



*An inquiry into the nature, activities and results of leading from a spiritual basis*

Full transcript of an interview with:

**ANAND PILLAI**  
India



**Interview conducted 11 March 2002**

**Specific information related to interview:**

**Organisation:** Hindustan Computer Ltd. (HCL) COMNET  
**Location:** Delhi, India  
**Industry:** Computer Technology  
**Position:** Vice President of Sales and Marketing  
**Years in Position:** 6  
**Gender:** Male  
**Age:** 43

**Current information (as of 2006):**

**Current Organisation:** HCL Technologies  
**Current Location:** Delhi, India  
**Current Industry:** Computer Technology  
**Current Position:** Head of Learning and Development, Vice President Talent and Transformation

**General information:**

**Total Years in All Leadership Positions:** 18

**Previous Positions/Organisations:** Computer Manager, Tata Groups, India; Hughes Network Systems, India; Country Manager, Bay Systems, India; Nortel Networks, Canada

**University Degrees:** BSc, Bangalore University, India; Post Graduate Management, DCM Management Development Center, India

**How to refer to Anand Pillai:**

“Head of the Learning and Development Department for HCL Technologies in India”

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# CAREER

## Career History

After finishing my BSc at Bangalore University and post graduate management at DCM Management Development Center, I went to Delhi where I joined DCM, a large multi-division company that is into textiles, pharmaceuticals, petrochemicals and engineering. In 1984, I joined the Tata's as a computer manager and worked in this capacity for over eight years. I initially joined their Strategic Management Group (SMG) and worked for several of their other groups. Finally I was with Tata Unisys looking after their mainframe computers and networking.

In 1992, I left Tata's to join Hughes Network Systems, which is an American company and in 1996, HCL, (Hindustan Computer Ltd.,) hired me in Bangalore to look after their sales and marketing. Due to the numerous shifts they kept making in their headquarters, I decided I wanted to be in Delhi and that is when Bay Networks offered me a position as a Country Manager to look after India and the neighbouring countries; these are the SAARC countries, which include Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan and others.

Then Bay Networks merged with a Canadian company called Nortel Networks. At that time HCL was a partner with Bay Networks and they asked me to go and head up their Canadian operations. So I went to North American and was based in Stamford, Connecticut initially. Then I went to Fairfax, Virginia, and then on to Toronto to set up their operations. Later, I returned here to India and became Vice President of Sales and Marketing for HCL COMNET.

## Current Responsibilities

Several years ago I decided that I did not want to get so caught up in the corporate world that I didn't have the energy later in life to share about the importance of living and working from spiritual values, and how to manage by those values. After teaching a course for the Indian Institute of Management and Research in Bombay, the Director of the school wrote a letter to our executive vice president about the course and how well it had been received. The executive vice president forwarded this letter to the president of HCL.

That in turn started a dialogue about what I most wanted to do for HCL, in relation to sharing my spiritual values and how to manage by those values. As a result, I ended up as head of the Center for Leadership and Management for HCL. I was very happy with this decision and felt that my prayers had been answered.

# SPIRITUALITY

## Spiritual View of Life

For me, spirituality is that state of “being what you were meant to be.”

I recognise that spirituality is different for every person. Spirituality for a religious person is to be lost in a personal God, or to be lost in a formless God, or meditation. Spirituality for a materialistic person is to be lost in possessions. Spirituality for a workaholic, or achievement-oriented person is to be lost in success. But spirituality for a “being” is to be lost in “being.”

Have you ever noticed that we are the only creatures who are called “beings”? We do not refer to any other thing or animal as a being. Our self-worth comes *in being* who we are, *not in doing* what we do, *not in achieving* what we achieve, *not in having* what we have.

In each category I just mentioned above, there is a careful and conscious detachment. In the case of the religious person he is definitely detached from the world. In the case of the materialistic person, he is definitely attached to the material, and therefore is detached from anything else. In the case of the workaholic, he is definitely attached to his work, so much so that he is detached to the natural relationships of a husband, or wife, or a child, or other people; because he is so task-oriented, he does not have the opportunity or time to be people oriented.

Whereas if I am a “being,” a spiritual being, and I do everything out of that, then the coordination factor is within me, it is not outside. I become attached to my inner being and detached from the outer world.

## Spiritual Theme

Connecting with God, the source of “being.”

