Spiritual Development in Organizations: A Religious–based Approach

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ABSTRACT. Both the spirituality in organizations and managerial issues have been addressed through different religion-based beliefs. In this article, one intends to enlarge it through the perspective of the Spiritist Doctrine (SD). Thus, it reviews the SD literature, as well as spirituality in organizations theory to find common views. In addition, it (1) argued that SD tenets, codified by Allan Kardec, also bring helpful contributions to work settings that differ from the traditional religion approaches and (2) discussed its implications to managers' spiritual development. It is posited that the SD tenets, while building on and expanding Jesus Christ's teachings, disclose us some severe implications related to our future. In a broader view, SD tenets provide important warnings that encompass people work lives as well. Finally, we depict a framework that embraces corporate life coupled with some factors that may likely build and enhances one's spiritual progress, the potential spiritual rewards derived from these factors, and the loci where the rewards are enjoyed.

KEY WORDS: spirituality, workplaces, religion, suffering, moral, meaning, relationships

Introduction

The spiritual paradigm has gradually become from an apparent fad management to a respectful theme given that it is attracting increasingly intellectual curiosity and personal search for understanding this phenomenon. In this regard, researchers from different religious and non-religious streams have currently identified and explored a myriad of constructs and dimensions related to spirituality and their supposed manifestations and implications on corporate life. Similarly, managers and workers have found a mechanism (spirituality) of reawakening of something more powerful that is innate in them. This mechanism, in turn, can enact them to utterly express their inner strengths. Organizations, for their part, are coming to a conclusion that by nurturing spirituality in the workplace is very beneficial in many aspects. In fact, spirituality and religion, wherein it is commonly undergirded, are subjects closely intertwined on human beings' journey on this planet. Thus, the study of these topics on organizational environments is pertinent, especially in respect of whether one takes into account that organizations are entities that do not exist by themselves. Organizations being a wholeheartedly human creation, they have undergone ongoing interventions to meet human needs. Nonetheless, in the last two decades of the twentieth century, organizations reflected a not so brighter face. As a result, people were somewhat prompted to look for more lasting things, such as the spiritual principles that seem to be so.

Bearing in mind the above backdrop, scholars such as Mitroff (2002) shows some level of perplexity upon the fact that the metaphysical issues and spiritual beliefs are practically untouched by the mainstream in organizational studies. Marshak (2006) argues that organization development resorts to a considerable amount of theories and ideas, and *religion* is one of them, whereas Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003) note that the interest in spirituality in workplaces are increasing at an accelerated rate. Therefore, the opening to a topic so embarrassing smacks of meaningful changes that are taking place in business arenas. We see that as a highly favorable frame and, to some degree, a clear signal of increasing consciousness regarding the positive perspectives that underlie the topic of spirituality.

In fact, many authors share similar view; Konz and Ryan (1999, p. 2), for example, are of the opinion that the organizations are slowly changing their role from just engendered economic and social activities to a locus of spiritual development. In a related vein, Guillory (2001, p. 40) believes that both workplace and changing societal values will prompt us to drawn upon ''inner space'' solutions and inspirations. Nash (2003), in turn, remarks that the interest in spirituality can distill positive effects in daily life, as well as in today's business environment. Mitroff (1998) holds a bold proposition in which spirituality represents the pivotal component contained in all management systems, and Zsolnai (2004) posits a very convergent conclusion. On the contrary, Gasparski (2004, p. 126) surmises that all managers will inevitably deal with issues related to metaphysics of organizations, management, and spirituality. Porth et al. (2003) regard that the evidence gathered until now confirms that spirituality in workplaces can enact radical transformations on organizational *modus operandi*.

On the face of those perceptions, the spiritual paradigm may apparently help to transform the nature of the management task by means of substantial changes. As a consequence, management could exhibit a more coherent and abiding concern for those who would be affected by its actions (Porth et al., 2003, p. 254) disseminating, by extension, a highly desirable virtuous organization face, including those companies that operate under a worldwide market perspective given that there has been no signal of reversing such a trend. Although this issue has not so far been explored by spirituality theorists, the adoption of the spiritual paradigm by this sort of companies would ideally require the same concerns with the quality of life, respect, and well-being of the customers living in poor countries as are usually seen in the richer markets served by them. In doing so, the decision maker would demonstrate the required human quality that is essential to management intervention as suggested by Lozano and Ribera (2004). Given that the theme of spirituality in organizations encompass many constructs, it has been mainly discussed in terms of self-awareness, decision making, power, politics, ethics, creativity, intuition, problem solving, stress management, leadership, and diversity, among others (King et al., 2000). Nonetheless, spirituality encompasses

fundamental aspects of our lives, including life in organizational settings that cannot be disdained anymore. Overall, the spirituality both in organizations and managerial issues have been addressed through different religion-based beliefs and tenets such as Islamic (Badawi, 2001, 2003; Beekun and Badawi, 2005; Sachedina, 2001), Judaism (Dorff, 2001; Epstein, 2003; Green, 2001), Roman Catholicism (Velasquez, 2001), Buddhism (Bodhipaksa, 2001; White, 2001), Eastern Orthodoxy (Harakas, 2001), Protestant Christianity (Childs, 2001; McGee, 2001; Roels 2001), Hinduism (Sharma, 2004), interfaith approach (Fernando, 2005; Fernando and Jackson, 2006), among others studies. In this article, one intends, otherwise, to discuss it through the perspective of the Spiritist Doctrine (SD) also named as Spiritism Doctrine.

