

# Spirituality and Ethical Behaviour in the Workplace: Wishful Thinking or Authentic Reality

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## Abstract

The link between religion and work is not new. For centuries, people have strived to interpret their work through religious lenses. Recently, however, a significant paradigm shift has occurred. The current view is that spirituality, as opposed to religion, is a better construct for understanding the relationship between the individual and modern pluralistic workplaces. This current perspective, sourced in various socio-cultural factors, views spirituality as positively influencing numerous organisational outcomes. Also implicit within this discourse is the notion that allowing and encouraging spirituality in the workplace leads to improved ethical behaviour at a personal level and an enhanced ethical climate/culture at an organisational level. What is unclear, however, is how an individual's spirituality translates into ethical behaviour within an organisational context and the impact of this conversion. This paper develops a model explaining this process.

A review of the relevant literature recognised several characteristics that permeate discussions on spirituality. This paper's premise is that these characteristics inform an individual's choice of values – they form a type of regulative ideal. The model developed explains the link between these values and virtue and therefore ethical behaviour in the workplace. The values frameworks developed recently in the spirituality literature specify those things a spiritual person perceives as worth having, getting or doing. This paper contends that these values, particular to spiritual persons, contribute to the flourishing of individuals and therefore lead to the acquisition of virtue. Spiritual persons are likely to be ethical persons. Such individuals are likely to be of significant benefit to their organisations.

## Keywords

Spirituality in the Workplace, Values/Virtues, Ethical Behaviour

## Introduction

Since the beginning of the 20th century, there has been an increasing focus on the spirit, spirituality, and spiritual phenomenon in Western society. Lately, this focus has shifted to the modern workplace with numerous articles and books, both popular and academic, championing the role of spirituality in improving organisations, markets and economies, and subsequently all of society. Contained within this discourse is the notion that spiritual individuals are ethical in business, and consequently, are of significant benefit to an organisation.

Indeed, the research literature to date provides some evidence of this link. For example, spiritual individuals in the workplace are more likely to demonstrate enhanced teamwork (Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Neck & Milliman, 1994), greater kindness & fairness (Biberman & Whitty, 1997), increased awareness of other employees needs (Cash & Gray, 2000), increased honesty and trust within their organisations (Brown, 2003; Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002), higher incidences of organisational citizenship behaviour (Nur & Organ, 2006), and express more servant leader behaviour (Beazley & Gemmill, 2006). They are also prone to perceive the ethical nature of business issues more clearly (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003b) and are more sensitive to corporate social performance (Giacalone, Paul & Jurkiewicz, 2005). What is unclear, however, in the workplace spirituality literature is why and how an individual's spirituality influences their ethical performance within an organisational context. Building on previous work carried out by Cavanagh & Bandsuch (2002), this paper develops a model using Aristotelian virtue ethics to address this lacuna.

## What is Spirituality?

While a distinguishing feature of modern society is the extraordinary popularity of spirituality, what is also apparent are the widespread and radical differences that exist over the use of the term, possible meanings and significance. Unfortunately, spirituality is a notion that resists

exact characterisation. For some, spirituality is a paradigm shift that stresses subjectivities and experience as opposed to dispassionate religion. To others, it is about escaping the constricting parameters of religion into the more inclusive realm of our humanity thereby ensuring the end of our need for the divine. To yet others its ambiguities make it an empty and misleading slogan.

Spirituality is clearly a broader construct than religion. Spirituality allows the individual to have a sense of the sacred without the institutional practices and limitations that are associated with traditional religion (Zinnbauer, Pargament, & Scott, 1999). However, you cannot isolate spirituality from religion. Most, if not all, religious individuals are spiritual. Beliefs and experiences that are part of traditional religiousness (e.g. prayer, going to church etc) are also spiritual if they are part of an individual's search for the sacred (Hill et al., 2000). At the same time, many spiritual individuals are unknowingly part of a non-traditional religion while others, who hold no affiliation to any organised group, practice a kind of private religion. Why is this? At an ontological level, religion and spirituality are characterised by similar components. If spirituality is not dependent on formalised religion, it is most certainly interdependent with it.

The obvious difficulty in defining spirituality lies in its multitude of meanings. In fact, Neal (2000) argues, we enhance this existing complexity the more we objectify and categorise spirituality. According to Carrette & King (2005), most authors go to extraordinary levels to define the term and yet struggle to come up with a definitive meaning. Writers commonly resort to employing a general meaning, "which enables them to corner a fanciful market space drifting on the vague etymologies of the word" (p.31). Speck (2005) concurs in noting that the various extant definitions of spirituality do not reflect a consensus of thought while Hicks (2003) warns against making broad sweeping claims about spirituality without "undertaking more work at least to address the philosophical and theological difficulties of the term and its definitional components" (p. 56). How do we overcome the problems inherent in defining spirituality broadly enough to incorporate theistic, non-theistic, and humanistic systems? Moreover, how do we convince others that spirituality is not only phenomenologically valid but also relevant to the living of our everyday lives?