## Distinction Between Spirituality and Religion

My spirituality shifted from the religion I was born into, which was Hinduism, to my faith, which is in Christ. When I told my family about my salvation experience with Lord Jesus, they were very upset. But I told them, “Look, I have not changed my religion. I am a Hindu by birth and I will continue to be a Hindu. Neither will I be changing my name. What has changed is that my faith is now with Lord Jesus and that is whom I want to follow. My parents are the same, and my clothes are the same. What has changed is inside me.” To put their doubts to rest I don’t plan to go into full time ministry or anything like that.

## Spiritual Purpose, Principles, and Values

When I connect with God, I have everything necessary for a life of productivity. All of this is my conviction to live and to share my spiritual values with others.

When I started doing research on spiritual quotient (SQ), I went from intelligence quotient (IQ) to emotional quotient (EQ) to spiritual quotient (SQ). Spiritual quotient measures the extent that you do what you do because of who you are, not because of your nationality, or title, or position in life. Who you are is your spiritual essence. The closer we relate every activity to our inner being, the higher our spiritual quotient is. SQ brings together my thoughts, intentions and activities and correlates them with

my inner being, my inner voice, my inner self worth. This motivation that comes from within will last. I really understand this, and I feel that my purpose is to share it.

Based on my spiritual outlook, my values include keeping agreements, giving respect, showing faith and confidence to uplift people, serving and satisfying people (customers, vendors, employees, etc.), taking responsibility, and giving people the freedom to make mistakes.

### **Consciously Growing Spiritually**

After my conversion to Christianity in 1979, I wavered back and forth about how to live my spirituality in everyday life for about two years. I would go to church and feel such love for mankind, but then I came home and hated my neighbour next door. I decided that I just couldn't keep living a life like that back and forth. Then I went to a conference where they were talking about a book that a Catholic priest wrote called *Practicing the Presence of God*. He shares in the book how he just talks to God – how it was a normal part of his life throughout the day. The people at the conference also talked about the pursuit of holiness in our everyday lives. In all of this I realised that I could live a better life just by being deeply spiritual. I don't have to have some external form of spirituality; I can actually put that spirituality to work in my everyday life.

In the Bible it clearly shows us that everything necessary for life and godliness is given to us. We just have to “be” and go back and connect to the source. For example, if this electronic equipment is not working, then I go back to the manual. When the manual does not explain all that I want it to explain, then I go back to the manufacturer. If I as a human being am not functioning well, then I go back to the manual, the Bible. If I don't understand the Bible, then I will go back to the manufacturer, God.

### **Spiritual Influences/Evolution**

I came to a deeper understanding of spirituality in 1979 when I was a university student. Until then I was practicing Hindu as my religion. My family comes from a group of people who believe that we are descendents of Krishna. But I came to recognise the issue of salvation at a far deeper level through a series of tragic incidences that happened in my family.

At the age of 10, I lost my father. Due to some family disputes over a piece of property, his brothers cast an evil spirit on him. He then became so tormented that he committed suicide. I kept asking a very close friend of my father's, “What happened? Why did he do this? Why did he leave us?”

Then another sequence of events happened in the next eight years that really had me start thinking about life after death. Four years after my father passed away, my elder sister got married and some money was given for her dowry. After the marriage, more money was demanded and she was subjected to mental persecution by her in-laws. She could not bear this and so she consumed poison and died. Two years after that, my aunty, who had been childless for 10 years, could not bear the curse of not having a child, and so she killed herself.

This brought me to question and to seek answers about how there could be an end to this misery, this suffering, and how to find salvation, which in Hindu terms is called moksha (liberation). I felt I needed to get answers to these questions. I started going to Hindu religious meetings to try to understand the various paths to spiritual liberation. I also asked, “Is this a result of my sin or somebody else's sin?” There seemed to be so much evil in my family.

Then in July of 1978 my younger sister was diagnosed with cancer. She was told it was terminal and that she had four months to live. When I heard that I felt ashamed that I was living and everyone else was dying. I ran away from home with the intention of committing suicide. However, I could not follow

through with it because I did not have the answer to my question of “where will I go after death”? None of the scriptures that I read gave me a definite answer.

About three months after my sister passed away, I was still in this confusion and decided that enough was enough. I got a rope and decided that it was time for me to end my own life. I was attending a Christian college and had a New Testament Bible in my room, but since I felt it was for Christians I had never read it. For some reason on that day, I decided to read it. I found an index of where to find passages to help you when you have a specific need, such as when you need peace, or when you are feeling sad, and so on.