Further, we propose that SD tenets can bring considerable contributions, implications, and insights upon managerial life that differs from the traditional religion approaches that are worthy of being explored. Thus, the following section presents an overview on SD and its tenets. Next, some methodological barriers that are commonly attributed to the study of the spiritual topic and how SD have dealt with them are discussed. Thirdly, it explores the spiritual principle of suffering as a natural consequence of wrongdoing and its potential impact on both at the organizational and individual level. Fourthly, it suggests some factors based on spirituality in the workplace theory, which could attenuate suffering and, at the same time, enhance the spiritual progress given that, according to SD, we all are living in this planet to achieve, willy–nilly, this goal. Lastly, we offer some suggestions for future research and conclusions.

Spiritist doctrine and its general tenets: an overview

According to Weiss et al. (2004), one's spiritual journey rarely unfolds – if ever – through a linear path. However, by the lens of SD, it is explained that everything in our lives is aligned with a divine purpose. Rather, everyone, according to this doctrine, reincarnates to carry out a specific mission. It is worth noting that all SD literatures, as well as spirits' messages, advocate strongly this tenet. In this sense,

one could deduce that Kardec (1804–1869), whose real name was Hyppolyte Leon Denizard Rivail, was in charge of establishing the fundaments and tenets of a new revelation. From the SD believers' point of view, the mankind received three great revelations since the beginning of its presence on the Earth. The first revelation – in which the cornerstone is the *Ten Commandments* – was received by Moses from God and was related to general instructions (a basic moral law) that underlined that the people faith should be addressed toward just one supreme divinity; this revelation symbolizes the monotheism belief. The second one was given by Jesus Christ, which, so to speak, refined and purified the previous revelation by means of teachings that inspired people to love God and others as themselves. Such orientations aimed to enhance the first revelation, suppressing things such as ritualistic worship and misunderstood interpretations of the law. In Kardec's view (1866/2003a), Jesus was accountable and responsible for introducing radical reforms in the secular laws. As for the third revelation (i.e., the SD), it is consonant with *the promised counselor* that was predicted by Jesus Christ as follows:

> If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of Truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you […]. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.[1]

Kardec (1866/2003a) believed that the above Jesus Christ's promise could just be reached in another era, given that at the time of Jesus Christ's corporeal existence people were neither able nor intellectually apt to understand his whole message. He presumed that the *Spirit of truth* – that under spiritist movement is believed to symbolize a group of spirits, which represents the purest aspects and principles of the Christian ideal inspired by Jesus and God above all – was designated to come up at a later time to teach mankind about other issues because Christ had not revealed everything to us. As for the task of reminding us upon what Christ had taught, Kardec assumed it was necessary either because

humankind had forgotten Christ's teachings or, more likely, not properly understood them. In fact, when we consider the spiral of violence that sweeps the planet, the hunger that affects millions of people, and all sorts of hanky-panky inside organizations and governments around the world, the ''modern diseases'' that are destroying human lives and animals, the growing unemployment rates, the dangerous level of pollution in oceans, rivers, and air, the depletion of forests, among other things, one cannot say whether Christ's words were *de facto* assimilated by humankind. Admittedly, it is undeniable that human beings have been pursuing a self-destructive routine, and, what's worse, it shows no signs of reversing soon. In essence, SD proposes that the Old Testament (first revelation) was personified in Moses and the New Testament (second revelation) in Jesus Christ. On the other hand, the third revelation[2] is not personified nor created by any human being's mind, *but it is afforded by spirits' teachings*. Kardec (1866/2003a, p. 32) proposed that ''The Spiritist Doctrine is, in this sense, the collective work of the illuminated intelligences of the spirit world.''

Kardec (1866/2003a, p. 32) also argued that ''The Spiritist Doctrine teaches nothing contrary to Christ's message. Rather, it develops that message, explain it in a way that everyone can understand, and makes plain that part of it which has been known, until now, only in an allegorical form.'' As we will see, SD provides, on one hand, very often complex, but, on the other hand, thorough or thoughtful – it depends on one's faith, of course – explanations related to the meaning of human being's journeys on this world. In other words, one could regard that SD offers well-explained answers to transcendental issues, moral dilemmas, and human choices, among other things, which permeate our lives. However, SD being a divine revelation or just a religion, the assumption remains that some of its topics could be pertinent to management and people flourishing in the workplaces. In this light, Kennedy (2003) posits that managers have the duty and, above all, the moral obligation to use the knowledge deducted from a *revelation* toward the benefit of their subordinates. We think that managers should at least know and meditate about it, and through this article, we intend to show SD perspective as many other religious and business researchers have done.

Some methodological barriers

Several researchers on spirituality in the workplace have pointed out the difficulties related to measuring spirituality under the positivist model paradigm (for example, Brown, 2003; Fornaciari and Dean, 2001; Fox, 1994; Thompson, 2004), while others emphasize that the discourses over this topic both in academic level and organizational science are far away from each other (Benefiel, 2003). Gozdz (2000) posits that we tend to follow the Western worldview, which is largely grounded on orthodox science, in which prevails the logical positivism, the Newtonian–Cartesian mechanical universe laws, and especially the quantification of reality. The implicit assumption in such a vision is that the things that are worth being investigated are the external, the material, the objective, and the empirically verifiable. To some degree, these ways of thinking have led us ''to create a world without depth,'' as suggested by Gull and Doh (2004, p. 129).