Carrette & King (2005) argue that spirituality has become the 'brand label' for the search for meaning, values, transcendence, hope and connectedness in modern societies. The notion operates by "compartmentalising questions of human values into an identifiable market space". They ask, "How then do we begin to find our way out of this maze?" (p.32). The answer to this question, as proposed by the authors of this paper, is to offer a universal and useful definition of spirituality consisting of four behavioural characteristics that evidence a specific mindset.

The behavioural characteristics of spiritual individuals include:

1. Seeking to transcend their ego (i.e. their own self-interests)
2. Awareness and acceptance of their interconnectedness with others, creation and their Ultimate Concern
3. Understanding the higher significance of their actions while seeking to integrate their lives holistically
4. Believing in something beyond the material universe which ultimately gives value to all else

A brief description of each of these follows. According to Ashforth & Pratt (2003), themes of self-transcendence figure prominently in most definitions of spirituality. What is self-transcendence? It is something that calls us beyond the "self"

(i.e. the ego) to concern for, and relationships with, others and with the ultimate "other". Torrance (1994) interprets it as "the individual in continuous interaction with a larger reality in which he or she transcends their personal existence" (p.82). Such persons transcend their egoistic self not by floating off to some mystical union or separate realm of existence but by coming to terms with its enlarging and transformative potentiality. Emmons (1999) echoes this in noting that such a rising may not be limited to rising above our natural world to relate to a divine being but could also include achieving a heightened state of consciousness (Mayer, 2000), having peak experiences (Maslow, 1970) or entering a state of 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

Spiritual persons seek to live an authentic life sourced in meaningful relationships. The process of self-transcendence, of affirming the spirit and transcending the ego, results in a growing awareness and acceptance of interconnectedness. This also is a general theme in the writing on spirituality (Kale, 2004; Sass, 2000). Spiritual individuals who recognise and imbue the truth of interconnectedness demonstrate the following qualities. First, they connect to the self. Spirituality is an interior journey to find the true self with which the conceited, arrogant, intellectualising, rationalising ego is so easily confused (Weil, 2002). Second, they connect to others. They no longer see themselves as an isolated "atomistic ego-subject" (Yu, 1987, p.143). For such individuals, spirituality is a state of being, a process towards wholeness that reflects being-in-the-world (Lapierre, 1994) and understands authentic being-in-communion with others and the Ultimate Other (Buber, 1970).

The importance of a sense of purpose is also apparent in the spirituality literature (Elkins, Hedstrom, Hughes, Leaf, & Saunders, 1988; Emmons, 2000; Wink & Dillion, 2002) Spirituality represents a higher level of understanding that enables the contextualisation of lower levels. It provides answers to the question "why?" and confers individual lives with a sense of integrated wholeness (Mitroff & Denton, 1999) The process of "meaning-making" helps us understand how spiritual individuals revise or reappraise an event or series of events in a manner that gives a higher level of meaning, that is, a spiritual meaning (Baumeister & Vohs, 2005). A good example of meaning making is the sanctification of work by spiritual individuals. Sanctifying work involves viewing labour as a calling rather than a job; it is about finding the significance in what one does and understanding how it contributes to and fulfils a higher purpose in life. This purposefulness in work provides individuals with a reason for living, as they comprehend the necessity of what they do and reflect on the difference that they make in this world.

Finally, spirituality is the personal expression of an 'Ultimate Concern'. According to Tillich (1952), ultimate concerns are those 'God values' in our lives which have centring power; they are the things with which we are ultimately concerned. Elkins et al. (1988) survey of diverse historical literatures on spirituality supports Tillich's view. They noted that a spiritual person has an experience-based belief in a transcendent dimension to life. The actual content of this belief may vary from a traditional theistic view of a personal God (e.g. Christianity), a non-theistic view of that infinite potential (e.g. Buddhism), or a humanistic view of the transcendent as being simply a natural extension of the conscious self into the area of the unconscious or Greater Self. Whatever the content or models used to describe the transcendent, the spiritual person believes in something beyond the material universe (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Furthermore, he or she believes that contact with this unseen dimension is beneficial (Dierendonck & Mohan, 2006; Emmons, Cheung, & Tehrani, 1998; WHOQOL SRPB Group, 2006).

