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Preventing Sexual Harassment at Workplaces – the Legal and the Spiritual Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to explore the spiritual trajectories of promoting harassment-free workspaces. The paper develops a bilateral model of individual and organizational spirituality about both the intentionality and outcomes of spiritual modes of thinking, decision-making, and performance.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The paper follows the case analysis method. It draws upon the experiences of an NGO working as an external change agent for instituting the spirit of the PoSH Act, 2013 in organizations. The authors have shortlisted 10 case studies from more than 100 sexual harassment cases handled by the NGO for addressing the larger issues of spirituality in organizations. The paper is interspersed with anecdotal and ethnographical references to continually juxtapose the letter and spirit of the legislation preventing harassment in India.

Findings: As evangelists of harassment-free workspaces, the authors find that realization of this goal will not be possible with only passive, mechanistic compliance with the letter of law or the rules of the organization laid down in this regard.

Research Limitations: The major limitation of this paper is that it only accounts the secondary information, the empirical investigation is missing.

Managerial Implications: The aim of harassment-free workspaces as a building block of a harassment-free world is a collective journey of individuals, Internal Complaint Committees, organizations, and society as a whole. That organization where the spirit is given more importance than just the letter, and the closer an organization is to the principle of equality, as expected of us by the universe, the closer it is on its spiritual path to creating harassment-free workspaces.

Originality/Value: The paper draws on the first-hand experience of the NGO and is an original contribution to the further development of research in this area.

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Introduction

This section traces the extant legislation on the prevention of sexual harassment in India in letter and spirit.

The Legislation

The Hon'ble Supreme Court intervened when Vishaka, an NGO, approached it to take cognizance of the Bhanwari Devi case (1992). Bhanwari Devi was doing a field job of dissuading families against child marriages and ended up being gang-raped by the families involved. Guidelines were set for all organizations to protect the women who are part of the workforce and also instructed that legislation be passed specifically in this direction (the Vishakha Guidelines, 1997). The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act (the "POSH Act") came into force in December 2013. The key implications of the POSH Act for organizations are:

1. Applicable to all women working in organized and unorganized sectors. It includes hospitals, educational institutions, sports facilities, and private and government-run organizations.
2. Direct onus on an employer for ensuring compliance:
 - a) HR Policy Document and Service Rules declare that sexual harassment will be treated as misconduct.
 - b) Formation and training of ICC (Internal Complaints Committee) are essential to handle employee grievances. It is a quasi-judicial body.
 - c) Spread awareness about Act 1 to all employees in letter and spirit.
 - d) Take action on the recommendations of the ICC within prescribed time limits.
 - e) Monitor timely submission of Annual Reports (reporting the number of training held, complaints received and disposed of, etc.) to the District Officer.
 - f) Compliance is statutory with penal consequences of non-compliance – monetary and cancellation of business licenses.

3. Time-bound process of receiving and resolving the complaint, taking action on the recommendation of ICC, and mechanism of Appeal available. A woman may take the route of conciliation, or else a full inquiry is conducted. It is essential to maintain confidentiality.
4. The definitions of Women, Workplace, and Harassment were widened to broaden the umbrella of complaints that can be resolved. This is in line with the guiding principles of ILO 2019 on violence and harassment.
5. Emphasis is on prevention and prohibition rather than on the redressal of complaints.

The PoSH Act thus provides a strong enabling framework to support organizations in promoting gender sensitivity and preventing sexual harassment in workplaces. The Internal Complaints Committees constituted under the PoSH Act have quasi-judicial powers to investigate cases of sexual harassment and also make recommendations to the employer to take the necessary action against the offenders.

The Spirit

While the PoSH Act provides a strong legislative framework, the spirit of the Act is on prevention and prohibition rather than redressal of complaints. This can only be achieved when gender sensitivity is ingrained into organizational culture and interpersonal relationships.

Relationships, whether personal or professional, need nurturing since it is these connections that build the organization, society, and world at large. In any organization, the role of leadership is most important in nurturing these relationships as the leaders have to instill these into the culture and spirit of the organization. Crucial spiritual values included in a business framework include integrity, honesty, accountability, quality, cooperation, service, intuition, trustworthiness, respect, justice, and service (McLaughlin et al., 2012).