In a similar vein, Fornaciari and Dean (2001) argue that by positive methodological approach and its traditional tools, pivotal issues that are part of spirituality and religion in organizations research such as soul, spirit, and faith are not appropriately measured. They also criticize the fact that the behavior sciences in their lasting quest to be seen as a highly scientific field have adopted research paradigms that, even in the physical science, have no longer been regarded as suitable to investigate some important phenomena. These authors remark that organizational leaders and scholars as well have the responsibility to accept evidence derived from the phenomenon of spirituality, even though they are built on ''the non-positive ways of knowing'' (Fornaciari and Dean, 2001, p. 347). Following the same line of reasoning, Steingard (2005, p. 227) conceives ''Spirituality as a holistic infusion of experience and wisdom into the management disciplines…,'' and he also posits that it requires more investigations to elicit ''new ontological, epistemological, and teleological dimensions of research and practice'' (pp. 227–228).

Despite the pertinent comments above depicted, Allan Kardec had adopted the positivist approach in his research related to the spirits' messages from which he elicited SD teachings. Rather, SD tenets were largely established on observations and in this procedure resides, by contrast, its main feature.

Therefore, Kardec's findings should be regarded by any religion or scientific stream that is: (1) indeed, truth-driven, (2) destitute of prejudice, and (3) really concerned with the phenomenon of life after death. Apropos this topic, Kardec (1878/2005) stated thus:

> The information thus arrived at has not been derived from the statements of a single spirit, who might have observed the things of the other life solely from his own point of view under one and the same aspect, or might still have been under the sway of his earthly prejudices … neither is it derived from a revelation made to a single individual, who might have been deceived by appearances, nor from the visions of an ecstatic which are always more or less illusory, and are often only the mirage of an excited imagination. *It is derived from the observation, and statements, of innumerable intermediaries scattered over the entire globe. The new revelation, therefore, is not being made exclusively through any one channel; every inquirer may see, and observe, for himself; and no one is obliged to base his belief on the statements of others*. (p. 80, emphasis added)

Kardec (1878/2005) recognized that he had not previously assumed that the souls of men after death, that is, people who having quitted the earthly or corporeal life could enter into communication with us. Nonetheless, he gradually found that such contacts were taking place because the humankind was finally ready to know and learn about the mysteries of the life beyond the grave. Thus, in those communications, the spirits described to him the state of happiness or unhappiness that they were enjoying in their current state of existence in the spiritual world. Through those messages, Allan Kardec was acquainted with the spirits' impressions, feelings, and the supposed transformations faced by them at their corporeal death. Most importantly, the knowledge gathered by Kardec enabled him to elicit the utter confirmation of Christ's teachings – and one of the most intriguing, especially for the purpose of this essay, has to do with the fact that *all spirits are always responsible for their own situation*. Kardec's findings revealed that every man and woman will be rewarded according to their feats and behaviors, that is, in total accordance with the Christ's teachings.[3] The feeling of happiness or unhappiness the spirits were enjoying in the spiritual world was a direct result of that tenet.

In other words, SD vehemently argues that all human beings will receive some form of *compensation*

or *punishment* depending upon the way they act, behave, think, and deal with their fellows and God (in Figure 1, we try to sum up this tenet). Thus, the implication of the finding that the present life will affect the future lives is considerable. It incites some insights about the way people conduct their lives on the Earth, encompassing organizational settings where they spend great part of their lives. Broadly speaking, it suggests a *consequential transcendent mechanism*, a divine law of cause and effect and/or action and reaction, as suggested by the SD that affects any person either in his/her current life or future lives or even in both equally. In fact, it is commonly named as *karma*. Weber (1963), as cited in Bezerra (2002, p. 157), claimed that this Hinduism principle that was adopted by Kardec ''is the most complete formal solution to the problem of theodicy. Through the karmic law the world is viewed as a completely connected and self-contained cosmos of ethical retribution, and within this world guilt and merit are unfailingly compensated by fate in the successive lives of the soul.''

Marcic (2000) wisely perceived that spiritual laws are different. Indeed, she found similar conclusions that were previously pointed out by Kardec (1866/2003a; 1857/2003b), that is, the effects of spiritual laws are as predictable as the material ones. Moreover, Marcic also noted that those laws tend to be neglected at least in the short run, what is perfectly plausible whether we consider our material-driven nature and ingrained temptation to focus on things that yield immediate outcomes, but the result of this behavior will come one day. In sum, each individual forges his or her own destiny.

Future lives as a result of current life

In our earthly dimension, we are generally prompted to search for immediate things like career, money, success, family, and so on. The quest for spirituality, in contrast, has been outlined as a journey toward the unification of one's inner and outer world to find out meaning and purpose to one's life. In such a quest, however, people generally come to a conclusion that they are inextricably tied to others (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000; King and Nicol, 1999). Lozano and Ribera (2004) posit that spirituality has the power to make individuals to be more lucid and

aware of their real behavior and practices. Similarly, Neal et al. (1999) suggested that since a spiritual transformation is put into practice by an individual, he or she seeks to integrate that transformation by applying certain principles in key aspects of his or her life, including at work settings that one is particularly interested here. When the transformations are channeled to the right track, and individuals perform their role in accordance, they tend to feel engaged, self-realized, helpful, and happy. These are some of the fair rewards for their efforts.