Spirituality is the actualisation of an inherently human capacity. From this perspective, the structure of and dynamics of the human person as such are central points of the emergence of the spiritual life. Spirituality is about “becoming a person in the fullest sense” (Macquarrie, 1972, p. 40) as one authentically quests for their ultimate value. Consequently, in principle at least, spirituality may be equally available to every human being seeking to live an authentically human life. There is also ample evidence to suggest that spirituality is a real thing. While an individual’s spirituality is undoubtedly a personal experience, it is a subjective encounter with a spiritual reality. To remove that reality is to eliminate its contribution to the content of the individual’s experience. The ramifications of this are significant.

If a putative object of experience contributes nothing to the content of experience, the putative experience is not a genuine experience at all, but only an illusion of one. Thus, by methodologically absenting the object of experience... [we] end up losing altogether the very category of experience (Archer, Collier, & Porpora, 2004, p. 14).

A critical realist ontology allows for the existence of a spiritual reality. A critical realist insists that the human mind apprehends reality and attempts to express and accommodate that reality as best it can with the tools at its disposal. Wright (1992) offers a good account of this general position:

[Critical realism] is a way of describing the process of ‘knowing’ that acknowledges the reality of the thing known, as something other than the knower (hence ‘realism’), while also fully acknowledging that the only access we have to this reality lies along the spiralling path of appropriate dialogue or conversation between the knower and the thing known (hence ‘critical’). This path leads to critical reflection on the products of our enquiry into ‘reality’ so that our assertions about ‘reality’ acknowledge their own provisionality. Knowledge, in other words, although in principle concerning realities independent of the knower, is never itself independent of the knower (p. 35).

This ontology relates to the fundamental distinction between the ‘intransitive’ and ‘transitive’ dimensions of knowledge identified by Bhaskar (2008[1975]). The transitive dimension is essentially our perception of reality, whereas the intransitive dimension is the actual underlying structure of reality. Admittedly, applying this notion to the social world is more complex. This world is, after all, socially constructed and contains knowledge itself and cannot therefore be said to exist independent of that knowledge. While it is reasonable to state that the natural world is naturally produced but socially defined or understood, the objects of social science have to be socially defined and socially produced. This, however, does not nullify their reality (Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 1997). For example, when researchers change their minds about a concept like spirituality it is unlikely to produce any significant change in the phenomena of spirituality. As Sayer (2000) notes, “for the most part [under a critical realist methodology], social scientists are cast in the modest role of construing rather than ‘constructing’ the social world” (p. 11).

Critical realists’ stratify reality. They argue for the arrangement of reality into levels and for research to go beyond surface phenomena and identify the causal mechanisms, processes and structures that account for the patterns observed. Specifically, Bhaskar (2008[1975]) differentiates between the real, the actual and the empirical level. The real is whatever exists, be it physical or social, regardless of whether we experience it or have an understanding of its nature. This is the realm of objects, their structures and their causal powers. These objects can be physical (e.g. minerals or water) or social (e.g. spirituality or a

political ideology). Bhaskar refers to these as mechanisms. The actual refers to the outcomes of activating the causal powers of real objects. These are states of affairs or events. They can also be mechanisms. Spiritual persons act spiritually, that is, they act selflessly, they build authentic relationships with others, and they live meaningfully while striving to actualise their ultimate concern. Finally, the empirical level is the domain of experience as it pertains to contingent knowledge of the real or the actual. This level pertains to a spiritual person’s experience of their own spirituality: how they understand it and live it out. Knowledge at this level is observable and therefore measurable. Again, experiences may also be real and actual as they act as mechanisms and events for new experiences. Bhaskar makes it clear that not all actualities may be experienced; it is not necessary for us to observe something for it to be real. Similarly, mechanisms are often unobservable but are nonetheless also real. Ultimately, Bhaskar resists any suggestion that reality is contingent upon observation alone. As part of this resistance, Bhaskar opposes any attempt to collapse his three domains into one. Such an action would fail to recognise the ontological depth of reality and lead to a superficial understanding of society and the world.

How do these levels relate to one another? First, ontological presupposition implies that one level could not exist without the other. Second, vertical explanation means that mechanisms operating at one level explain those operating at another (McGrath, 2002). This idea has significant implications for spirituality. As Pratschke (2003) explains,

each account of a generative mechanism contains ‘gaps’ or ‘black boxes’ which may subsequently be explained by positing the existing of additional mechanisms at a ‘deeper’ or a more fundamental level (p.16).

