

Spirituality in Management from Islamic Perspectives

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Spirituality in Management from Islamic Perspectives

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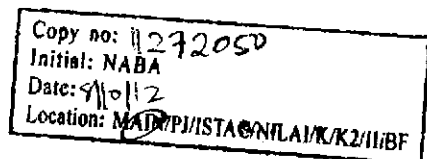
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CHAPTER 4

Spirituality in Business Ethics from an Islamic Perspective

Suhaimi Mhd Sarif and Yusof Ismail

Abstract

This chapter explores the presence of spirituality in business ethics with the application of governing goodness and preventing evil. The foundation to spirituality in Islam is based on core perspective called Tawhid. The first element in Tawhidic paradigm (Unity of God) establishes the relationship not only with Allah (called vertical relationship), but also among human beings and the natural environment (called horizontal relationships). The second element is Tawhidic paradigm specifies a set of comprehensive, mutually reinforcing values referred to as promotion of goodness ('amr bil ma'aruf) and prevention of evil (nahi anil munkar). It is important for decision makers – the servant ('abd) and vicegerent (khalifa) - to comprehend this macro perspective upon which more specific principles are derived. The decision makers are obligated to integrate ma'aruf-munkar imperatives into the decision making process. Broad concept of ma'aruf incorporates goodness (khayr), righteousness (birr) and lawful (halal) which in turn deserve positive rewards (ajr). Munkar includes bad (sharr), sins (ithm) and prohibited (haram), which in turn are related to corresponding punishment (i'dam).

Introduction

Spirituality in business ethics uses holistic paradigm, comprehensive understanding, and affirmative decisions in examining acceptable conduct in business activities. Knowledge and understanding work together through the influence spirituality to address business ethics. In today's world where corporate wrongdoings are getting complex,

dynamic and extensive, well educated and trained directors, managers and executives are insufficient.

Business ethics is a core course at tertiary level following the gigantic frauds, financial scandals, and malpractices at big corporations. The consequences of the unethical practices have enormous impact on the welfare and well being of humanity (Aggarwal, Choi, & Dow, 2008; Brown & Dang, 2011; Tremblay & Gendron, 2011). As a result, companies have to bear costly probes on corporate governance (Aggarwal, Choi, & Dow, 2008; Tremblay & Gendron, 2011) and internal financial reporting (Brown & Dang, 2011). People from different value and belief systems unanimously condemned such unethical practices and the negative consequences that they brought to the society (Tillman, 2009; Lombrano & Ianniello, 2010; Murphy, 2011; Simmons, 2011). The root of the unethical behaviour committed by companies' Board of Directors, managers, executives and operatives is not due to lack of tertiary education, competencies, and capability; rather, the ability to act consciously and be sensitive to the consequences of their actions to fellow humanity and other creatures. Thus, the objective of this chapter is to explore the spiritual aspects of business ethics from Islamic perspectives.

Realizing that the consequences are unbearable in terms of losses, damages and images, many companies used external control mechanisms to curb the repeat corporate wrong doings. However, the corporate doings are still happening on large scale.

☛ Islam offers spirituality solutions from Tawhidic paradigm. This paradigm provides solutions comprehensively as it is the way of life recognised by Allah SWT. The trust (amanah) entrusted by Allah to mankind as vicegerent of Allah to execute the Divine commandment via promoting of goodness ('amal ma'aruf) and preventing of evil (nahi munkar). Hussin (2007) argued that such task is a fundamental duty for all Muslims, men and women. This task has been related to the unique status as the selected nation (khaira ummah). When they are not fully executed the task or abandoned the task, the society and the nation will suffer the severe consequences.

Spirituality in Arabic is derived from the word spirit or ruh that means every deed is accompanied with the presence of spirit/soul, conviction. It is related to Islam because according to Imam Hassan al Banna (Banna, 2005),

Indeed, Islam consists of faith, prayers, nation, races, and spirituality, actions, book and weapon. The word spirit or 'ruh' is from the Arabic word that means, a word that has multiples meaning; such as 'water source', 'eye', 'spy', 'gold', 'silver' amongst others. The word ruh appeared in Sura al Israa, 17:85 as the secret of life:

And they ask you concerning the Ruh (the spirit). Say: "The Ruh (the spirit) is one of the things, the knowledge of which is only with my Lord. And of knowledge, you (mankind) have been given only a little (Al Israa, 17:85).