However, it seems that SD broadens that point by embracing, so to speak, both the constructs of future rewards and punishments. That is, topics that are not commonly discussed in our conversations, but that make part of our lives according to this doctrine. Kardec (1878/2005) was of the opinion that SD shows us that – in accordance with the expressed teachings of the Gospel – each human being is the architect of his or her fortune, both during life and after death. Put differently, they owe their progress and happiness to their own merits and efforts, and not to any kind of favoritism. Offering a logical explanation, he reasoned that God rewards the human beings (spirits) by their efforts toward the moral progress, and punishes *temporarily* whom negligence it. Further, it is worth highlighting that SD does not endorse the notion of eternal suffering.

On the other hand, happiness, another construct that has been exhaustively examined by researchers, receives considerable attention from the SD. In fact, Kardec (1878/2005) argued that a happiness state was only obtained by spirits that reach progress in both intelligence and morality; yet, he recognized that such developments are rarely achieved together and at the same time. Therefore, what a spirit fails to accomplish in one lifetime he or she could attain in another one through a new opportunity. Accordingly, the advancement in each of these two branches of progress is equalized and achieved by any spirit in the long run. This perception would account for why one can often find highly intelligent men who manifest, in contrast, low level of morality, and vice versa. He also noted that it is especially in the spirit-state that we will reap the fruit of our moral and spiritual progress – if we succeeded in our previous incarnation.

As for the issues of meaning and purpose that are closely interrelated to spiritual paradigm, there is no

Source	Means	Free Will Personal Mechanism	The Potential Outcomes, according to God's Laws	The Loci of Adjustment
Individual	Current Life	- Acts - Behaviors - Thoughts - Relationships	- Punishments (Suffering) or - Rewards (Happiness)	- Current Life and/or - Future lives (spiritual and earthly)

Figure 1. Synthesis of cause and effect law, according to the Spiritist Doctrine.

denying that through SD one can find very interesting explanations that go beyond the traditional ones. For instance, this doctrine underlines the need of people strive to reach the perfection, as once Jesus Christ advised us,[4] to mold a better future both in the spiritual dimension and through a reincarnation in another corporeal existence. However, Bezerra (2002, p. 198) suggests that SD "provides tools for its adherents and converts to conceptualize the world and life. In other words, it provides a methodological approach to self-improvement with tools for its followers to think about how the modern world, often chaotic, works and also how they can better live in it." However, taking into account that our world contains plenty of people's wrongdoings and misbehaviors affecting both private and corporative lives, the next section will cover what SD proposes about the consequences over the authors of these actions.

Some aspects related to suffering

Recently, a Brazilian drug dealer and assassin told to the police officers whom arrested him that he had fear of dying. It can seem paradoxical that a man with a so terrible track record was afraid of facing the result of his "labor" in the spiritual life. It can be hypothesized, only based on anecdotal evidence, that the majority of people also face the same fear, even though they are owners of better credentials. Relatedly, humankind history has been underlined by pain, blood, and suffering. Nowadays, it is suffice to turn on the TV to watch plenty of scenes of violence spreading worldwide.

Bad politicians, leaders, citizens, and *managers* have brought forth suffering in all layers of society, nations, and organizations. Behind those events there are always individuals – sometimes holding expressive MBAs or EMBAs – enjoying fully their freedom and free will, but taking the wrong direction. They are, so to speak, the agents of collective suffering while employing their gifts *not* to help mankind. Quite the contrary, they basically produce fear, disappointment, frustration, resentment, and panic, among other negative emotions, on people around them. As the human laws are not perfect, as well as us, sometimes these people get away with it. Therefore, it would be fair that one day, as suggested in the foregoing drug dealer case, these people should pay for their crimes and misbehaviors and reap the bitter consequences of their acts, even though in another life, as proposed by the SD tenets. In the next section, this point is discussed in the individual and organizational level.

Organizational level: one face of this coin

Although the paradigm of spirituality has been seen as beneficial to work settings and, at the same time, being associated with positive outcomes, by contrast, fear and intimidations have strikingly maintained more room in these places and being pointed out as the main reasons (Guillory, 2001; Laabs, 1995; Pfeffer, 2003) for its avoidance. The exaggerated search for improvements in productivity and shareholders' financial returns, whereby many firms are sole driven. Gavin and Mason (2004) has created a darker atmosphere within organizational life.

Bearing this in mind, Frost (2003) was very accurate in regarding the organizational life as a no benign one. As a result, suffering became one salient component of organizational life (Frost, 1999). In fact, organization life has placed enormous and detrimental pressure on workers of all levels to serve their companies at the highest priority. Rather, time and energy are increasingly focused on work and the other aspects of life that generally contribute to the one's balance are weakened and feelings of suffering take place (Cavanagh et al., 2004).

Accordingly, the individuals tend to live – pressured by organizations' greed and sense of self-preservation – boring existences without enough time to reflect and enjoy other important dimensions of life. Of course, the companies responsible for this landscape often embody a totally dispirited perspective in which its worst facet is being highly harmful to humankind well-being. In McKnight's (1984) view, as cited in Trott (1996), these organizations deny humanness, that is, the spiritual nature of one's being, sapping enthusiasm, effort, collaboration, creativity, sense of commitment, and goal setting, as well as undermining performance and persistence on work environments. In addition, the uncertainties created by such companies for the sake of ongoing layoffs, even though they are apparently successful, are emotionally painful.