In other words, higher-level structures, mechanisms and phenomena such as human behaviours and interactions are emergent from, but not reducible to lower-level ones. Although these lower-level mechanisms are often unobservable, we postulate their existence by investigating their observable effects. Fleetwood (2005), in his discussion of multiple modes of reality, puts this idea succinctly in stating that

An entity is said to be real if it has casual efficiency; has an effect on behaviour; makes a difference. Confusion often stems from (mis)treating real entities synonymously with material entities; and/or from (mis)treating non-material entities synonymously with non-real entities. God may or may not be real, but the idea of God is as real as Mount Everest, because the idea of God makes a difference to people’s actions (p. 199).

Spirituality, like other phenomenon, stratifies into different levels (or modes) of reality. Ultimately, spirituality exists as a reality independent of the knower, a mechanism. A critical realist would argue that such a reality is partially elucidated using philosophical and theological inquiry. We may not know this reality completely but we further postulate its existence by noting and articulating certain universal attitudes and effects. These are both ‘real’ and ‘actual’ – they are an underlying causal mechanism and they are an event or a state of affairs. Measurement of these is possible (See e.g. Delaney, 2005; Howden, 1992; Seidlitz et al., 2002). Finally, spirituality exists as a reality for each individual or group that experience and live it on a daily basis. They encounter the underlying ‘real’ mechanism(s) of spirituality and the actuality of those mechanisms as they exercise causal power in their lives via material effects. As at other levels of spirituality, these effects are open to exploration.

Spiritual people experience the object of spirituality via their desire to overcome the egotistical self, to develop authentic relationships with others, with creation and with their ultimate



concern, and as they strive to find meaning and purpose in their life. The following definition of spirituality adapted from Schneiders (1989) conveys this idea:

[Spiritual individuals] consciously strive to integrate their lives in terms not of isolation and self-absorption but of self-transcendence toward the ultimate value they perceive (p. 684).

This definition avoids classifying the phenomenon in terms of a singular dimension such as 'a belief in God' while at the same time avoiding categorizations with numerous facets (often reducible into each other). It allows for a multitude of spiritualities, each determined by the lived experience and the particular ultimate concern that is being pursued by the individual via his or her life project. It involves intrinsically some relatively coherent and articulate understanding of a human being's interdependency with creation and supports the notion of the self-transcendence and inner development as an essential part of a spiritual life.

Since the spiritual quest is directed towards the ultimate concern in one's life, spirituality seems to have a direct reference to morality (Downey, 1997), and it is generally accepted in the literature that an appropriate spirituality, that is, one defined by the characteristics discussed above, results in and is demonstrated by virtuous behaviours, and a good life. How does this occur?

### Spirituality as a Regulative Ideal

This paper proposes that a person's spirituality, characterised by the degree they imbue and live out self-transcendence, interconnectedness, a sense of purpose, and a belief in an Ultimate Concern, constitutes a regulative ideal (from now on: RI). Oakley & Cocking (2001) define the RI as an

Internalised normative disposition to direct one's actions and alter one's motivation in certain ways. To say that a person has a RI is to say that they have internalised a certain conception of correctness or excellence in such a way that they are able to adjust their motivation and behaviour so that it conforms, or at least does not conflict, with that standard (p. 25).

For an individual who has internalised a certain conception of what it is to be spiritual, it means they can be guided by this conception in their practice, through regulating their motivations, perceptions and actions towards others so they are consistent with their notion of spirituality.

According to Oakley & Cocking (2001), RIs may be general in scope, or they may be specific to certain domains. A general RI produced from the four components listed earlier will govern the spiritual individual's life. However, specific regulative ideals may also guide the activities of a spiritual individual in particular areas. For example, part of being a good manager has one internalising what the appropriate ends of business are and then treating one's stakeholders in ways that are consistent with those ends. The higher-order and more general RIs, however, govern these particular regulative ideals. They function "so as to co-ordinate the interplay between the particular RIs which themselves govern the agent's motivation in relation to each of the plural values" (p.29).

Oakley & Cocking (2001) also note that since RIs operate as a background guide for our motivation, they direct us to act appropriately, even when we are unaware of them and do not

deliberately aim at them. In other words, they can guide us in our actions without becoming one of our purposes in acting. While a RI can consist of certain codifiable principles, it can also consist of values and considerations that are not codifiable. This uncodifiability, however, does not preclude those values or that ideal from playing a guiding role in our motivation and behaviour. Given the inherent ambiguity involved in defining and applying spirituality, this last point is pertinent.

