

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

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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 organisations.

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 organisations.

I. 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, section III addresses spirituality in the workplace. For the purposes of section II, particular attention will be given to the role of connectedness, transcendence, and meaning in life in defining what spirituality consists of (Weathers, McCarthy, & Coffey, 2016). Before doing so, it is important to distinguish the concept of spirituality from that of religion.

A. Distinguishing ‘spirituality’ from ‘religion’

There is an increasingly well recognised 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.

B. 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. Nelson-Becker, 2003: p.98; Buck, 2006: p.

290; 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, 2015: 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]onnectdness, 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.

C. Transcendence

The attribute of transcendence is closely related to that of connectedness. Weathers, McCarthy, and Coffey (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. Alexandria 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.

D. 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., 1998, 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., 1998, 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 emphasises 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 conceptualisation 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 has been credited to the 'subjective turn' of modern culture (Heelas and Woodhead, 2005). Citing Charles Taylor's *Ethics of Authenticity*, Heelas and Woodhead explains the rise in interest in spirituality in terms of the 'subjectivities of each individual':

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 the 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 and 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.

II. Law, Business and Management

A. 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 and 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 illnesses 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, 2019). 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. In *McMindfulness: How Mindfulness Became the New Capitalist Spirituality* Purser argues that mindfulness interventions may in fact be counterproductive to the long-term health of the 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 organisational policies and ways of working damaging employee wellness.

Such a transactional approach, whether deliberate or unintended, highlights the limitations of several prevalent organisational attitudes towards 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, *how should organisations 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.

B. The Future of Work

The Industrial Revolution marks one of the most disruptive periods in the 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 19th and 20th century (Hobsbawm, 1962, p. 37). In the 21st century, the Fourth Industrial Revolution led by the convergence of emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), robotics and quantum computing, has catalysed 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, a 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 and Sandholm, 2019). Poker is a game that ‘involves hidden information, deception, and bluffing’ (Brown, 2020: p. 16). The fact the AI has been utilised 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 and 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, Richardson, Lee, Mizrahi, & Roche, 2019: p. 19). The report – ‘The path to prosperity: Why the future of work is human’ – categorised 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 prioritised 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 well. Rafael Domingo 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 section IV. Before doing so, the section that follows discusses the impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic on prioritisation of employee well-being and need for a fundamental reassessment of the employer-employee relationship.

C. 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 losses have been unprecedented (International Labour Organisation, 2021: p. 1), the shift to ‘working from home’ has resulted in a rise in mental health problems among those employed in the professional services. Stephen Koss, a Partner in Ernst & Young’s People Advisory Services, comments that:

[T]hose now working remotely face the mental stress of isolation and the physical challenges of new workspaces – kitchen tables, bedrooms and garages – that are far from fit for purpose. Staff may also be juggling business commitments with increased childcare and home-schooling responsibilities –

and worries about older, immunocompromised or absent friends and family members (Koss, 2020).

Writing for the Financial Times, Kate Beioley reported in March 2021 that ‘[j]unior lawyers and consultants are warning they are suffering burnout after working longer hours in isolation during the pandemic, sparking fears of an exodus from the biggest global law and advisory firms’ (Beioley, 2021). The changes experienced as a result of the pandemic—such as increased workload and longer hours – raise significant issues for the relationship between employer and employee, including of the responsibility of the former for the well-being of the latter.

A report issued by Accenture in September 2020, authored by Ellyn Shook (Accenture’s Chief Leadership and HR Officer) and David Rodriguez (Global Chief HR Officer for Marriott), provides insight into how workers’ perception of the relationship between employer and employee has changed as a result of the pandemic. The study found that 78% ‘of workers strongly believe their employer is responsible for helping them become net better off’ (Shook and Rodriguez, 2020: p. 14). Becoming ‘net better off’ was defined in terms of the following six dimensions: Relational, Financial, Purposeful, Physical, Employable, and Emotional & Mental (Shook and Rodriguez, 2020: p. 8). The percentage referring to the responsibility of employer to help workers to become ‘net better off’ grew sharply during the pandemic in comparison to the position before the pandemic (Shook and Rodriguez, 2020: p. 14). Further, this understanding was also shared by 50% of the executive leaders surveyed by Accenture, a significant rise from before the pandemic.

Nevertheless, the figures reveal a disconnect between what employers and employees think about what truly matters. According to David Rodriguez, ‘the pandemic has accelerated what was already in motion: a questioning of relationship between employer & employee’ (Debevoise, 2020). Indeed, questions concerning responsibility for employee well-being have been brought into sharp focus by the pandemic. As noted by Stephen Koss, ‘the current crisis has hit organizations very differently. But the single common factor for everyone is that life is infinitely more stressful’ (Koss, 2020). Encouraging employees to ‘take ownership and accountability for their own wellbeing’ (Koss, 2020) without addressing workload issues is questionable. Reporting on a global survey conducted by the Financial Times on work and mental health, Emma Jacobs and Lucy Warwick-Ching stated that:

The overwhelming sentiment was that all the supportive messages and apps were ultimately meaningless if they did not address workloads. Many reported increased hours due to job losses, furlough and illnesses, while also struggling to keep businesses afloat. Research by Stanford University found that more than a third of Americans who were working from home last August spent the time they would have used on their commute doing extra work (Jacobs and Warwick-Ching, 2021).