My name is Anand, which means ultimate bliss. In fact, it is the culmination of peace, bliss and joy. I knew that my need of the hour was peace so I looked up the passage that it referred to. The verse was John 14:27, “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give as the world gives. Do not let your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

I said to myself, this is a very strong, very assertive and confirmative statement. I knew what peace the world gave, but this was not that. This is a different peace: this is God’s own peace. Then Jesus said something very important to me in that moment, “Do not let your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” This felt like everything I was looking for in one package. It was very definitive.

Suddenly even some of the words in the Christian literature I had read previously came alive for me. I realised that Lord Jesus was saying that he had come so that I could have life at its fullest, so that I could be full of life, which is what I needed, especially at that moment. I got really excited and decided to postpone my decision to take my own life. I decided that my death could wait. I needed to explore this.

I thought that I would like to pray to this God. Again, in my tradition as a Hindu I had never prayed directly; I had to give my petition to the priest and then he would pray. But this time I decided to make an exception and so I prayed. I basically said, “Dear God, you are a Christian God and I am a Hindu, and I want to know more.” I also thought I should include a lot of “thou’s and thee’s” so it would sound like a real prayer.

This happened when I was 20 years old. Since then the Lord has been wonderful, even though there has been some opposition from my relatives and friends.

## STORIES OF SPIRITUAL-BASED LEADERSHIP

### First Story – Understanding inner control during an extremely difficult situation

I must give you a personal example of how I responded in an extremely difficult situation by connecting with my spirituality – an example which can also be applied to work situations. A little more than two years ago, my son met with an accident: a fully loaded car drove over his right foot. It caused a lot of damage to his foot. My wife rushed home from work in order to take him to the hospital. I was travelling in Bangalore and received a call that this had happened, so I had to catch a flight back to Delhi.

Everyone who knew what had happened wanted to stone the driver; they wanted to beat him. My wife took control of the situation and said, "Listen, this is our child. Please let us take care of it." This driver was pleading with my wife not to make a police case because then he would lose his job and would not be employable again.

When I arrived in Delhi I went to the operation theatre and there was my wife, along with the head of HR and vice president of operations from our company who had also come. One person had paid the bill and one person had arranged the doctor. My entire company was involved, even though it happened after office hours and outside of the company business. The vice president of customer support and his wife had also come to be of support to my wife, and his elder daughter went to be with our daughter at home.

When I came, everyone was there and their immediate reaction was one of anger and wanting to know what had happened. For me, I simply asked the doctor two questions: "Will there be any irreparable damage? How long will he take to recover?" That was all I asked. In all of this, I had also called the pastor and he had come. After talking to the doctor, I looked into my wife's eyes and without words I just said "Thank you" to God. Then I looked at the pastor and said, "Let us thank God for this situation." My colleagues said, "What is wrong with this guy? Here is his boy who has suffered and by that time had had two operations, and he wants to thank God. For what?" So I went on and prayed, "Lord, thank you for this situation. We want to thank you for preventing a greater damage."

In all of this, my wife was not crying or throwing a tantrum. She had the presence of mind to keep her focus on and take care of our son, even though it was a very emotionally draining situation. Instead she took control of the situation as a practical person. When I came we were both in complete control. We kept focusing on our son, to support him. Everyone else wanted to focus on what happened, on the driver, on everything else except our son.

Delhi is a very vindictive society, if you do something people want to make sure that you pay for it. Afterwards, my neighbours all got together and said, "Forget the driver, you must go after the owner." We told them that we would take care of it. The owner of the car came and apologised and offered to pay for the damages. I told him, "Take your money and go back; we don't need your money. Whatever you do, will not be able to pay back the flesh that my son lost, or the two inches of tendon that my son lost. Recognise that this situation was not in your control or in my control. It was in someone else's control. However, I want you to recognise that you have a role in maintaining order and discipline. I want you to incur a cost, and the cost I want you to incur is to first go to the community association and apologise to them, that you have been irresponsible in this community and you have let your car driver run over a small boy's foot. I want you to put that apology in writing and to feel the pain. Then I want you to put boards all over the streets in the community that say 'Children at Play. Drive Carefully.' You write these boards yourself and put them up." Our neighbours

had never heard of anything like this being imposed. They were used to using this as an opportunity to receive large amounts of money for damages.