It may also be emphasized that the pursuit and resolution of cases under the PoSH Act entail significant individual and organizational

time and costs apart from the psychological impact on all parties, both perpetrator and victim. Hence, the sensitivity of handling the complaints is paramount to ensure a fair resolution. The fairness of the process of resolution also has the long-term impact of building trust in an organization's sensitivity and promoting gender justice while at the same time preventing frivolous complaints. Piotrkowski (1998) also concluded that the frequency of harassment was negatively correlated with job satisfaction and positively associated with an index of distress.

Whenever cases of sexual harassment are reported, the leaders have to drive the process of law in letter and spirit and take action on guilty. It is their sensitivity and commitment that drives the culture of the organization. Hence interventions by leaders can play the role of a catalyst in achieving a harassment-free world. The leaders are guided by the ICC. Whether the ICC carries out justice through just the letter or in spirit, is dependent on the collective spiritual journey of the committee members.

Methodology

The paper follows the case analysis method. It draws upon the experiences of POSHCA, a non-government organization working as an external change agent for instituting the spirit of the Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013, (commonly referred to as the PoSH Act) in organizations. The authors have shortlisted 10 instances or case studies from more than 100 sexual harassment cases handled by POSHCA as an independent external member on the Internal Complaints Committees of several organizations for addressing the larger issues of spirituality in organizations. The case studies discussed are samples and broader groups have been generalized out of the hundreds of complaints handled.

The attempt is to enunciate some principles and practices that drive the realization of the goal of a harassment-free organization and world. The entire paper is interspersed with anecdotal and ethnographical references to continually juxtapose the letter and spirit of the legislation preventing harassment in India. An attempt is being made to

conclude the effort made by the internal members and the external counsel as well as the role of the leadership in not just handing justice in letters but delving deep to understand the humane angle – yet another spiritual process.

Case Studies and Analysis

This section draws on POSHCA's experience in championing the cause of harassment-free workspaces and examines select cases intending to discern the contours of such spaces and the drivers of bona fide behavior. It also reflects upon our findings, the reason behind the cases, and the spiritual journey of creating harassment-free workspaces.

Case 1: Morals of Immoral Desire

She made it on merit to a job of her choice in an automobile company near Delhi. She had to accompany her boss to an outstation business meeting in Mumbai. The boss planned the travel and stay. After the meeting with the client, her boss started touching her on her knees and thighs in the cab. They reached the hotel and he put his hand around her shoulder while asking for the keys to their respective rooms. He invited her for dinner in his room after which she went back to her room. He started calling her on the pretext of work. She ignored the calls. At 3:00 AM he knocked at her door. Now she was too scared. She called up her parents in Meerut, who in turn contacted an acquaintance from Mumbai. The acquaintance came to the hotel by 4:30 AM and booked her on the first flight to Delhi. She reached her office by 9:00 AM and made a complaint to HR. The HR head listened to her empathetically and acted with a sense of urgency to provide vital support to the girl and generate evidence to confront the intimidator. The HR head also called us in as external members of the ICC.

The boss was informed about the allegations made against him. He was totally on the defensive. For his 3:00 AM knocking, he said he was going to give her a toothbrush lest they miss the morning flight. He also said his phone had broken. However, thanks to the culture of proactive resolution of issues impacting employee well-being, the organization had already obtained the details of their travel and

stay and more importantly the relevant CCTV footage from the hotel. He had no answers as to why he booked a hotel in the first place that was not amongst the listed hotels given by the organization. The girl also had all the call logs. He later admitted to being attracted to her and having given in to the immoral desire. He profoundly regretted his behavior and offered to resign. The girl was categorical that she simply 'wanted restoration of justice and not as interested in retribution'. Keeping her wish in mind, the organization took a confession and apology from the boss.

Spiritual Reflections on the Case

The case reflects a mindset where males assume they are superior – one because of their gender itself, and second due to their position of authority. The patriarchal setup gives them an unspoken right to have their way. Most sexual harassment cases fall in this category. Quid-pro-quo sexual harassment is also common because of the power equations. Unconscious bias plays on them. Women generally are too meek to stand up for themselves. A lot of these incidents are reported by facilities management staff and contractual workers. Least evidence and witnesses are available and therefore pinning them down is nearly impossible. "In other words, sexual coercion and unwanted sexual attention can be viewed as 'come-ons' while gender harassment is, for all intents and purposes, a 'put-down'" (Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Leskinen et al., 2011).

In this case, due to its proactive approach in collecting the evidence (including CCTV footage), the organization was able to pin down the offender and provide justice. Thus, the culture of care, dignity, and harmony was preserved.