The issues highlighted by the pandemic call for a re-orientation of the relationship between employer and employee. The *status quo* is arguably unsustainable. While it is common for employee well-being to be treated as a means to particular organisational ends, the authors posit here that an alternative approach is needed. The section that follows explores such an alternative approach, highlighting the significance of spirituality for the re-orientation required.

III. From Models to Application: Implications for the Practice of Management

The integration of spirituality into the workplace raises a number of issues for the theory and practice of management. One of the most significant for the professional and legal services concerns recognition of the intrinsic worth of employee well-being. Understood in terms incorporating spirituality, a holistic approach to employee well-being places a categorical imperative on managers to address a diverse range of concerns. The sections that follow explore these in more detail.

A. Ethics

In *Secular Spirituality: The Next Step Towards Enlightenment*, Harald Walach states that: ‘Ethical behavior is a natural result of spiritual experience, and from a certain point onwards it is also a precondition for further spiritual growth’ (Walach, 2015, 2017: p. 26). In the same way that the spiritual life of an individual is supported by ethics, ethics in decision-making is also supported by values of a spiritual nature. On account of this, there is an onus on managers to be pro-active in addressing concerns of an ethical nature at all levels. Unethical practices undermine not only the individual spirituality of employees but the integrity of the organisation as a whole. In this context, it is important to be mindful of the relationship between workplace spirituality and ethical well-being. George Gotsis and Zoi Kortezi state that ‘Spiritual values ... are not only expected to enhance ethical well-being, but also to affect issues of

organisational justice, both in terms of distributive equity and of the intention to behave fairly' (Gotsis and Kortezi, 2008: p. 593).

Evidence of the ethical impact of workplace spirituality is provided in a number of studies (e.g. Geigle, 2012; McGhee and Grant, 2017; Göçen & Özğan, 2018). As noted by Davide Geigle,

Many of the empirical studies demonstrate a positive effect of [workplace spirituality] on job commitment, satisfaction, and performance. In addition, the empirical research on workplace spirituality has demonstrated results in altruism and conscientiousness, self-career management, reduced inter-role conflict, reduced frustration, organization based self-esteem, involvement, retention, and ethical behavior. (Geigle, 2012: p. 14)

Exploring the transcendent influence of spirituality on ethical action in organizations, Peter McGhee and Patricia Grant studied claims concerning spiritual individuals being more ethical and therefore 'of significant value to the long-term viability of organizations and ultimately society' (McGhee and Grant, 2017: p. 160). The study, conducted in a New Zealand business context, found that:

participants' spirituality was manifested through an awareness of others that guided and enabled them to act in authentically ethical ways that transcended organizational conditions. When participants reported doing this, they felt increased well-being; when they were unable to enact their spirituality, they suffered a variety of negative feelings (McGhee and Grant, 2017: p. 160).

This finding was explained in terms of personal authenticity:

As part of their spiritual (and thus moral) identity, participants had a consciousness that, in part at least, was directed toward the welfare of others. This spiritual other-orientation provides direction via principles (e.g. do unto others) and values (e.g. fairness, compassion, and selflessness) to act ethically. Participants were motivated to operate this way in order to be authentic to their spirituality. When individuals were spiritually authentic, they reported an enhanced sense of well-being. In instances where they were not authentic, they reported diminished welfare (McGhee and Grant, 2017: p. 171).

Mindful of the intrinsic value of employee well-being, the instrumentalization of workplace spirituality should be guarded against at all levels of an organisation. As noted by George Gotsis and Zoi Kortezi, 'spiritual values should not be reduced to mere instrumentalities principally and exclusively at the service of exogenous, desirable organisational ends' (Gotsis and Kortezi, 2008: p. 595). Such an approach negates the authenticity required for spirituality to flourish in the workplace in a sustainable way. The section that follows explores the importance of developing an inclusive, open culture supportive of workplace spirituality.

B. Culture

In supporting the spiritual life of employees, a space must exist for consideration of matters pertaining to personal development, employee well-being and work-life balance. Policies should be in place to address such considerations, mindful of how they affect employees on a day-to-day basis. To cultivate an environment supportive of workplace spirituality, it is important to look beyond policy to the actual the culture of an organisation.

