SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP – AN EMERGING PARADIGM

Ana-Maria GRIGORE
Hyperion University, Romania
Andreea MITROI
Hyperion University, Romania

ABSTRACT

One of the greatest challenges facing leaders today is the need to develop new business models that accentuate ethical leadership, employee well-being and social responsibility without sacrificing profitability.

The true measure of a firm performance is multi-dimensional and should say something, besides the profit or increase market share, about the moral values and business ethics.

KEYWORDS*: spirituality, spiritual capital, workplace spirituality, spiritual leadership*

1. Introduction

Ian I. Mitroff (2008), with an experience of 25 years in crisis management said: 'no single crisis that we have studied so far was an isolated crisis. Each crisis is simultaneously an ethical crisis, a public relations one, a legal crisis, a communication and a coordination one etc". He speaks of the two challenges facing all organizations today, both public and private, both profit- oriented and non-profit organizations, both government and business. They are: management and spirituality crisis. While the two may seem to have no connection with one another, they are actually only two opposite sides of the same complex coin, he says.

Spirituality cannot be confused with religion, although the two are related. White (2006) makes a distinction as follows: 'spirituality consists of opening the perspective of a person to a superior power or of a Superior Self, it is not necessarily linked to any religious institution or a certain Dogma.' Spiritual people want their lives and work to have purpose and meaning.

There is sufficient evidence that the managers interests in the spiritual values has started to grow. Kerns (2002) signals a large number of sites and books about the business that deals with spirituality and a large number of 'business guru' that hold seminars related to this topic. Patricia Aburdene in her recent book, states that the focus on spirituality in business is becoming so pervasive that it stands as "today's greatest megatrend." She contends that more and more people are making choices in the marketplace as "values-driven consumers" and the power of spirituality is increasingly impacting our personal lives and is spreading into organizations to foster a moral transformation in them.

White (2006) considers that the academic world will no longer have the choice but to become 'visionary in relation to new generations of students and their need for spiritual development that will have to be stimulated in school.'

2. What is spirituality in business?

Some would say that it's simply embodying their personal values of honesty, integrity, and good quality work. Others would say it's treating their co-workers and employees in a responsible, caring way. For others, it's participating in spiritual study groups or using prayer, meditation, or intuitive guidance at work. And for some, it's making their business socially responsible in how it impacts the environment, serves the community or helps create a better world.

Some business people are comfortable using the word "spirituality" in the work environment, as it's more generic and inclusive than "religion." Instead of emphasizing belief as religion does, the word spirituality emphasizes how values are applied and embodied. Other people aren't comfortable with the word spiritual and prefer to talk more about values and ethics when describing the same things that others would call spiritual. However, there are some people who will talk about God as their business partner or their CEO. *(McLaughlin, 2004)*

Spirituality offers rich implications for management and leadership. The way we manage depends on the way we are. Spirituality is not something that we can just tack on to management. If spirituality is in our nature, we will bring it with us when we manage.

Management is a challenge for spirituality. The connection is not automatic: it needs effort and vigilance to develop. Management practices generate feedback that impact our own vision of life, humanity and spirituality. Management benefits from an approach that does not merely consider spirituality as a potential "addition" to management. The opportunity should be seized to develop a more precise, richer conception of management. (Lozano, Ribera, 2004*)*

3. Workplace spirituality

Workplace spirituality has been an ambiguous term, although scholars are increasingly bringing clarity to the definition. Ashmos and Duchon defined workplace spirituality in terms of its components: (1) a recognition that employees have an inner life; (2) an assumption that employees desire to find work meaningful; and (3) a commitment by the company to serve as a context or community for spiritual growth. These dimensions have been incorporated into the term spiritual well-being (SWB), which is a "self-perceived state of the degree to which one feels a sense of purpose and direction" (Fry, 2008)

Other scholars suggest that workplace spirituality can be cultivated to produce increased organizational performance. Reder(quoted by Fry, 2008) found that spirituality-based organizational cultures were the most productive, and through maximizing productivity they reach dominance in the marketplace. In addition, there is emerging evidence that workplaces that are spiritually healthy perform better (Duchon & Plowman, 2005, Mitroff, 2008). Bringing ethics and spiritual values into the workplace can lead to increase also employee retention, customer loyalty, and brand reputation.

In response to calling for spirituality to be based on definable and measurable aspects of the work environment, Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003) define workplace spirituality as: "A framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that

promotes employees' experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected in a way that provides feelings of compassion and joy".

The main challenge of spirituality is to overcome the false perception that spirituality is a taboo and that does not apply to most organizations. Rhodes (2006) emphasizes that 'workplace spirituality' has become a respectable topic, discussed in management textbooks.

In the company of tomorrow, employees will have not only a career, but a vocation. The real stars are the non-profit organizations, like Red Cross or Amnesty Int. In order to succeed, companies will have to learn how to deal with both talent and spirit. (Ridderstrale, Nordstrom, 2007).