Case 2: Learning to Handle Empowered Women – The Hard Way

A leadership team of an MNC was in Goa for an offsite. On the last day, they were on the dance floor with loud music and psychedelic lights. A male colleague approached a woman for a dance. She ignored him. He persisted. Two other colleagues came in between the dancing in such a way as not to offend anyone and separated the two. He approached her

again and tried to hold her by her waist. She moved away. He then touched her on her shoulder and then she very clearly showed her index finger trying to say a firm 'no'. After this, she moved out of the dance floor and made a complaint the same night. Witnesses corroborated her version of the complaint.

The male, in his defense, said he had tapped her on her shoulder only to ask her to come out for a smoke. When the inquiry began, he was asked to produce witnesses and evidence in his defense. He stated, "Why would somebody be looking at me? I am no Tom Hanks". The case was adjudged against him and he had to suffer a substantial monetary loss in compensation. When the final report was handed to him, he was taken aback and requested the case be reopened.

Spiritual Reflections on the Case

These are typically cases from MNCs where the western culture of freedom is acceptable. In most cases 'men work from an angle of grandiosity and need to step down while women usually suffer from shame and therefore need to step up' (Real, 2019). However, empowered women firmly refuse conciliation. They are confident that deeper investigations would lead to the truth. They use such incidents to send signals to stop patriarchal behavior. The leadership tilts towards justice especially if the respondent is a high performer. In this case, both colleagues were equally empowered. There was also a psychological angle where monetary punishment is what pinched him and drove him to desperation to fly down to talk personally to the committee.

Case 3: One Bad Fish and Choice for Organization

A woman complained that her two bosses often asked her to stay back late and that there was no woman guard at that time. She also said that she was complimented by the two males.

When all parties presented their case, it became murky because she had written emails stating that she was very happy working under him and would be willing to come back to work with him again. Digging deeper, there was evidence that she had been misusing her position as the

design head and sending products to a new dealer instead who happened to be her husband's agency. Her juniors were able to find this through the Facebook account. When she was caught, she offered to resign. However, when her full and final settlement was being made, she said she would not repay a loan of INR Two lakh that she had taken for her father's illness and instead filed a case of harassment against the two bosses. It was a harrowing experience for them, and their helplessness was palpable.

The committee was convinced that this was a complaint made to tarnish the image of the two and arm-twisting them into loan waiver. The ICC permitted the organization to deduct the loan money and also decided not to give her Relieving Letter. The woman dragged the case further into Court but lost.

Spiritual Reflections on the Case

These are cases where women either want special favors like a salary without working, not repaying loans, getting transferred to a more suitable location, or wanting retribution against a rebuke, negative feedback, and like. They misuse the provisions of the Act and leverage the psychological advantage of empathy with women in such cases. They often have the support of others who may be wanting to get even with a superior and partner under the garb of this Act. Greed proved to be her undoing. A healthy admission of guilt would have been better. The organization's leadership mindfully decided to continue the loan policy.

Case 4: Importance of Consent – Sexual or Otherwise

A girl reported early morning that a male colleague had hugged her tight from the back as she was trying to set up the studio in Bangalore. The two colleagues had been in a close relationship. The male had already talked about his relationship with his parents. The girl had also committed to doing so. However, when she went to her hometown, she got engaged to someone else. The male colleague kept pestering her to talk to her parents, but she refused to do so. He could not handle the rejection and one morning, he reached the studio early because he knew that she was to open the studio that day. In desperation, he

hugged her tightly from the back and said she belonged to him only. She reported as soon as her boss came in.

The committee lost the only crucial evidence of the CCTV footage that he later admitted having switched off. He spoke despairingly but finally reconciled to her wishes. This non-acceptance of rejection by the girl cost him his stable job along with the emotional loss. The organization supported the girl and moved her to a northern location closer to home as per her wishes.

Spiritual Reflections on the Case

The bruised male ego that has never experienced “no” for an answer can reach a zone of harming the woman. Such cases need immediately focused attention to avoid any untoward extreme step. Even though such cases of sexual assault fall under Criminal Law, evolved organizations make an effort to help. Stern legal and other behavioral interventions are a must to help males understand the importance of consent and boundary with co-workers.

Case 5: Love at First Sight – Consequences at Workplace

A young girl was facing her Exit Interview with the HR Head. She had been humiliated for not coping with work. She narrated that the superior told her on the first day itself that he had fallen in love with her and that this was 'love at first sight'. He went out of the way to help like seeing her off at the gate every day. It was a long walk to the huge campus of the IT company in Bangalore.