What might a spiritual person's RI be like? Spirituality is about making sense of one's existence while recognising the interconnectedness of all living things. It involves standing outside ourselves and considering the meaning of our actions, the complexity of our motives and the impact we have on the world around us. Further, it involves seeking a sense of purpose or 'being' and becoming connected to something greater than just one's own ego – a connection that provides a sense of the sacred or the holy. Consequently, a spiritual person's RI will consist of values and principles that will reflect these deeply held understandings.

What happens when we contextualise this individual within the workplace? Such a person understands the need to bring the whole person to work. They want to integrate their lives and in doing so connect with themselves and with others in their workplace community (Dehler & Welsh, 1994). Spiritual individuals endeavour to "express inner life needs by seeking meaningful work" (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000, p. 136). They confer their work and the workplace with the quality of connection to something greater than the material world. Work becomes part of a bigger picture; it is a calling, a vocation and not merely a means to an end. As part of this process, spiritual persons subjugate their workplace ego to the transcendent (i.e. ultimate concern) whatever that may be. Such a practice allows workers to rise above their differences and naturally look to their organisation as a communal centre (Mirvis, 1997). Giacalone & Jurkiewicz (2003a) summarise these ideas in stating that a person with spirituality-oriented ideals "balances economic, quality of work life, and social responsibility concerns" (p.16).

What might be the core values or principles of a spiritual worker's general RI? The literature has not been reticent in this area (see Table 1). In recent years, a number of publications have discussed the role of spiritual values in the workplace. For example, Kriger & Hanson (1999) developed a set of universal values drawn from the world's major religions as the basis for creating healthy employees and organisations. They argued that their values were essential to enable both economic and spiritual ideals to thrive and grow in modern organizations. Fry's (2003) theory of spiritual leadership comprised a set values that are necessary to intrinsically motivate one's self and others so that they have a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership of the organisation. Reave (2005), on the other hand, provided a useful table relating spiritual values and such variables as perceptions, motivation, satisfaction, retention, ethics and organisational citizenship behaviour. Jurkiewicz & Giacalone (2004) carried out a similar exercise in configuring workplace spirituality as a measureable aspect of an organisation's culture. Despite their focus, the values embodied in workplace spirituality are a reflection of the spiritual individuals who work in the organisation. Other authors cite slightly different lists but in general, similar values keep cropping up.

Table 1: A comparison of scholarly articles comparing similar values relating to spiritual individuals in the workplace

AUTHOR(S)	SPIRITUAL VALUES	COMMENT
Jackson , (1999, pp. 65-66) & Kriger & Hanson, (1999, p. 304)	Equality, Honesty, Compassion, Avoiding Harm, Respect, Peace, Justice, Forgiveness, Service, Duty, Trustworthiness, Being a Good Citizen, Peace, Thankfulness	Spiritual values from world's main religions (Sikhism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Baha'ism, Confucianism & Jainism)
Synder & Lopez (2001)	Optimism, Hope, Humility, Compassion, Forgiveness, Gratitude, Love, Altruism, Empathy, Toughness, Meaningfulness	List of values linked to positive psychology and spirituality
Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, (2003a, p. 14)	Integrity, Humanism, Awareness, Meaningfulness, Responsibility, Love, Inner Peace, Truth, Humility, Sense of Community, Justice	Manifestations of spirituality in the form of spiritual attributes
Fry (2003, p. 695)	Forgiveness, Kindness, Integrity, Empathy, Honesty, Patience, Courage, Trust, Humility, Service to Others	Specifically tied to spiritual leadership; all subordinate under a single value altruistic love
Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, (2004, p. 131)	Benevolence, Generativity, Humanism, Integrity, Justice, Mutuality, Receptivity, Respect, Responsibility, Trust	Values framework for measuring workplace spirituality
Fry, (2005, p. 56)	Honesty, Forgiveness, Hope, Gratitude, Humility, Compassion, Integrity	A set of core values reflecting a state of ethical and spiritual well-being experienced by a spiritual employee
Marques (2005, p. 86)	Respect, Understanding, Openness, Honesty, Giving, Trust, Kindness, Peace & Harmony, Acceptance, Creativity, Appreciation, Helpfulness	Vital themes for a spiritual workplace from the literature and compared with the statements of six business executives.
Reave (2005, p. 658)	Meaningfulness, Integrity, Honesty, Humility, Respect, Fairness, Caring & Concern, Listening, Appreciating Others, Reflective Practice	Spiritual values and practices as related to leadership effectiveness  Integrity viewed as the most crucial spiritual value for success