The doctors warned us that this accident could cause our son psychological problems, because at the age of 6 he had gone through such a traumatic experience. We prayed, and we knew that we were maintaining an inner control of ourselves in this situation. He was in the hospital for three months, and one day we opened his diary – a small spiral book that he used to scribble things in. He had written four diagrams. One was a car and a boy with the words “no hurt.” Then there was one with the car close to the boy and he wrote, “hurt, car over leg, blood and flesh comes out.” He wrote this in a positive manner and was able to relate to his own experience without going through the emotions. You should see him today. He is a very jovial boy.

This has become an example in our office. That situation was an uncontrollable situation, but we were in control. By being in control I mean: there is a sphere in which you have control and there is a sphere in which you do not have control. I am in control of my emotions, I am in control of my actions, I am in control of my intentions, and so on. I am not in control of others’ emotions, others’ actions, or others’ intentions. If I try to control that which I cannot control, then I lose control. So if I operate in this zone of control and expand this, it is what I call the sphere of influence. If I stay in this zone that I can control, then I can increase my sphere of influence. In my office, this has become an operating principle for responding to situations.

### **Second Story – Responding to a large mistake made by an employee**

At HCL, we had a situation in Calcutta where we were submitting a bid that was due the next morning at 10:00. This was a World Bank tender for 4-1/2 million US dollars. We worked all through the night to prepare the documents. We had to prepare three sets of the commercial bid and three sets of the technical bid. Everything was done, and we split up to check that all of the documents were correct. We gave the bid at 10:00, just at the time it was due. That day the bid was opened at 4:00 and it was discovered that our supporting document for the annual maintenance contract was not there. As a result we were disqualified.

The first reaction everyone had was to find the guy who made the mistake and sack him. However, I said, “No, there is no point in doing that. It was a mistake. If he did it intentionally, then yes, there is no reason for him to continue with the company. But if he did it unintentionally, that is a different matter. We all worked through the night, and who knows what happened at 4:30 in the morning?”

So, instead of getting angry and upset and sending nasty e-mails, I said, “Let’s take control of this situation and let’s see what we can do to salvage this situation. Let us focus our creative energy on supporting him, so that he has the initiative to stay on through the night when we have the next bid.”

This is what motivates people to go beyond the call of duty, to do what they are supposed to do. I took the lead and told them, “I am not getting angry, and so I am asking you not to get angry either.” I started to give them direction and ideas and told them to go to the evaluation committee and explain what happened and give the document to them in writing. I also asked them to tell the committee in writing that due to our inadvertent error the supporting document had been left out and request them to consider our secondary bid as our primary bid. The written law did not prevent the evaluation committee from considering this secondary bid.

After we submitted this written request, the committee said they would not honour our second bid. They said that they instead would follow another law which says that if you have not submitted a bid for a component, it will be assumed that your quote is the highest quoted figure from among the other

competitors. As a result, our quotation became costlier and we became out priced and were out of the race.

We received this information and again kept our focus on trying to find a solution. After some further research, we found out that the other competitor had also violated one of the specifications. They had quoted their bid in Indian rupees, whereas this was a World Bank tender that needed to be quoted in US dollars. We pointed this out to the committee and as a result they applied the rule that said a bidder must then use the highest exchange rate, plus a deemed export rate. So this premium was added and ultimately this vendor was disqualified. We won the bid and for that year it was the largest contract we received.

The moral of this story is simply this: we focused our creative energy not on the person who made the mistake, but on the process. The question that we asked ourselves was “what” went wrong, not “who” made this mistake. The customer also had a lot of respect for us because they watched us go through this process. We took the person who had made the mistake with us and admitted the mistake, and we all worked together to find a solution. The person who made the mistake and everyone else on the team was left motivated to work for the company, because now they know that if they do make a mistake their neck is not on the line.

The spiritual basis that I came from in this situation is that I knew that this person had not made this mistake intentionally. If I had berated him for being irresponsible, then I would be telling him that he is an irresponsible person. That would have demeaned my faith in him. So instead I focused on the process and showed him respect. I also gave him the liberty to do wrong.