When she repeatedly told him that she belonged to a small town and had come to make a career, he increased her workload and shouted when she could not cope. Her call log showed frequent calls from him. He defended saying he called her only after work hours and therefore this was not a case of harassment at the workplace. The ICC handed over a termination letter and he was still unable to understand what called for such serious action.

Spiritual Reflections on the Case

A very deep patriarchal response to take a woman's refusal for granted and continue

walking into the zone of “unwelcome” is the basis of harassment. Organizations can play a role in helping the males understand that “Desire is about wanting. However, the question is who owns the wanting? It is an act of sovereignty, of freedom, of choice. You can force sex, but you cannot force desires” (Perel, 2012).

To instill a healthy culture, the organization did not just stop there. It proactively made an extensive schedule for conducting training. Well-thought-out modules were prepared to change the traditional masculine traits: (a) delusion of dominance and power and (b) denial of vulnerability (Real, 2019). The willingness of the organization to give such training higher importance is a way to quicken the unlearning and relearning process.

Case 6: Stringent Organization Policies

The woman, an outsourced employee working for a big pharma company made a complaint against her boss that during a feedback session her boss had rebuked her and offered her many alternate careers including modeling as an option since she is ‘good-looking’. He also offered to give her a reference for a friend who owned a modeling studio. This upset the girl enough to make a complaint. On investigations, it was found that the feedback was given in an open pantry where several co-workers were present. The boss spoke for over one and a half hours trying to emphasize that the work she was doing on quality checks was a critical one and therefore no mistakes could be tolerated. The conversation on modeling was for less than 3 minutes.

This was one case where the Committee was unable to reach a consensus. As an external member and a neutral party, I wanted to give just a warning. However, the company policy is based on the global organization, which was very strict. Unfortunately, I felt that the necessary rigor of the global culture of training was lacking. The majority decided to hand over the termination letter. The organization lost a diligent responsible senior employee.

Spiritual Reflections on the Case

Men sometimes walk into the trap unknowingly. Their simplicity lands them in

trouble. It may be good to have uniformity and stringent global policies provided it is followed up with as much rigor in training etc. Further, using discretion where one decision will not leave a permanent scar on a human being is important, especially when the behavior is unintentional. Even sharing the reason for losing the job is a process of shame and guilt combined.

Case 7: Driven by Desperation

A girl handed us a 137-page complaint stating that her boss pestered her to shift her residence closer to the office. She also said that when she was wearing black clothes on a rainy day, her boss complimented her. The complaint also contained another incident. She had gone along with the boss to a colleague’s (Ms. X, who was also a close friend of hers) home for a prayer meeting. The evidence she shared was a mobile recording of the conversation between them giving directions to reach the colleague’s house. She said that the boss had adjusted her seatbelt in such a way as to touch her inappropriately. The boss denied all the allegations.

On investigations, it was found that she was on maternity leave for three months. Even after three months, she was allowed to “work from home” provided she kept the critical deadlines. The complaint appeared to have been written by a formally qualified lawyer because it contained all the legal language picked verbatim from the Act. Further, Ms. X told the ICC that she had offered the woman to go to the metro station with her husband, who was also well-known to her. The woman replied, “I came with the boss, I will go back with him. It’s okay.”

This certainly did not appear to be a genuine complaint. If a woman had been assaulted once, why would she go back with him? What was surprising for us was that she had stapled the particular page stating the section that pending inquiry, a woman may be granted up to 3 months’ leave over and above all other leaves. The desperation that drove the woman to take such a risk for getting more time as a caregiver to her child while not wanting to forego her salary, was amplified. The woman was terminated for her malicious complaint.

Spiritual Reflections on the Case

There are cases where women are driven to desperation in situations where they wanted to protect their interests by twisting the individual or twisting the system. They may have killed their conscience to achieve the goal. Unlike in cases of greed, these are women for whom money is survival or a tool for a breather in an otherwise overburdened life.

The lack of availability of creches in the organizations despite laws can also drive women to try their luck with such misuse of genuine laws. The Committee made a special remark in the report suggesting immediate creche arrangements in office and they complied in good spirit.