Why do these values occur consistently within the literature? Because they embody what is to be a spiritual human being in the workplace. They are the manifestation of the four components of spirituality in a person's lived experience. Some of these values may reflect all the elements of spirituality. For example, integrity is required to ensure a person is true to their RI and for others to be confident that such a person will act accordingly. Other values may be more specific to particular aspects of spirituality. For example, striving to overcome the egoistic self encourages the development of values such as benevolence, respect for others and altruism. Benevolence is a kindness and understanding towards others and an orientation to promote their happiness in a work context. Respect means treating fellow employees with esteem and value and showing consideration and concern for others. Altruism has the spiritual individual doing good for its own sake. They understand the impact, both on themselves and on others, of acting from an unselfish bias.

Alternatively, interconnectedness to an 'other' and to one's 'Ultimate Other' might promote values such as trustworthiness and humility. Trustworthiness has the individual being depended on by others, while at the same time, depending on their "Ultimate Other" to guide and imbue their work. Humility, at one level, ensures the spiritual individual recognises their own inadequacies and acts without expecting the praise of others while rejoicing in the good or success of others. At another level, humility is about recognising the need for their "Ultimate Other" in all that they do. The search for greater meaning in one's work leads to values such as generativity, professionalism and industriousness, and good organisational citizenship behaviour. Generativity is about seeing the big picture and having a long-term focus, knowing that the work done today will be respectful of future generations. Work is a gift to others or the 'Other' and so it has to be of good quality. Being a good citizen implies caring about

others and the environment. It carries ideas of the essential dignity and worth of all stakeholders.

Many other values are applicable here but such discussion is beyond the purview of this paper. What is clear is that a spiritual person imbues certain values. What is unclear, however, is how those values transition into ethical behaviours. After all, many people have the values listed above and do not demonstrate ethical behaviour in accordance with them. Further, many apparently "spiritual people" profess these values but they also fail to translate them into appropriate actions. How do these values become ethical outcomes within an organisational context?

### How are Spiritual Individuals in the Workplace Virtuous and Consequently Ethical?

A variety of studies demonstrates a clear link between values and workplace behaviour. People bring to work their values that drive behaviour (Roe & Ester, 1999). These values are relatively stable over time and have an impact on attitudes and behaviour. Values affect one's perception of a situation, how one relates to others, and act as guides for choices and actions (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). As Spohn (1997) notes, these "resources for attentiveness may be derived from spirituality and from morality or ethics" (p.3).

The previous section has explored the RI of spiritual persons and how this acts as an overarching guide to what they value; specifically what such persons value in a work context. Spiritual persons have internalised a certain conception of authentic excellence. This means that they not only intellectually adhere to specific values but also are committed to carrying them out. This section will explain the link between this RI and ethical behaviour using Aristotle's notion of virtue.

Virtues are attitudes, dispositions or character traits that enable us to be and to act in ways that allow us to pursue our human potential for moral excellence. They permeate our state of being and dispose us to action. The possessor of virtue is a morally good person. Virtue enables us to have the appropriate emotions and inner states as well as moving us to act in a virtuous way. Virtues develop through learning and practice. The road to becoming virtuous requires a person to be consistently motivated by moral goods in their actions. After a time of repeating such actions, they acquire good habits.

Virtues we get by first exercising them. For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them e.g. men become builders by building and lyre-players by playing the lyre; so too we become just by doing just acts, brave by doing brave acts; by doing the acts that we do in our transactions with other men we become just or unjust and by doing the acts that we do in the presence of danger...we become brave or cowardly (Aristotle, Trans. 1941, NE Bk 2 chap 1; 1103a31 & 1103b15).

However, virtues are not just habits. They are habits in that once acquired they become characteristic of a person. For example, a person who has developed the virtue of honesty is an honest person because he or she tends to be honest in all circumstances. Every virtuous act is more than a habit, as it requires choice, understanding and knowledge. The virtuous agent has come to recognise the value of virtue and view it as the appropriate response in a given situation. As Keenan (1995) has noted "being virtuous is more than having a particular habit of acting...it means having a fundamental set of related virtues that enable a person to live and act morally well" (p. 714).

The link between value and virtue, and therefore spiritual and virtuous people, hinges upon the distinction between value and moral value. Values guide all human decisions but a virtuous act is a special kind of act guided by moral values (Mele, 2005). We define a value as that which is worth having, getting or doing. In this sense it is relational, that is, it is a value for some person (Bond, 2001). A moral value, on the other hand, when one lives according to it, contributes to the perfection or flourishing of the individual as a human being. They are those things worth possessing if you want to become more human (Guardini, 1999). In this way, moral values are objective. For example many people value success and fame but pursuit of these does not make one a better person in the Aristotelian sense. On the other hand striving to acquire courage, humility and honesty would truly enrich their humanity and consequently make them a more attractive person.