### **Third Story – Solving the source of the problem**

There was a time when I had just moved into a new assignment and a vendor had not been paid because he had not supplied what he was suppose to have supplied. This vendor was upset because he had not received his money. This conflict had been going on for quite some time when I took this position.

My secretary received a call from this vendor, and she came to ask me if she should tell him that I was not there. While she had the receiver covered she told me what a nasty fellow he was, and how he was going to shout at me. While she kept the receiver down for a minute, I told her that I did not want to hurt her, but I wanted to take the call. I took the call and asked the man what I could do for him. He said that his payment had not come. I told him the truth, I said, “Sir, I have just moved into this position one week ago. Give me your details, phone number and invoice. I cannot promise you a payment; however, I can promise you that within the next half of hour I will tell you why your payment has not been made. Then we can see what we need to do so you can receive your payment.”

He shouted that everyone promised to call back, but no one ever called back. I said with a calm voice, “Sir, you have spoken to me for the first time; please give me that respect. If I don’t call you back then you can yell at me also.” In that half hour, I talked with my secretary, first about how she was avoiding rather than solving the problem. I told her that we must solve the cause of the problem and not just the symptoms. I said, “By your saying that I am not here, you are only solving the symptoms. We don’t want him to give up as a dissatisfied vendor. We want him to be a satisfied vendor.”

I then went to the accounts department and found out that he had short supplied an item. In less than fifteen minutes, I called him back and told him exactly what the facts were. I told him that if he supplied the item that was not supplied, then we would pay him. He said, “Sir, I don’t even want the payment now that I am talking to you. I want to thank you for giving me the full details. Yes, there was initially a short supply, but the reason I did not supply the full amount was because I talked with a

person in your company and he told me I would not be paid even if I supplied the rest of the order.” He supplied the item and got his payment; and my secretary increased her faith and ability to handle problems.

I did not shout back at this man the way others before me had. I basically asked for some time so I could fully understand the problem. Before the time I had promised, I called him and I told him the full details. So he got his job done and I got my job done. More importantly, I do not have to dread his call in the future, and my secretary does not have to dread his call.

So the values that I was leading from were transferred to both of these people. From this experience, my secretary gained a clear conviction to solve the problems and not the symptoms.

#### **Fourth Story – Creating the spirit of downsizing**

When the recession hit our industry, we all said that we did not want to downsize. We said that instead we were willing to go into the “spirit of downsizing.” Yes, our revenues had gone down, so we knew we must reduce our costs. We focused our creativity on how we could reduce our costs. One way we did this was to work longer hours during the weekday and not work on Saturdays. This allowed us to completely shut down the lights and air conditioning on Saturday, which in turn reduced this overhead cost. Finding creative ways to reduce our costs worked for us and we were able to ride through the recession without having to let any people go.

#### **Fifth Story – Aligning career with spiritual values**

In my former position as Vice President of Sales and Marketing, I kept realising there was so much to spirituality and to life. The more I read and studied the Bible, the more I found answers on how to manage stress, how to manage time, how to manage money, and how to manage people. I continued to find so many things. As a result, I decided that I did not want to get so caught up in the corporate world that I didn’t have the energy to share my spiritual values and how I follow them as a manager.

I did not want to leave my job, so I began thinking about how I could create the opportunity for doing this. I realised there were a lot of management schools that were already calling me to come and give 1-to-2 hour lectures on topics such as leadership and values-based communications and management. When I looked at what I was doing closely, I saw that I was spending about 20 hours per trip, given my round-trip travel, to go to these schools and give these short talks. I decided that was not good for me and was not the best I could do for the students. So I told them, “Let me create some one-day, one and a half day, or two-day workshops for you where we can do some more intensive work.”

I did this for the Indian Institute of Management and Research in Bombay, with a workshop on communication. Most courses speak of communication from the outer view, which to me is the external manifestation of something much deeper. For me, true communication comes from expressing what is in your heart with full integrity. More importantly, even when you are not speaking in words, your non-verbal communication is there and it’s more powerful than words.

I spoke to them for two days on this subject of communication and the Director was very excited. He wrote to our executive vice president and told him what a great experience it was for me to come and deliver this workshop. In his exuberance he stated in his letter that they wanted to offer me a consulting faculty position.