Nowadays, people no longer want to leave their fundamental values at the enterprise gateway. Fogel (2000), a Nobel Prize laureate in 1993, is one of the economists who have stressed the importance of spirituality in the new economy. He identified fifteen vital spiritual resources that include concepts such as: a perception of the purpose, a perception of the opportunity, a sense of the idea of community, strong family morals, a strong work ethic and high self esteem.

Above all, people are constantly searching for meaning and purpose in life. And they will find them where they spend most of their time, i.e. at work. They want to work for a good organization, one that treats them and everyone else with respect.

4. Spiritual Leadership

One reason for which visionary leadership is so undeveloped today is the importance that the today's society confers to a certain type of capital: the material capital. Too often, the value of a company is judged according to the money earned at the end of a day, or to how much power it might provide us in comparison with others. This obsession with material gain has led to short-term thinking and the pursuit of one's own interests. It is true that any type of company we would like to work for needs some form of financial wealth if it wants to be successful in the short term. capitalism', etc.

Leaders and managers must see above their own interests, and should see their role as the one to determine the company to have goals and spiritual values, not just profit. They should also take responsibility for the world in which they operate and where they create wealth.

Leaders may give up almost anything,except responsability - to them and to the organisation. John Rockefeller Jr.used to say: "I believe any right brings a resposability;any opportunity,an obligation;any property,a duty." (Maxwell, 1999, p.50).

But for leadership to inspire long term, sustainable goals, it needs to focus on two other forms of capital: the social and the spiritual ones.(Zohar, 2005). This approach suggests a capitalism that is not solely concerned with selfish interests. It employs other terms as well for this new type of capitalism: 'moral capitalism', 'spiritual capitalism', 'sustainable capitalism".

Fundamentally, spiritual capital reflects the reason for which an individual or an organization exists, the things one believes in, aspires to and assumes responsibility for. Our spiritual capital includes our moral capital. The spiritual capital is a new paradigm that requires us to radically change the mentality regarding the philosophical foundations, the practice of business management or any other type of company. I do not refer here to the concern of religion or spiritual practice. Rather, I refer to the power that a leader can unleash within individuals or organizations through the evocation of the deepest meanings, values and goals of people (Zohar, 2005).

In his book, about the 8th step of wisdom, Stephen Covey says 'When we study the life of all great personalities - people who had an overwhelming influence on those around ...we always find a model, a constant. Due to their constant efforts and inner struggle they always pursued in life, they managed to develop to a great extent the four capacities and native intelligence. In Covey's opinion, these are:

• mental intelligence (IQ). When talking about intelligence, we usually make an association with mental intelligence, and with our ability to analyze, to reason, to think abstractly, to use language, to visualize and understand.

• physical or body intelligence (PQ) of the human body is a different type of intelligence, of which we are all aware implicitly , though, most of us very often discover it openly. It is found in the respiratory system, circulatory, nervous as well as the vital systems. It scans ceaselessly the environment, destroying the diseased cells and fighting constantly for survival.

• emotional intelligence (EQ) refers to our share of emotional intelligence. In the mid 90s, in the book *Emotional Intelligence - Why it can matter more than IQ*, Daniel Goleman has expressed the kind of intelligence that our hearts and emotions have. EQ expresses through trust, empathy, self-consciousness and self-control, and the ability to meet the appropriate emotions of others. It is that state of synchronization and social opportunity, and is articulated in the courage to admit mistakes, to express differences and respect them.

• spiritual intelligence (SQ). Same as EQ, SQ has started in recent years to hold an increasingly important place in scientific research and in philosophical/psychological debates. Spiritual intelligence is the most important of all intelligence, because it becomes the source of orientation, guiding the other three types of intelligence. Spiritual intelligence is the ability to access meanings, values and of higher, long-term goals and unconscious aspects of the self, and to use these meanings, values and goals to live a richer and more creative life. Spiritual intelligence is the supreme intelligence of the visionary leader.

Since these four dimensions of life clearly overlap, we cannot act exclusively on any of them without directly or indirectly influencing the other dimensions. And this means to recognize that when people come to work, they do not leave their 'spiritual side' at home. Although 'the whole person enters the door every day, very often, people are forced to fragment themselves into a thousand disconnected pieces. (Mitroff, 2008).

Spiritual leadership can be viewed as an emerging paradigm within the broader context of workplace spirituality (Fry, Cohen, 2009)

Intelligent Management from the spiritual point of view can be developed by applying 12 principles (Zohar, 2005):

• *Self Awareness*: Knowing what I believe in and appreciate, what motivates me deeply.

• *Spontaneity*: Living in and being responsive at any moment in time.

• *Being led by vision and value*. Acting according to principles and deep beliefs and living in the same way.

• *Holism*: Envisaging higher models, relationships and connections; having a sense of belonging.