Based on this all, at least one question can be placed: Why such things are still taking place? Moxley (2000) offers a very thoughtful answer when he suggests that ''Life in organizations is full of moral ambiguities…'' (p. 66). He blatantly recognizes that life in organizations is a by-product of executives and managers' inner lives. In this sense, they project onto such places all the fears, insecurities, and pain they carry on themselves generating a negative impact. With reference to that point, it would be germane to add that those people carry on more than those inner feelings to workplaces. Rather, they often reproduce in workplaces all sort of storms and mental disorders that they carry on their own souls such as lack of compassion, love, respect, and friendship.

As a result, in those work settings mushroom envy, greed, jealousy, among other negative feelings, that gives rise to organization's breakdown. Gozdz (2000) states, in turn, that the structure of organizations is derived from the societal beliefs that shape people's awareness and worldview. In a similar view, Lennick and Kiel (2005) reported that some of the most admired corporations in the USA and around the world have been systematically slow to acknowledge the catastrophic outcomes that their business processes are causing to the planet, although it seems to be changing currently.

In contrast, Marcic (2000) surmises that there are firms being inspired by spiritual values and, by extension, adopting a new way of doing business. More exactly, they may be functioning in a way in which important virtues such as unity, integrity, respect, and service may be strongly integrated into their daily operations. Marcic predicts that firms that are violating the spiritual laws, which were previously remarked, may suffer in the long run. These organizations would arguably get the alienation of their workers, the dissatisfaction of their customers, the loss of community respect, and so on. In fact, evidence shows that her opinion is consistent with what occurred with companies such as Enron, Arthur Andersen, Tyco, and Adelphia to name a few. At this juncture, it is germane to emphasize that SD tenets does not demonize wealth (profit). In effect, if it was untrue God would not have allowed its existence on the Earth (Kardec, 1866/2003a). Furthermore, the use of profit is of paramount importance for helping the human progress by financially supporting myriad of earthly discoveries. Wisely, Kardec also deducted that neither great work, nor organized economic activity, cultural progress, and research could be carried out without enough resources. In his opinion, always inspired by spirits messages, wealth (profit) was a vital element of progress.

Although SD tenets encompass predominantly the individual level, the organizations' role was not put aside. The *spirit of Joanna de Ângelis*[5] (Franco, 2004), one of the members of The Spirit of Truth Group cited earlier, channeled a message through the Brazilian medium Divaldo P. Franco[6] whereby she remarks that the business mindset is linear, straight, opportunist, as well as devoid of love, mercy, and compassion. In her view, organizations give rise to progress in the planet, in contrast, they are causing misery, moral, economic, and social violence that are spreading worldwide. She also noted that organizations, leveraged by Jesus Christ's thoughts, play their role with benevolence, solidarity, and peace.

Relatedly, Kardec (1866/2003a, p. 210) remarked that "Indeed, it's part of our mission on the Earth to work to improve the conditions of life in this world. It's up to us to reclaim the Earth, make it a healthy place to live, and develop it so that one day it will be able to support all the population that its vast area can hold […]." It suggests that almost a century and half ago, the codifier of SD had ever predicted several pillars of the corporate social responsibility theory.

On the other hand, through the *spirit of François Nicholas Madeleine's* message in 1863, Kardec was told that people is entrusted with authority

> …should never forget that they have *souls in their charge, and will have to answer for the good and bad guidance they give. The mistakes their subordinates make, the vices they surrender to because of the poor guidance they received (or because their superiors set bad examples), will carry consequences for the people in positions of authority*. In the same way, the reward for leading their subordinates on an upright path will also come back to those in authority. Recall that every person on the Earth has a mission, some greater than others; but whatever for it takes, it's always designed to further love in the world. You thus fail in your mission when you betray this Providential design. (Kardec, 1866/2003a, p. 229, emphasis added)

In essence, the SD teachings aforementioned reinforce the consequential mechanism that was previously discussed. In addition, those teachings implicitly posit the need of enhancing management awareness and commitment to universal values as well as providing high quality human resources policies toward training, development, and empowering of workers. Overall, such resources would likely inspire ethical behavior and enact wiser managerial decisions that could certainly benefit both the organizations and society. In a related vein, Vasconcelos (2009) found evidence that a religious-based framework – based on SD tenets, intuition, and prayer coupled with rational analysis – might enrich the sensitive topic of decision-making process in organizations. Nonetheless, whether we regard what many firms are currently doing around the globe, we will come to terms that a dispirited vision is still prevailing. And, such scenario is derived from the individuals, that is, managers and CEOs that run the majority of those organizations that are deliberately choosing to follow a path that will likely cost a higher personal (spiritual) price to them.

Individual level: the other face of this coin

The consequential perspective that is present in SD tenets tends to enlarge human beings' view about the phenomenon of life-death showing the true justice of God. After all, the SD literature reports plenty of cases of individuals that belonging to all levels of society and longing for increasing their power, reputation, personal image, being successful, or richer in a previous incarnation imposed unacceptable sufferings (such as aggression, violence, injustice, psychological contract breach, among other kinds of deviances) on people who were around or trusted them. However, reaping the fair outcomes of their wrongdoings, they generally reincarnate in bad environments being excluded from society. Further, they commonly enjoy poor life conditions, as well as suffering from painful diseases to expurgate the consequences of their acts through the period of either many years or a whole life or even in other lives. Kardec (1857/2003b) claimed that whatever the life to which the cause of suffering is linked, that is, whether the cause is related to the present or a previous life, our misfortunes are derived from an earlier wrongdoing or misbehavior.