Case 8: The Orthodoxy Paradox

A girl complained that on the way back from a target-completion party with colleagues at a mall, a male colleague took her hand and touched his private parts with it. She was in a car with two senior males sitting in front of the car who were acquaintances, but the male sitting with her at the back on her right (Mr. X) was not known to her at all. When they reached her residence, the senior person in the front seat asked Mr. X to drop the girl right at her doorstep since she was way too drunk. Just as he was taking her, a confidant of hers also reached up to her door. She insisted she had called her friend because she apprehended that after the untoward incident in the car, Mr. X may try to take advantage of her drunken state and come up to her floor. However, he said he did go to drop her but only at the insistence of the seniors.

She finally broke down and revealed that her confidant had seen her with Mr. X and it had enraged him. Offense, being the best way of defense, she chose the route. It also became clear that the complaint was filed after a discussion with that close friend whose ego seems hurt and the girl was unable to justify the allegations. The Committee suggested she reach out to the counselor empaneled with the organization. She formally apologized to Mr. X.

Spiritual Reflections on the Case

Often youngsters who are in a relationship make complaints as a face-saving act.

However, it takes courage to make an allegation as serious as this even if she wanted to protect herself. Also, it is commonly observed that youngsters who have moved out of the fold of orthodox families from smaller cities have new-found freedom and desperation to “fit in” with excessive drinking, late-night parties, overspending on clothing, etc. Not surprisingly, both genders are indulging in this. Can organizations invest in interventions when they employ such youngsters and sensitize them?

Case 9: The Shadow Pandemic

There was a complaint from a hospital during the pandemic that one of the male doctors had touched a woman nurse inappropriately in the operating theatre. The nurse had spoken about the incident to her other nursing staff as soon as she came out of the operation theatre. When her duty got over, she changed and came to the head nurse and narrated the incident to him. This was her third complaint against the same senior doctor. He denied it the third time as well.

When the committee tried to see the CCTV footage, it clearly showed all staff whether doctors or nurses, whether males or females, covered in PPE kits with masks and shields on their faces! It was therefore impossible to make out anything. Therefore, the committee could not take action since nothing could be substantiated.

Spiritual Reflections on the Case

The pandemic is being called a shadow pandemic for violence against women and children.

The kind of cases being reported is the ones where males are taking liberty because there are no demarcated “office hours”, appropriate attire, backdrops, and no fear of being ‘watched’ anymore. The victims and perpetrators are together, it is becoming more and more difficult to prove/disprove allegations.

A benefit of the doubt should be granted to a lack of understanding of technology. Proactive organizations issued instructions on the etiquette of work-from-home. Others were slow to follow. However, most cases go unreported.

Several anonymous complaints are pouring in. All complaints state the desperation of jobs for financial needs.

Case 10: Attention – By Hook or Crook

A visibly disturbed girl, about 35 years, walked in. She was very fidgety and nervous. She was smoking and then nervously put out the cigarette. She started talking about how she had been brought up by her grandmother. She worked with a male colleague in a previous company and helped him move to a better job profile in Gurgaon. She had come to report a case of sexual assault against him. She stated that the man (who was married) had taken advantage of her kissing her forcefully on her lips as a way of saying thanks to her for the job that he had because of her. She alleged that the incident had taken place after lunch hours, and there was no witness or CCTV footage available. She said he had been asking her out and that she had been refusing him. She broke down while talking to us.

The male said that the two of them did work together in the previous organization, but it was not because of her that he got the job and therefore the question of thanking her did not arise. It was he who got the job first. It was evident from his call log that he was attending to an official call at the time the incident is alleged to have happened. No action was against him.

Spiritual Reflections on the Case

The entire body language of the woman pointed towards her being nervous. It could also have meant she was lying. What was certain was that she wanted his attention. Could it be conjectured that having lost her parents early in life had led her to being an attention-seeker? Those from broken families are often involved in sexual harassment - both as a harasser and as a victim. These cases should be handled with even more sensitivity. These employees are attention-seekers for obvious reasons. They are more vulnerable than males and want to go the extra mile to not hear a “no”. Women, on the other hand, tend to want extra attention from the opposite sex and make complaints that give them that extra kick of being proven beautiful/smart enough to get that attention.