The executive vice president forwarded this letter to the president of HCL and unfortunately it caused a lot of difficulty. The president was basically ready to take a strong action and tell me that I should

stop this type of teaching and training outside of the company completely. Then the vice president intervened and told him, "Listen and just think carefully before you take any strong action. Training is Anand's passion, preaching is his passion, and coaching is his way of life. You cannot stop him from doing that; he has so much to share and offer. The moment you stop him from doing this he will leave." The president responded that he didn't want me to leave and he didn't want to put a restriction on me that would have me leave.

At first, I told the president that I would not do any more training. But the evening after that meeting I really prayed to the Lord. I knew that the training I was doing was for the good and many people had been blessed. So many managers had told me that they had not seen this view, this dimension of spirituality. I had created modules on time management and stress management and used verses in the Bible to illuminate how to live them in a spiritual way. I could not imagine a life of not doing this type of teaching and training.

During this dialogue process with the president, I realised something very important. My core competence was living a life of spirituality and then translating my life's experiences into something I could teach to others and train them to implement in their own work. I realised that when I worked based upon my core competence, I was able to find a way to bring it to my work in a productive way.

The president called me back in the next day and the first thing I said to him was, "I want to take back my words that I will not do any more training because it is a conflict for the company. I cannot do that. I assure you that if you give me your favourite key responsibilities I will fulfil them." As I spoke to the president I was fully prepared to quit if I needed to. After listening to me they asked me what it was that I wanted to do. I told them that I wanted to be involved in this type of training in a greater capacity. So we went back and forth for one week discussing what it was that I could best do in the company. As a result of all of this, I am now the head of the Center for Leadership and Management for HCL.

# LEADING A BUSINESS FROM A SPIRITUAL BASIS

## Defining and Measuring Success – for Career and for Organisation

I know that the ultimate success of a person is not measured in terms of their intelligence quotient (IQ) or emotional quotient (EQ), but in terms of their spiritual quotient (SQ), which to me is also their “success quotient.” I may be very low in my IQ. I may be moderate in my EQ. But I can still be a great success if I am high in my SQ. My intellect is a function of my age. My emotional reaction is a function of what is going on in my world. A reactive person is one who reacts to a situation; a pro-active person is one who controls a situation. Spiritual quotient is beyond all of this. It is the inner spirituality that lets you be a practical person, driven by your inner being.

Success as a leader is achieving what you have predetermined to do. Now what you predetermine to do is not your function alone; it is a collective, mutual concurrence with everyone involved. I do not determine success unilaterally; I determine it as a function of the environment, which includes people, colleagues, team members, and the organisation. I make a predetermined objective and when we achieve that objective, both individually and as a collective, then to me that is success as a leader. This definition comes from my inner understanding of spirituality.

If I were to define success from my materialist, ego-centred view of success it would be that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line – and it’s too bad if there is somebody in between. Instead, for me as a leader, it is getting the collective participation and the collective win of everybody who is responsible in the system. It also involves motivation, inspiration, delegation, empowerment and collective ownership.

## Developing an Organisational Culture

For me, what is important is the *internal* motivation, not the external motivation. I bring lots of people together and make it a collective process, so that everyone is responsible and participates in the success. I don’t come to the office to enjoy myself alone. I come to the office to enjoy others. I come here to enjoy the system and to contribute to the system. As a result of my contribution of being, I am inspiring others to contribute their being and as a result, the organisation’s being is enhanced. This is true service. When I focus on my being and the others focus on their being, then all the rest becomes incidental.

My desire and dream is to take this same kind of vision forward to the one hundred managers in our organisation. Today these managers come to me for training modules; what I want them to discover is the spirituality that is within them and have them manifest it in the way that they know best. Then, this movement can be passed along.

Some of the leaders in our organisation have the spiritual understanding of servant leadership and the entire concept of spiritual leadership. As a result, that has led to a culture where responsibilities are not *given*; rather, responsibilities are *taken*. This rule is what servant leadership is about. For example, if I walk into this room and see that my cup has not been taken, I do not yell at the canteen guy. What I do is take the cup to the tray where he can collect it. So what happens is that I take the responsibility for the cup. What does it take for me to take that cup myself? Yes, the traditional system says that if I take the cup, then it spoils the guy and he won’t fulfil his responsibilities in the future. But what actually happens is, when he sees me do this, he does not have the courage to let the boss do his cleaning for him and so it motivates him to do a better job.

Instead of complaining that there is a knock on the door, you go and open the door. If you see that someone is not doing something that you want done, you do it. Here in our organisation we only listen to complaints from our employees when they cannot do anything about it. If they can do something about it, he or she had better do it.