These objective moral values are known by the human reason. The inclinations of human nature, lead us to recognise what is good for the human being. Every person has the inclination to conserve his or her life, so life is a good. Similarly, we are inclined to know and to live in society so truth and peace must be good for the human being. Living according to these values means a person will respect themselves and others in whatever

they do. They will be among other things honest, hard working, kind, responsible and a good listener. According to Argandona (2008), the moral virtues are responsible for developing a person's capacity for self-governance or self-control and so helping them to overcome self-interest in their decision-making.

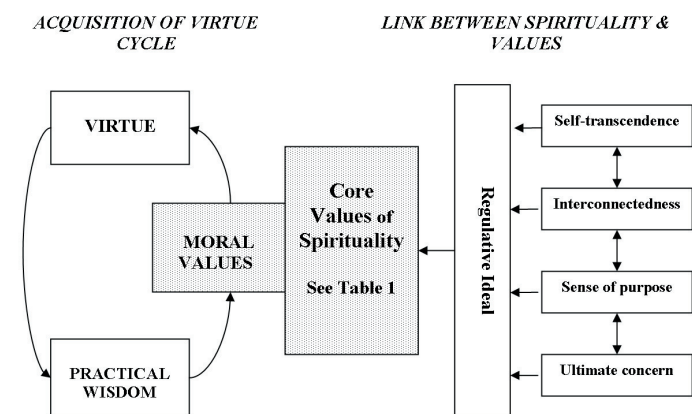
If the person perseveres in acquiring such good habits in all of their decisions, they will become virtuous and accordingly will grow in the virtue of practical wisdom. Aristotle (Trans. 1941) wrote that the wise do not see things in the same way as those who look for personal advantage. The practically wise are those who understand what is truly worthwhile, truly important, and thereby truly advantageous in life: who know in short, that is worthwhile to be virtuous (NE Bk 6 chap 13; 1144b31). Such a person will grow in the ability to grasp what a particular value requires in a concrete situation.

Practical wisdom or *phronesis* is the reward for striving for virtue. It is the ability to know what is good to do here and now. It is comparable to having a sixth sense. For example, what being honest actually requires in this situation or what justice requires of me in these circumstances. It enables a person to have a rational control of their feelings: to "have those feelings at the right times on the right grounds towards the right people for the right motive and in the right way" (Aristotle, Trans. 1941, NE Bk 2 chap 6; 1106b16). We can explain this philosophically by the close connection between the intellect and the will. The more virtuous a person is, the more morally upright they are. In other words, their will is directed towards moral good. There is certain strength in a will that enables it to choose the moral good with ease in situations that would severely test ordinary people. This rectitude of the will influences the clarity of the intellect, enabling it to perceive what virtue demands in a particular situation.

The core values of spirituality are moral values to the extent that they resemble the objective moral goods of human nature. The nature of a spiritual person's RI is the assurance of this. Spiritual persons are not driven by their ego in the workplace. They seek wholesome relationships with others and a greater meaning in what they do (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Adherence to their RI leads them to be others-focussed which implies pursuing moral goods. The four formative components of the RI would hinder or discourage any value or habit that would smack of selfishness or egoism (i.e. vice).

Therefore, a spiritual person is likely to be virtuous and to demonstrate certain virtues. Up until now, it has been unclear why and how a spiritual person is necessarily ethical in the workplace. The theory that explains how this process might occur is Aristotelian virtue ethics. A virtuous person perceives that it is worthwhile to live according to moral values. A spiritual person's mindset is similar to that of a virtuous person. Their RI will take them to live according to moral values, which respect themselves and others; thereby entering the cycle of virtue acquisition and acquiring practical wisdom (see Figure 1).





Link between Spirituality & Values: A spiritual person operates according to a regulative ideal that consists of certain values that essentially seek the good of others. This 'others focus' renders these values as moral values. Accordingly, they incorporate themselves into the acquisition of virtue cycle.

Acquisition of Virtue Cycle: One acquires virtue by consciously acting according to moral values. These are rooted in human nature, and by definition, place one in a respect-filled relationship with others. As one grows in virtue one becomes practically wise which enables them in turn to better grasp or perceive the moral value in every action.