Under this *karmic* perspective or theodicy approach, the individual will precisely experience what he or she has made others suffer. Whether the perpetrators, for example, have been hard and inhumane, they will be treated with harshness and inhumanity likewise. Similarly, people that are very arrogant may be prompted to born in humbler circumstances to get rid of their faults. As for those people that tend to behave in a stingy and selfish manner or have made bad use of their money, they will find themselves facing the lack of the necessary means for survival.

The spirits caution especially those people who misuse power – a kind of deviance closely linked with the corporate life. According to them, the act of oppressing fellows violates an important Law of God. The spirits also taught Kardec that in the spiritual world absolutely nothing can be hidden; thus, an individual that was a, for example, hypocrite in the corporeal life would be unmasked and all his or her wrongdoings are revealed.

In this light, in work settings people often allow that the darker sides of their inner selves emerge. They are no rare driven by negative wishes, lack of

virtues, or even spiritual traps (for example, obsession[7]). The latter possibility was discussed by Lewis and Geroy (2000), as well as strongly explored by the SD literature (e.g., Ruiz, 2007) in terms of organizational context. In a similar view, Krieger and Hanson (1999) note that the feelings of revenge and hatred present in ethical crises, as well as political turmoil around the world, can last for centuries. From the SD standpoint, such things occur because of Jesus Christ's teachings over the imperative to love each other have not been fully learned.

Nonetheless, it is very plausible that everyone is subject to unleash through leeway what they have the worse or better inside them. However, when the negative side comes into play, the individual becomes prone to commit unethical acts or moral deviances that may wreak havoc to years of self–help and self-awareness quests. Depending on the position occupied by this individual on an organizational chart, the personal and/or collective damage can be irreversible. Suffice to say what has happened with some CEOs and managers that have been arrested for the sake of frauds. Admittedly, it is not a good thing for the mankind. In essence, these facts undoubtedly show that human beings have not learned essential moral lessons.

In the question no. 895 of *The Spirits' Books*, Kardec (1857/2003b) asked the spirits upon what is the most salient signal of moral imperfection and they answered that was selfishness. In fact, sometimes what people carry on inside them, even in the workplaces, is completely deplorable. The avoidance of moral faults approach that is discussed here suggests the need of a quest for an inner transformation in which only the better *self* should emerge from any human being. Thus, people searching for incorporating virtues on their personalities, acts, and thoughts should be an ongoing exercise that could prevent them from suffering in the future.

In effect, the corporate life could be substantially enhanced if people taken into account the need of those improvements in their daily tasks. In addition, such a view suggests that plenty of envy, callousness, selfishness, betrayal, mercilessness, insensitivity, gossip, disservice, and negligence, among other negative feelings and behaviors strongly present in the workplaces, are always result of people's moral weaknesses.

Factors that can attenuate suffering and enhancing the likelihood of spiritual progress

On the other hand, there are means whereby whether one could theoretically minimize the possibilities of future pain both in corporeal and spiritual dimensions. It involves issues of cognitive and behavioral nature that have been addressed by both spirituality in organization researchers and SD tenets. They are summarized and depicted (see Figure 2) here not aiming at the normative–prescriptive intention, though we admit that on the surface. In the broadest sense, if they are rightly understood and appropriately applied, they could be very helpful to workers and managers likewise.

In fact, there are no reasonable cause to believe that those issues could not help human beings to

Dimension	The Factors of Spiritual Progress Related to Work	The Potential Spiritual Rewards	The Loci Where The Rewards Are Enjoyed
Current Life	- Moral Foundation - Meaning - Relationships	- Less Spiritual Debts - Spiritual credits - Joy - Self-realization - Happiness	- Current Life and/or - Future Lives (spiritual and earthly)

Figure 2. Tools to build our spiritual progress, according to the Spiritist Doctrine.

build their own spiritual prosperity. Furthermore, it is worth remembering that organizational intelligence is attributed to the usage of some management tools that help improve the organizational performance. Similarly, we propose that the utilization of some factors in our daily lives at work that could shape a genuine spiritual intelligence frame. Most importantly, they can potentially smooth the harshness of our lives in organizations and, by the same taken, yield inward joys, happiness, and spiritual conquests.

The moral factor

Dyck and Schroeder (2005) highlight the existence of personal moral standpoint that influences people's choices, work, and management behavior. We think that the broad differences of opinions related to a so sensitive issue do not contribute positively to the harmony of our societies and organizations. The spirits told Kardec (1857/2003b, p. 247) that ''The moral law is the rule for proper action, that is to say, for distinguishing practically between the good and the bad […]. You act rightly when you take the good of everyone as your aim and rule for action. To the extent that you do so, you obey the law of God.''

Nonetheless, as that rule has not been appropriately followed, it remains the challenge. Although the stakeholders' theory proposes something closer to it, such proposition is not a so popular and widespread belief. Presumably, the moral dimension is deeper than any other theoretical proposition because it is always inspired by God since the previously alluded *first revelation*. The missionaries, as they are refereed to by the SD teachings, play a key role as a kind of translators (mediums) of God's will in all this process. The current discussion upon moral principles retrieves, to some degree, an old theme that for some reason had been treated as a sidelight by human beings.