The culture of an organisation is defined not only by values espoused by its leadership, but also by basic assumptions that are ‘taken for granted’, ‘invisible’ or ‘preconscious’ (Schein, 1984: p. 4). Bearing in mind the diversity of approaches to the ‘spiritual’, it is difficult to overemphasise the importance of taking an inclusive approach to workplace spirituality. Fahri Karakas states that:

[W]orkplaces of today are more diverse and multicultural than ever before. Therefore, it has become crucial to acknowledge diversity in the workplace and absolutely respect individual differences ... Promoting “one right path” or favoring a specific spiritual or religious framework will not work in these diverse work environments. A culture of respect for diversity of beliefs and faiths should be cultivated in the workplace by enforcing codes of conduct as well as instilling values of tolerance and compassion (Karakas, 2010: p. 31).

The instilling of values such as tolerance and compassion has the potential to transform the culture of an organisation. Peter McGhee and Patricia Grant, refer to the fact that ‘highly spiritual people are ethical at work’ and that ‘they enact their spirituality in ways that improve the overall ethicality of the organization by transforming its “dominant schema”’ (McGhee and Grant, 2017: p. 173). They describe the transformative potential of workplace spirituality on the culture of an organization in the following way:

The effects of consistent spiritual enactment may be a gradual transformation of norms and expectations toward an organizational culture with higher moral values such as altruism, integrity and community. Such a process ultimately produces beneficial effects for an organization. Consequently, organizations should implement tactics that enhance and encourage an authentic spirituality. For example, cultures that provide opportunities and resources to “speak openly and express inner feelings and values, regardless of fear, alienation or exclusion” in a manner that includes constructive feedback may encourage actions in the workplace that positively reinforce spirituality. Some authors also note that less bureaucratic and more self-managed, autonomous, and democratic structures could also contribute to this process (McGhee and Grant, 2017: p. 173).

In changing the culture of an organisation, it is important to bear in mind that ‘spirituality is not something to be accomplished in the next week or quarter, but rather is a task that extends over the entire course of a person's – and organization's – life’ (Mitroff and Denton, 1999: p. 176). While the process is one which must support the developmental needs and ethical well-being of employees, for it to be holistic it should be conceived in terms that are broader than this. The process of organisational culture change must also take into consideration the overarching impact of the organisation on society, including that which affects future generations. The section that follows explores the significance of this for workplace spirituality.

C. The Common Good of Humanity

The realisation of the universal, non-sectarian and inclusive values associated with spirituality would have far reaching impact on any organisation. Moreover, a natural and foreseeable consequence of such values and their authentic expression would be the expansion of concern beyond that of the organisation itself. Judith Neal reasons that ‘[i]f personal spirituality is a process of expanding one’s consciousness and focus beyond one’s own ego, then perhaps organizational spirituality is a process of expanding the organization’s collective consciousness beyond just the culture and mission of the company to a focus on the greater collective good’ (Neal, 2018: p. 25).

The dissolution of distinctions between persons – including those relating to nationality, ethnicity, religion, sex, economic or social status – provides a basis for the integration of such persons within an organisation. The same logic is applicable outside the organisation. For integration to occur at any level of human society – including regional, national and international – certain distinctions must be accorded irrelevance. Spirituality in this context serves as a unifying principle, facilitating a ‘heart-centred’ approach to the integration of humanity (Patel et al., 2018: p. 181).

According to Judge Antônio Augusto Cançado Trindade, ‘[u]niversal human rights find support in the spirituality of all cultures and religions, are rooted in the human spirit itself; as such, they are not the expression of a given culture (Western or any other), but rather of the *universal juridical conscience* itself’ (Trindade, 2014: p. 207). Mindful that the progress of humanity is ‘often characterised in terms of the realisation of universally shared values (including the abolition of slavery, the prohibition of torture, the proscription of apartheid, etc.)’ it is arguable that ‘greater attention be given to the spiritual basis for progressive realization of such values’ (Cullen, 2017: p. 304).

The challenge is one that concerns the spiritual life not only of individuals and organisations but that of humanity as whole. Many of the challenges faced by organisations cannot be addressed without attention at a global level. These include the spread of infectious diseases such as Covid-19, extreme weather attributable to climate change, the pollution of the high seas, and global poverty. Accordingly, ‘the choice confronting humanity at this critical point in history is not *whether* organizations should become more spiritual but rather *how* they can. If organizations are to survive, let alone prosper, then frankly we see no alternative to their becoming spiritual’ (Mitroff and Denton, 1999: p. 168-169).

Conclusion

Spirituality, it has been posited, is to be approached in terms that are universal, inclusive and non-sectarian in nature. Understood in such terms, spirituality is to be taken as a good that is intrinsically beneficial to individuals, organisations and humanity as a whole. As an intrinsic good, it is not to be treated as a means to end but as an end in itself. As noted by Mitroff and Denton, ‘Spirituality is not a final state. It is an ongoing process - a process that leads to itself. Above all, spirituality is not a simpleminded how-to list or checklist. It is a perpetual process of becoming, a continual unfolding of the human spirit’ (Mitroff and Denton, 1999: p. 185).

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