Figure 1: How Spirituality Translates into Ethical Behaviour

## The Benefits of Spiritual (and Virtuous) Workers

Spirituality acts as a regulative ideal. This 'ideal' generates an embedded network of specific moral values that represents an 'internalised disposition' to act and be motivated in particular ways which address a spiritual individual's conception of what makes for excellence, in terms of their roles and responsibilities. The regulative ideal will provide a standard that informs judgement and helps to govern moral choices made in the context of daily working practice. It will be a reference point that will help to regulate both motivation and conduct so that a spiritual individual tends to conform to their internalised conception of good or excellent spirituality. To put this differently, motivations, decisions and actions that harmonise with a person's regulative ideal are appropriate and practiced, while those that clash with it are rejected. Through repeated acts, these values become "inculcate[d] specific habits of the heart [i.e. virtues]" (Spohn, 1997, p. 3) which, in turn, contribute to the further development of one's spiritual character. This person, because they have developed certain virtues, will act ethically, that is, do the right thing at work and elsewhere.

What are the benefits of a spiritual employee/manager in the workplace? What might be the outcomes of having individuals whose internalised regulative ideal compels them to subjugate their own ego while promoting the interests of others? An ideal that, at the same time, causes them to search for the greater meaning in what they do even as they hold themselves accountable to a higher concern. Which organisation would not want employees/managers who understand that we are beings-in-communion? Moreover, because they authentically exist only in communion, we must enact unconditional respect and openness to others.

Authentically spiritual individuals exercise certain virtues. These virtues are the outward workings of an inward mindset—their internalised regulative ideal. One would think that such an individual would provide their work organisations with significant advantages as they exercise these virtues in their work context. While the following research does not explicitly connect to the exercise of spiritual virtues, it does not take much

imagination to see the potential linkages. For instance, why do spiritual individuals have greater organisational commitment (Milliman, Czaplewski, & Ferguson, 2003), increased job motivation (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004), increased productivity (Duchon & Plowman, 2005), and greater job satisfaction (Nur & Organ, 2006)? Perhaps, at least partially, it is because they see work as a calling not just a job; and it is a job in which they want to do the best they can with humility while respecting others for example.

The spiritual individual's quest for a higher purpose, personal meaning and transcendent values in their workplace does not equate to an outward focus only; it also creates a desire to integrate the self. For such individuals, spirituality is also a state of being, a process towards wholeness. Being virtuous is about seeking a fulfilled life, not just for others, but also for oneself. This internal focus leads to a number of outcomes that also indirectly benefit the organisation.

Spirituality endows individuals with a general regulative ideal that includes specific values and beliefs which give stability to them when all else is in flux (Emmons, 1999; Seidnitz et al., 2002). Spirituality is also efficacious. It empowers individuals to achieve authentic spirituality, realise their virtuous ends and cope with and solve problems faced in life (Pargament, 1997; Silberman, 2003). Finally, empirical evidence suggests that a spiritual life is likely to be characterised by positive satisfaction, a greater sense of fulfilment and a better quality of life (Dierendonck & Mohan, 2006; Mohan, 2001; WHOQOL SRPB Group, 2006). The overall result of each of these factors is a happier, healthier and more fulfilled employee.

Finally, because the virtues are predominately other-centred (Cavanagh & Bandsuch, 2002), spiritualities that focus on the self alone and its pursuit of personal balance and happiness (a kind of spiritual narcissism) are not authentic since they fail to develop the right kind of moral habits that truly enhance the benefits of spirituality in the workplace (Porth, Steingard, & McCall, 2003). Spiritual people are empowered (and empower others) to look beyond self-interest to make a difference in and a contribution to society as a whole. Virtue is also useful in recognising and minimising the potential problems of some inauthentic spiritualities (e.g. certain types of fundamentalism) since these are not directed at the good of others and do not resonate with an authentically spiritual regulative ideal.

## Conclusion

Gull and Doh (2004) argue that spirituality can be the basis for ethical conduct in business. Where spirituality is absent, there is a lack of understanding that we are deeply connected.

Being in touch with spiritual principles and values helps to stimulate the moral imaginations of individuals and can provide depth of understanding of the many ethical problems that arise [in business] (p.134).

This paper has sought explain the link between individual spirituality and ethical behaviour in the workplace. The authors believe that Aristotelian virtue is the mediating factor between spirituality and moral conduct in business. They contend that spirituality forms an internalised general regulative ideal, based on four common aspects of spirituality: self-transcendence, interconnectedness, meaning and one's ultimate concern, that governs what individuals perceive and value and how they act. These moral values practiced over time become virtues. Spiritually virtuous individuals contribute significant benefits to organisations.

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