Moral values constitute core elements in every human society irrespective of the era they existed, and when they were neglected the chaos were always established. Indeed, in the contemporary workplaces it is uncommon to see the practice or talking about virtues, despite the academic and popular discourse. Perhaps, it still takes place because of our moral

ambiguity. Butterfield et al. (2000) propose the necessity of moral awareness as a pivotal step whereby ethical decision-making process can be triggered. Drawing upon the same reasoning, Dukerich et al. (2000, p. 30) highlight that ''Important personal, organizational, and societal consequences may depend on the outcomes of a manager's categorization of a problem as moral or nonmoral.'' Some scholars emphasize, by extension, the adoption of a kind of moral compass whereby: (1) one aims the goodness (Thompson, 2004) and (2) organizations are achieving long-lasting success (Lennick and Kiel, 2005). Frankly, we are not sure about the emergence of a theory of *moral agency* as posited by Zsolnai (2004), given that there has not been paucity of theoretical development in this field. Overall, one tends to appreciate manifestations of goodness and virtues that are always rested on moral foundation. We also tend to admire people and organizations that behave as ''good Samaritans.'' Beneath all the organizational transformation that has been discussed in the last two decades is the imperative to change firstly ourselves by vehemently rejecting appeals and solutions that act counter to moral principles not to regret our choices some day.

The meaning factor

In the proposed framework, a considerable importance is attributed to the issue of meaning. Our major premise is that an individual whose life is without meaning is not able to accept the spiritual path much less acts toward it. People that are material-driven tend to disdain or at least neglect this kind of quest. Rather, as they are more interested in accrue their wealth and power, metaphysical concerns are deliberately eschewed and, accordingly, just temporary satisfaction is pursued. Through SD literature review, we found evidence that people with such profile are generally very disappointed in the spirit world taking into account that *they never carry their material conquests or transitory power to this dimension*. On the face of that, the general perception is that finding meaning in the earthly life obeys a spiritual purpose that can help us − and, by extension, others around us − here and hereafter becomes consistent. In addition, the meaning construct remembers us that we should just put our marks

upon things (fulfillments) that can be categorized as being good and meaningful deeds for those who God places on our journey to help through our natural gifts. We regard that such a view is aligned with that Jesus Christ's teaching that advises us to store up our treasures – that is, the goodness and relief that were spread from our free will – in heaven, because there they would not be destroyed, broken or stolen by no one. And, in the workplaces one has a substantial opportunity to carry out such things.

Drawing upon a more earthly approach, Pauchant (2002a) suggests that meaning is a generic need related to human condition, which is particularly observable in current workplaces. Pauchant (2002b) also claims that the search for that constitutes to many today's managers a concern that reveals, to some degree, an ethical quest. There is no denying that both constructs, under the approach that is being explored in this essay, follow side by side. Nonetheless, some authors have associated the issue of meaning with other positive outcomes that it is worth mentioning.

Gavin and Mason (2004), for example, remember that many organizations have disdained the lesson that the workplaces that are designed and managed to provide meaning for their workers tend to be more healthy and happy. In a related vein, to Pratt and Ashforth (2003, p. 326) "[…] Creating meaningfulness is not only a means of increasing performance – it is also an end in itself." Cameron et al. (2003) suggest that the effort of doing good coupled with doing well, giving room to employee work-life balance, and the adoption of organizational policies, processes, and culture fueled by integrity and virtuousness (that is, good examples) are seen as belief system factors closely intertwined with meaningfulness in organizations. Meanwhile Allison (2004) rightly remarks that, in the end, meaning and value are the most efficient motivational mechanisms that we could find on the Earth. Lastly, through SD teachings such quest becomes more relevant than one could think on the surface.

The relationship factor

The last factor that we consider as potentially beneficial to trigger a consistent spiritual progress is related to the quality of our relationships. In fact, in organizational structures, the emergence of forming efficient teams would not be achieved if there were not the coexistence of healthy interpersonal relationships. In a more basic level, without respectful and productive relationships the humankind would not be here anymore. In contrast, in a more transcendent level, if an individual does not connect with God, it is certain that his or her corporeal journey will take serious risk of being impoverished and dispirited. In effect, in the human history abound characters that seemed to lose, in some moment, this fundamental linkage with the divine power. On the other hand, Kardec (1878/2005) noted that the issue of relationships is a cornerstone whereby the spirits progress, starting at the family pillar and achieving the social life where they reveal virtues or imperfections that mold their characters.

The codifier of SD (Kardec, 1878/2005, p. 31) also remarked that some dichotomies such as "Kindness, gentleness, violence, charity, selfishness, generosity, avarice, humility, pride, sincerity, hypocrisy, loyalty, and treachery behavior" that underline human relations, allows us to know what kind of motivations, aims, and stimulus shape the human interplays. Therefore, inside work environments human interactions can create or deplete the energy of the organizational members (Dutton, 2003). However, when the relationships in the workplace are seen through a spiritual perspective the evidence shows that it enacts positive linkages. In this sense, Weiss et al. (2004) remark the possibility of generating interdependence, mutuality, and reciprocity.

Sharing the same reasoning, some authors believe that relationships at work settings can also be suffused with trust, respect, fair treatment, compassion, reciprocal tolerance, and inspired by both people's clarity of mind and heart (Krieger and Hanson, 1999; Trott, 1996). Moreover, when one regards that the energy and vitality of both individuals and organizations are likewise leveraged by the connections that take place in the workplaces and by those outside with which the organization interacts (Dutton, 2003), these relationships can be supported by spiritual tenets. As such, they can contribute vigorously to the creation of wellness in the organizational environment, as proposed by Trott (1996). At this point, we believe that would not be exaggeration to

state that through the cultivation of good relationships we are subtly reminded upon our humble condition and limits. After all, we can make just few things alone.