The Collective Journey to Harassment-free Workspaces

The endeavors to situate harassment-free workspaces as a building block of a harassment-free world are a collective journey of individuals, ICCs, and organizations. The collective spiritual journey of an ICC while dealing with complaints pushes it to go deeper than the proverbial tip of the iceberg. What is it that the individuals in the ICC, the employees (as witnesses, etc.) and the leadership can do collectively to achieve a harassment-free world? Some basic suggestions:

Need for Strong Legal Framework in Letter and Spirit

It is important to have uniformity and stringent policies followed up with as much rigor in training etc. It is also important to investigate thoroughly and strictly punish offenders. At the same time, one must take cognizance of Standard Operating Procedures and Spiritual Operating Procedures. It is important to use discretion where one decision will not leave a permanent scar on a human being is important, especially when the behavior is unintentional.

Organization’s Role – Building Sensitivity

The culture of an organization is usually top driven. Those organizations where the spirit is given more importance than just the letter, gain in the long run with better productivity. Driven from the top, a lot of organizations give as much importance to targets for ‘inclusion and diversity as they do to triple their bottom line. The importance given to the celebration of International Women’s Day, thoughtful and engaging exercises like the “I pledge...” where employees affirm to take an action on changing their behavior, monthly newsletter/mailers with reminders on expected behaviors at the workplace, etc. making it a zero-tolerance zone substantiate the intent. The closer an organization is to the principle of equality, as expected of us by the universe, the closer it is on its spiritual path to creating harassment-free workspaces.

Beyond Just Legal Interventions

Organizations should provide proactive training to help males mindfully analyze patriarchal

mindsets and remove unconscious bias; Absorb and apply the concept of boundaries and consent; Teach women to be healthy and aggressive; Comforting them with confidentiality.

ICC should go a layer deeper to understand the issue. Bringing out healthy guilt will go a long way. Refer more to the psychologist than punish for the behavior. Constructive shame is also another way to handle it. Punish strongly only when needed.

Role of Intelligentsia

Studies are being conducted to explore the nexus between spirituality and leadership (Dent et al., 2005) and discover factors and conditions for promoting a theory of spiritual leadership (Smith et al., 2018) within the context of the workplace. Researchers and psychologists are playing an important role in this direction.

The Role of Social and Mass Media

Social media is a very powerful tool that is being used, irrespective of qualification, gender, caste, etc. Story-driven videos portraying boundaries and consent can be game changers. For example, there was a video portraying a retail outlet selling toilet seats. A woman walks in and relieves herself to the shock and dismay of the salesman. The message said *“Just because there is a toilet seat, you don’t pee; just because she is a woman, she is not available”*

Mass media can be effectively used to engage with society at large through the creative storytellers sharing the sociological changes being experienced the world over. The paradigm shifts of women becoming independent and hence change in expectations of roles at the workplace, in a marriage, for child rearing and division of household work needs the other gender to respond to the change with alacrity. One such example in main-stream Bollywood cinema is the movie “Pink”

World View

It is heartening to note that United Nations¹¹ keeps redefining the guidelines to make the world a better and safer place. Countries sign various accords and follow the guidelines so given. Apart from the governments, there is

work being done by NGOs in this direction. They are dedicatedly championing the cause of women and children – the more vulnerable of the sections. Ready reckoners are available on their website for posters etc. that can be useful to make a beginning.

Conclusion: Spirituality – The Only Way Forward

“The ultimate cure for all relationship issues is spiritual. When I’m triggered, it’s about fear, anger, and control. When I am in my adult (or centered), it’s about being in the moment with what’s there. I don’t ask clients to give up unless they have faith, and that faith is ultimately the spirit. It’s very hard to have a healthy relationship without faith” (Hubl, 2022).

An individual’s spirit is viewed as a connection between one’s soul and one’s values. Keeping one’s conscience aligned with the universe, listening to the inner self, walking the talk, and taking others along, toward the cause of an idealistic world to live in, are all a part of the spiritual process.

Kouzes, J., & Posner, (2003) findings affirmed those values with the five leadership practices they identified in their research including that leadership is about inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart. There are spiritual connections with these approaches to leadership: servant leadership, ethical leadership, principle-centered leadership, authentic leadership, reflective leadership, empowering leadership, civic leadership, leadership for social change, and relational leadership.

Be it keeping the balance in the ecology, balance in the society, and balance of the inner self, it is a journey one must tread in a lifetime to grow to a higher order. Similarly, societies, organizations, and countries must grow as a collective conscience to match the frequency of the universe. The Covid-19 pandemic has been a great teacher that reinforces the idea of surviving only as a spiritual being and through a spiritual process.

Can one expect to change the world alone? Not alone and not in a lifetime. But one can leave the world a better place when individuals and organizations walk the talk. One envisions a better version of oneself and the world and everything in between.

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