Another change that occurred for me as I began to live a deeply spiritual life was my relationship with my subordinates. My concepts of empowerment changed, my concepts of interpersonal relationships changed, and my concepts of leadership changed, all as a result of studying the Bible and getting deeper into the spiritual aspect of life. I don't think of them as subordinates – I think of them as my co-partners in accomplishing the mission that we have together. It's not that I have a mission and they do their job in order to help me fulfil my mission. I strongly believe that real change does not happen from the outside; it must come from within.

When I hire someone I tell him or her, "If I knew what it was that you needed to do, I would not be hiring you. I want you to apply your thinking, your opinions. At the end of the day you know more about your job than I do." I give them the freedom to do what they need to do to produce the results that they need to produce. Everyone is taught to think for themselves, rather than going strictly by the rulebook.

### **Role of Business in Benefiting the Local Community, Nation and Society as a Whole**

From a spiritual perspective, the more people realise that they are part of the problem, rather than thinking everyone else is the problem, then we will come nearer to important solutions. This may sound philosophical, but it is actually very practical. We have seen this work in our company here and we practice this in my home. The rule in our home is: whatever we see that is not done, we do it. That takes less effort than shouting. If I make others wrong, they can also make me wrong, so where do we get from there. Instead, we own the system and say let's do something about it. If this can happen in a family, it can also happen in a larger context, like a company, a district, a society.

# BEING A SPIRITUAL-BASED LEADER

## Relationship with Major Stakeholders

As I began to live a deeply spiritual life, I looked at everything in my work differently. I saw that when I was talking to a customer, I was not just selling him a product; I was serving him. I was serving him through the product, I was serving him through the after sales support and I was serving him through my consultative process of selling. This changed my whole way of selling and relating to people. The key to this is that my business must only be there to help my customer to improve their business as a result of my selling them what I am selling.

## Continued Growth as a Spiritual-Based Leader

What I would like to do personally is to go back on a continual basis to each one of the scriptures in the Bible, to each one of Jesus' actions and understand more of what it means. For example, when Lord Jesus washed the feet of his disciples I know what action he took. I also know in the first instance why he did that. But I do not know yet how the disciples got the principle of leadership. I don't know how that happened, even though later on these disciples became great leaders.

I want to understand this, so that I can reproduce this. That was one of the commands of God in Genesis chapter 1: "Be fruitful and multiply." If I were to paraphrase this I would say, "Be productive and then be re-productive." I have no right to be re-productive if I am not productive in the first place.

## Inner Processes that Guide Decision-Making

I do not think the saying "practice makes perfect" is correct. To me practice makes permanent. If I am not doing something correctly and I keep practicing it, I will only make permanent what is not correct. If I seek guidance and introspection from my inner being, from my inner spirituality, then that makes perfect. So practice does not make perfect, practice just makes permanent. If you know what you are doing from the inside, you will be perfect.

## Guidance and Advice for Aspiring Spiritual-Based Leaders

Sometimes you must focus more on the value-based leadership, instead of going deeply into the spiritual-based leadership. Most people can more easily recognise what is of value and can make sense of what they need to do.

You can do things out of conviction, or you can do things because you are convinced. When I am convinced, then I just do something because the value is clear and transparent, whereas conviction comes more out of a deeper experience.

If I first do something because I am convinced, then afterwards I will do it out of conviction because while I am doing it, I will recognise the value and realise how it will make my ability to manage or lead much more effective. When a person feels a conviction, then they have the ability to reproduce that same conviction in others.

Appreciation is a result of being convinced, but being able to reproduce what you believe in others will come as a result of conviction. In fact, a person may or may not even appreciate what they are doing, but they will go ahead and do it. Conviction can also be positive or negative. I am talking about

positive conviction from within. This is beyond age or status; I can pass on my convictions to my children, to my wife, or to my team members.

Jesus did not write a book; he did not found an institution; he did not found an ashram. All he did was pass on his conviction. Most of his twelve disciples died a martyr's death because they carried on Jesus' conviction. From that time onwards till today, Jesus' followers have been true followers because they have deep convictions. This conviction comes from an inner deeper realisation and not just an external convincing. It is not an easy step. You must move from coaxing, to cajoling, to convincing, to having conviction.