Directions for future research and conclusions

In terms of research veins and based on what was discussed here, one could at first explore the managers' perceptions and opinions upon a future life as a result of their actions in the current life. In other words, would such previous knowledge yield some kind of change or transformation in managers' and CEOs' mindsets or in the way they perform their activities in the workplaces? On the face of that knowledge, there could be something (that is, decision-making, thought, or saying) that they would like to mend? Other point has to do with the current overwork that organizations have been impinged on workers' lives. Stated differently, there is strong evidence that people have increasingly been spending hours on jobs beyond the reasonable time by force of circumstances (i.e., they are being forced to accept it regarding the paucity of job opportunities). In this regard, Ciulla (2000, p. 31) wisely recognizes that "If labor, toil, and drudgery can cause pain and misery, then some kinds of work are ideal for torture and punishment."

Kardec's (1857/2003b [question no. 684]) studies showed that people in power those under them who make overwork "…commit one of the worst mistakes" (p. 260). Under SD tenets this behavior means that "Such abuses are against the divine law" (p. 261). Therefore, another topic that would deserve to be examined is: How managers would deal with such teaching? Would they reassess their procedures related to that managerial issue? What would they implement to satisfy both "Mammon and God," if it is possible? As for the spiritual manifestations, sensitiveness, and perceptions of workers and managers even in the workplaces, regarding the extensive range of mediumship developments, one could, for example, gather narratives upon them. In other vein, one could – as once Allan Kardec carried out – ask, in spiritist meetings, the spirits upon their impressions and feelings at the spiritual life related to their former professional activities at earthly life.

That is, there would be something that they regret to have done or undone in their previous corporeal existence? At a deepest sense, one could ask the decision-makers upon their conflicts – taking into account that not always one acts toward goodness – over unleashing their spirituality in the workplaces. With reference to the framework that was depicted, it would be very interesting to peruse the individuals' inner impulse at work, that is, at what frequency they are motivated by moral principles. Have they really found a meaning in their corporate lives and careers? Apropos the relationships: Are they seen as opportunities to build healthy, productive, and spiritually richer relations?

The interconnections that were raised in this article can contribute to – at least it is our hope – opening and developing managers' and workers' minds to a more "ethereal theme" that is also relevant at work settings. As such, it is aligned with Karakas' view (2009, pp. 17–18), "New Organization development is about equipping managers with these new capacities mind-sets and heart-sets." Admittedly, for those that are highly concerned with the material gains and earthly pleasures, the subjects that were treated throughout this article will likely be unpalatable. We recognize that the spiritual theme brings forward the necessity of changes that people are rarely willing to do. We surmise that it explains, to some degree, the contradictory events that still exist in our civilization.

On the other hand, the corporate life has been influenced by many things and there is no justifiable reason to believe that the spiritual power should not be one of them. The SD tenets, in turn, provide insightful and wisdom guidance to virtue acquisitions and spiritual flourishing, that is, knowledge upon our true nature. Further, it reminds us of the imperative to spread goodness through our acts, behaviors, thoughts, and relationships to enjoy a better future.[8] As we have seen, the SD tenets, while building upon and expanding Jesus Christ's teachings, disclose us some severe implications related to our future. Lastly, at the corporate life and professional activities, we have the germane opportunity to employ our gifts to contribute something meaningful. In doing so, one is carrying out a nobler mission that, according to spirits' teachings, can take us to achieve a true happiness both in the corporeal and spiritual dimensions.

Notes

[1] See John, 14: 15–17, 26.

[2] Despite the communications between people and spirits being so older than the mankind existence, it is attributed to the talk between Fox sisters and a dead man by means of a so-called tiptology (a language of beats, raps, and tilts) on the night of March 31, 1848, at Hydesville, NY, as the starting point of the spiritist movement worldwide (Wantuil and Thiesen, 1979).

[3] See Matthew, 16: 26–27.

[4] See Matthew, 5: 48.

[5] It is worth mentioning that the spirit of Joanna de Ângelis is the spiritual author of 59 books related to psychology, psychiatric, psychoanalysis, self-help, among other themes, always under the SD approach (Joana de Ângelis, 2009).

[6] Divaldo Pereira Franco is currently regarded as the most prolific medium worldwide, given that, in the last revision of this writing, on September 1, 2009, he had already psychographied (i.e., channeled through psychic communications) more than 202 books. He is a restless spokesman of SD tenets having given more than 11,000 speeches in more than 2000 Brazilian cities in addition to 62 countries located in the five continents. He made conferences in near 50 universities located in different countries of South and North American, European, and African continents. He also received more than 600 honors and titles such as Doctor in Parapsychology, Doctor *Honoris Causa* in Humanity, and Doctor *Honoris Causa* in Education from American, Canadian, and Brazilian universities (Divaldo Franco, 2009).

[7] It refers to the temporary bad influence exerted upon a person by one or more spirits' lacking Jesus Christ's teaching comprehension. The causes of this situation may be related to person's earlier lives. Generally speaking, today's victims were responsible for considerable deviances in their past lives attracting, by the divine law of cause and effect, unavoidable suffering. In such cases it is required a spiritual treatment, behavior change, and inner transformation. In the worst cases there can have psychical and mental ailments.

[8] See Matthew, 6: 19–20.

Acknowledgments

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