• *Compassion*: Having the quality to feel as other people do, and a deep sense of empathy.

• *Celebrating Diversity*: Appreciating other people for their differences, and not in spite of them.

• *Field Independence*: Standing up in a crowd and having one's own beliefs.

• *Humility*: The feeling of being a player in a larger drama, the sense of one's place in the world.

• *The tendency to ask fundamental questions beginning with Why:* The need to understand things and their causes.

• *Ability to change perspective*: Ceasing in to a situation or problem and seeing the bigger picture; viewing problems in a wider context.

• *Use of adversity in a positive way*: Learning from mistakes, going back and suffering; the consequent growth.

• *Sense of vocation*: The feeling of being called to serve, of giving something back.

Dee Hock, founder and CEO of Visa International believes that a real leader invests his time like this: 50% in himself-objectives, ethics, principles, motives-, 20% leading the subordinates and 15% leading the partners. "If you do not understand that you work for your people you know nil about leadership. You know only tirany."

The leaders confront the challenge to transform burocracy in amorocracy! From routine to love: love for what you do, for your people, for you product, for your customer. Love and passion in your organization. .(Ridderstrale, Nordstrom, 2007)

The secret behind all the extraordinary accomplishments-in sports, art, politics or business-lay in passion. Sure, companies have abillities; they seek also opportunities in their area of competence. But more important it is they develop feelings about things that are important for their people. The modern companies compete not only in practical skills.

5. Conclusions

Above all, people are constantly searching for meaning and purpose in life. And they will find them where they spend most of their time, i.e. at work. They want to work for a good organization, one that treats them and everyone else with respect.

When people come to work, they do not leave their 'spiritual side' at home. In order to succeed, companies will have to learn how to deal with both talent and spirit

One of the greatest challenges facing leaders today is the need to develop new business models that accentuate ethical leadership, employee well-being, sustainability and social responsibility without sacrificing profitability, revenue growth, and other indicators of financial performance. (Fry, Slocum, 2008)

Spiritual leadership can be viewed as an emerging paradigm within the broader context of workplace spirituality.

References

1. Aburdene, P., *Megatrends 2010: The Rise of Conscious Capitalism*, 2007
2. Covey, S., *The 8ᵗʰ Habit. From Effectiveness to Greatness*, Allfa Publisher, 2006
3. Duchon, D., & Plowman, D.A., "Nurturing the spirit at work: Impact on work unit performance", *The leadership Quarterly's Special Issue on Spiritual Leadership*, 16, 807-833, 2005
4. Fry, L.W. Spiritual Leadership: "State-of -the-Art and Future Directions for Theory, Research, and Practice" In J. Biberman & Tishman, L. (Eds*.), Spirituality in Business: Theory, Practice, and Future Directions* (pp. 106-124*).* New York: Palgrave, 2008
5. Fry L.W., Slocum W. Jr, "Maximizing the Triple Bottom Line through Spiritual Leadership", *Journal of Business Ethics*, 2008

6. Fry L. W., Melanie P. Cohen, "Spiritual Leadership as a Paradigm for Organizational Transformation and Recovery from Extended Work Hours Cultures", *Journal of Business Ethics* 265-278, 2009

7. Fogel, R., *The fourth great awakening*, University of Chicago Press, 2000

8. Friedman, Th., *All fall down*, New York Times, A33, 26 November , 2008

9. Giacalone, R.A. & Jurkiewicz, C.L. *Toward a science of workplace spirituality*. A. Giacalone, & C.L. Jurkiewicz (Eds.), Handbook of workplace spirituality and organizational, New York: M. E. Sharp. 2003, p. 13

10. Lozano J,R. Ribera, "A New Chance for Management – a New Challenge for spirituality" in *Spirituality and ethics in management,* Kluver Academic Publishers, 2004

11. Maxwell, John C, *Dezvoltă liderul din tine*, Editura Amaltea, 1999, p. 50

12. McLaughlin Corinne, *Spirituality and ethics in Business*, 2004, http://www.visionarylead.org/articles/spbus.htm

13. Mitroff, I., *Two Challenges: Crisis Management and Spirituality*, http://blogs.harvardbusiness.org/goldsmith/2008/09/preparing_your_company_for _a_crisis.html

14. Ridderstrale, J. K. Nordstrom, *Karaoke capitalism, Management pentru omenire*, Editura Publica, 2007

15. Rhodes, K., *Six components of a model for workplace spirituality*, Graziodio Business Report, 9(2), 2006

16. Smith, Y., *Next type of CEO scandal. Naked Capitalism*, & February, 2007

17. Zohar, D., "Spiritually Intelligent Leadership" *Leader to Leader*. 38 Fall 2005, pp. 45-51

18. White, S., "Spirituality and the intellectual development of college students: The new leadership challenge in higher education", *International Electronic Journal for Leadership in Learning*, 10(3), 2006