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RESEARCH ARTICLE

SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE AT THE CORE OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

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Abstract

This article discusses spiritual intelligence to be the primal source of becoming an effective leader. Even after every five years when we as citizens of India were striving hard to change the corrupt stifling state of our government and nation, condition remained equally rotten and stagnated. After a long time it was only the personal vision of Shri Arvind Kejriwal merged with his actions decided on what is right and just for the other that could knock the change. The article explores the characteristics of spiritual intelligence rooted in Arvind Kejriwal.

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Introduction

True leadership is moral authority, not formal authority. Leadership is a choice, not a position. The choice is to follow universal timeless principles, which will build trust and respect ...¹

Stephen R. Covey

Stephen R. Covey is right in his answer that purpose-driven leaders have to stand out for their wisdom and choices because their belief and choices not only reflect a concern for others but also have an impact on others. They act as the echo that reflects the universal truth representing the fundamental values of life and living. This in turn can serve as bedrock for the joys and hopes of the entire nation and at the other end can become the reason for its sufferings. Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela were some such resonances who could identify the right sense of purpose through their remarkable vision. Their passion and compassion won million of hearts.

In today's world intelligence is without question substituted with cerebral way of thinking, decisions are demanded to be based on mere logical deduction. However the ironic question that arises is that if alone the cognitive intelligence or even the emotional faculty has been able to stand the test of the time? The recent historic culmination of Delhi Legislative Assembly elections of 2013 is the answer. Youngest cabinet ever is being chosen with the trust on their ardent belief to evolve a better world. This choice mirrored the moral and ethical choices which epitomize spiritual intelligence.

Zanah Dohar and Ian Marshall coined the term spiritual intelligence. They defined it as "[...] the ability to find meaning, purpose and values in our life, connecting our actions and lives to a wider, richer, meaning-giving context [...]". Hence, the source of knowledge about the universal timeless principles is our own repertoire of spiritual intelligence which also serves as a thread between our inner lives to the being in the world. For Indians the concept of spiritual intelligence is an age old heritage and wisdom embedded in ancient scriptures. For instance, in *The Bhagvad Gita*, verse 2.51, Shri Krishna imparted the supreme knowledge to Arjuna by stating that "Endowed with spiritual intelligence and comprehension of reality one attains the supreme stage" and in verse 18.30, it is explained as "Spiritual Intelligence is the nature of goodness, which factually knows the propriety of things as well as the impropriety of things, duty and non-duty, humility and sacrifice, fear and fearlessness, bondage and liberation". At

¹ It is the answer to the question about how leaders can progress. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/discussion/2008/07/16/DI2008071602427.html>

the same time verse 2.66 proclaims that “[...] with an uncontrolled mind it is not possible to have spiritual intelligence, without spiritual intelligence one cannot meditate and without meditation it is not possible to realise the ultimate truth”. The uncontrolled mind can stop the flow of our inner goodness, placing us in opposition to our fellow human beings. Wisdom and compassion are both necessary to maintain inner and outer peace. Accordingly we can assert that spiritual intelligence is not about alienating cognitive intelligence or emotional faculty rather both serve as its dimension in their balanced state to facilitate the change which is necessary to reform the world in a better place to live.

CASE STUDY

In our Indian political history, Arvind Kejriwal is not the first who has triggered a crusade against corruption though he is the only one who became a household name and swayed the entire nation in the tide of hope with his vision. He not only founded ‘Parivartan’² but also brought Parivartan³ because he was connected to both the self and others and thus was not only in touch with right values and beliefs but also used them to understand and respect others which leads to a greater sense of purpose in life, a purpose which is greater than any being. Kejriwal has spiritual intelligence activated at his core. Consequently, charting some of the events and achievements of Arvind Kejriwal’s life we can understand the various manifestations of spiritual intelligence encompassing every moment of our physical existence as human beings.

Arvind Kejriwal⁴ was born to Gobind Ram Kejriwal and Gita Devi. Gobind Ram Kejriwal was an electrical engineer, graduated from Birla Institute of Technology. With an educated father to take a good care, Arvind had a substantially comfortable childhood. He received good education and emerged out to be one of the few who get an opportunity to pursue mechanical engineering from the best institute of the country, Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur. In 1989, he earned the lucrative job with Tata steel and unlike many who leave the country for greater gain, Kejriwal decided to face Civil Services Examination because he wanted to serve the society and the nation. However he had taken a sabbatical in 1999 from Indian Revenue Service realising that this designation is not being able to satiate his thirst to serve the society and so during this break he initiated a movement, which was a rare of its own kind, ‘Parivartan’. It concentrated on helping citizens in sorting out income tax, electricity, ration and any basic matters. This is what Zannah Dohar and Ian Marshall define as one of the most important manifestation of Spiritual Intelligence- sense of vocation, the first inner call that solicits to repay what has been partaken by you. Although, with this clamour comes a dilemma of what to choose. Kejriwal was granted the sabbatical on the agreement that upon resuming his work, he will have to serve Indian Revenue Service for at least three years without quitting the job with an added condition of repaying the salary given during the leave period if he could not put up with the former agreement. Kejriwal had initially signed the pact but on returning to the chair in 2003 he projected the next two features of spiritual intelligence that are, discernment and spontaneity. After working for 18 months, Kejriwal in the light of self awareness which is the fourth characteristic of spiritual intelligence, that is to believe and value what deeply motivates you, decided to live in for the moment. The moment was about reaching out to the common men and focussing on the issues affecting them leading him to join Anna Hazare. It was the next feature of spiritual intelligence, sense of belongingness to those who share the world with you, who share the space with you. Nonetheless, spontaneity was based on the exhibition of the keen insight. Kejriwal acted from his deep beliefs and principles of goodness, holism and compassion.

RESULT

The instant Kejriwal recognised the reservoir of spiritual Intelligence, the layer of dominance over him shattered, his mind got unveiled and the leader in him was born. The notion of progress and equality which always existed as a mental state started occupying the external space too. Spiritual Intelligence brings awareness and awareness in turn awakens the desire to change. The Youngest Chief Minister, Arvind Kejriwal is now all set with the venture to bring Aam Admi together and develop a sense of unity among them so that they can fight together and build a world of beings, free from evils, corruption and prejudices.

² Kejriwal started *Parivartan*, an organization that is run by a few young volunteers who help thousands of citizens get basic necessities of life—like a ration card or an electricity connection—without paying bribes to government officials.

³ Change

⁴ Some factual information has been taken from “Mango man' Arvind Kejriwal, India's newest political star”. NDTV. Edited by [Nadim Asrar](#) December 27, 2013.

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