Al-Bukhari (2011) says interpretation of Sura al Israa, 17:85 can be based on a Hadith in which 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud said, "While I was walking with the Prophet on a farm, and he was resting on a palm-leaf stalk, some Jews passed by. Some of them said to the others, 'Ask him about the Ruh.' Some of them said, 'What urges you to ask him about that' Others said, 'Do not ask him, lest he gives you a reply which you do not like.' But they said, 'Ask him.' So they asked him about the Ruh. The Prophet kept quiet and did not give them an answer, and I knew that he was receiving revelation, so I stayed where I was. When the revelation was complete, the Prophet said:

In different context, Al Zuhaily (2002) found a dispute among the scholars whether the 'ruh' is similar to desire (al nafs). Sura al Fajr, 89: 27, spirituality is defined as soul, desire or al nafs, as Allah said:

"O tranquil soul!"

In Sura Yunus, 12:53, spirituality is related to soul or al nafs that inclined to evil, Allah said:

"And I free not myself (from the blame). Verily, the self is inclined to evil, except when my Lord bestows His mercy (upon whom He wills). Verily, my Lord is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful".

☛ Spirituality in Islam refers to the application of Tawhidic paradigm (Unity of God) that provides harmonious linkages between the Worldly affairs (al Duniyya) and the Hereafter (al Akhirah) in the context of business (Rahman, 1995; Beekun, 1997; Hamid, 1999). Based on this premise, the Tawhidic paradigm directs the obligations to promote goodness ('amr bil ma'aruf) and prevent evil (nahi anil munkar) (Beekun, 1997; Hamid, 1999). Prerequisites to one's execution of the fundamental duties are possession of knowledge (al ilm), true conviction (al iman), and integrity (al ihsan) (Mawdudi, 1991; Laming, 2002; Ismail, 2004). Knowledge incorporates broad concept

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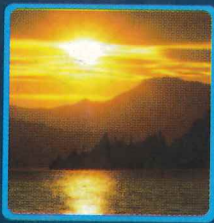
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Spirituality in Management from Islamic Perspectives

Organisations are continually searching for methods to improve work environments and workplace relationships. Both academic scholars and employers have recognized that employees are now looking for soul enriching fulfillment at work. Management scholars are taking urgent steps to include spirituality studies in responding to this trend, particularly after the recent episodes of ethical and moral violations through many financial scandals in the corporate world. Spirituality in workplace is now gaining prevalence as a mainstream topic in management theory. Although Spirituality has been studied from several religious perspectives, very little research has been done from Islamic perspectives, and no book or major publication is available that covered the Islamic religious issues which are closely related to spirituality studies. This book, *Spirituality in Management from Islamic Perspective* attempts to fill this gap, and presents the functions, roles, and purposes of spirituality studies based on the learning from the Islamic religious scripture (Holy Qur'an), and teachings of the prophet (Ahadiths). The book covered several major areas of organizational management (e.g., Human Resource Management, Organisational Behavior, Quality Management, Entrepreneurship, Business Ethics, Leadership, Human Capital Development), and discussed the implications of spirituality from Islamic perspectives on these areas. The various chapters of the book presented several conceptual models, which were developed based on extensive reviews of relevant literature. Those conceptual frameworks would help future researchers in designing new research agenda for studying the effects of several independent variables on relevant dependent variables of individual and organizational performance. The conceptual frameworks may also help managers and policy makers to understand the potential impacts that spirituality might have on employee performance, and thereby management could be inspired to nurture and develop employees' spirituality at workplace for enhancing ethical standards, integrity, and commitment to work. Hopefully this book will trigger substantial research interests among the readers for conducting empirical research in future, results from which would provide significant contributions to the contemporary Management literature.

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