due to its metadimensional nature… Teaching, painting, cooking and driving are not strictly spiritual actions, but the spiritual element can inspire and be present in all these activities (Domingo, 2019: pp. 337–338).

The spiritual element is one that necessitates a holistic approach to management, understanding employee well-being as an intrinsic good. Mindful of changes arising from the use of new technologies, the implications for the theory and practice of management are discussed further in Sect. "From Models to Application: Implications for the Practice of Management". Before doing so, the section that follows discusses the impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic on prioritization of employee well-being and need for a fundamental reassessment of the employer–employee relationship.

The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The changes wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic will no doubt exert a lasting influence on the *modus operandi* of employers and employees. While global employment