

Spirituality and Human Behaviour

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This article brings forth the importance of inclusion of Spirituality in human behaviour. At present, human beings have gained many things and have added many comforts to their life. But somewhere his peace of life had gone far behind leading to more of restlessness, stress and depression. There were many recent incidents of killing, suicide, corruption etc. which reflects the darker side of human being. The reason behind it seems to be vast enough. In the present environment human values are lost; no one cares for the welfare of others. This environment leads to more of greed, enmity etc. displacing the positivity of human behaviour. Thus, there is a strong need for every human being to raise his/her positive spirits. Hence, comes the role of “Spirituality”, the term in itself includes all the positive attributes of being one with others, thinking positively etc. To cultivate spirituality in one’s behaviour it requires a complete purification of mind, body and soul and inclusion of emotional components of compassion, empathy and humanity.

So, an attempt has been made to throw light on “Spirituality” as the most required ethical behaviour, as well as how it can be cultivated by human beings.

Keywords: Spirituality, Values, Positivity, Human Behaviour.

In a conceptual analysis by Tanyi, spirituality was viewed as broader than religion and involving human beings ‘search for meaning in life’. The definition that emerged was: “spirituality is a personal search for meaning and purpose in life, which may or may not be related to religion. It entails connection to religious beliefs, values and practices that give meaning to life, thereby inspiring and motivating individuals to achieve their optimal being”. Here spirituality seems to be primarily considered in an existential sense. Stoll described spirituality as: “Who I am — unique, and personally connected to God. That relationship with God is expressed through my body, my thinking, my feelings, my judgments, and my creativity. My spirituality motivates me to choose meaningful relationships and pursuits. Through my spirituality I give and receive love; I respond to and appreciate God, other people, a sunset, a symphony, and spring. I am driven forward, sometimes because of pain, sometimes in spite of pain. Spirituality allows me to reflect myself. I am a person because of my spirituality —motivated and enabled to value, to worship, and to communicate with the holy, the transcendent”. In accordance with these definitions, all humans are spiritual beings and need not be religious to be spiritual. Spirituality is individual, encompassing relational components and one’s search for

the meaning and purpose of life. Despite a large number of reviews on spirituality, for example, in the context of palliative care, nursing management, recovery from surgery and spiritual needs, there is a lack of clarity in research concerning differences in the views of spirituality and spiritual values in the context of nursing. Secondly, the word 'spiritual' is a synonym for 'existential' when discussing 'spiritual issues' in the sense of existential questions. Existentialist philosophers such as Kierkegaard, Buber and Frankl consider the experience of life, suffering, guilt, fear, freedom, responsibility, moral conscience and despair as spiritual. Buber argued that the spirit is not in the self, but expresses itself in an authentic communication between two or more human subjects, me and you. The fact that a human experience is spiritual in an existential sense implies that it is characteristic of the human existence per se. Thus, Barbosada Silva concluded that what is existential (spiritual) is also universal in the sense that it is considered to belong to all people at all times and in all places. Thirdly, the term 'spiritual' is used as a synonym for 'religious. Examples of spiritual and religious experiences include guilt, the need for reconciliation with God, the hope of eternal life and the meaning of suffering as an expression of God's plan for the human being.

The phenomenon of spirituality appears as a complex whole, constructed out of elements which are complementarily interrelated. Spirituality is a relational process which constitutes an original whole in which God and man are reciprocally related.

(1) The relational process can be viewed from the standpoint of the divine pole: God communicates himself; on the way to this divine self-communication man appropriates for himself God's truth and worth in order to become perfect in God. It can also be viewed from the standpoint of the human pole: humans in various ways prepare themselves for union with God in order to grow in the direction of perfection in God. The relational process is layered: the whole of human experience (the faculties, affectivity, praxis) is involved in it on a personal, social, and socio-cultural level (the perspective of experience). This is a phased process marked by several transitions.

(3) The relational process is mediated: there are forms which serve as intermediaries to take humans in the direction of God (forms of knowing, willing, acting, and so forth) and forms which serve as intermediaries to bring God in the direction of man (Scripture, sacraments, the neighbour, and so forth).

Spirituality awakens within a person when they attain a certain peace of mind. They become one with their body, mind and soul. When nothing scares or attracts them or when they don't easily get swayed away by human emotions, that's when a person attains spirituality. The spiritual state of mind can be very relaxing. It can guide a person towards greater happiness. An attempt has been made to through light on some of the unique characteristics of spirituality.

1. NOTHING SCARES:

When you are not scared of anything, but instead accept challenges and obstacles with an open heart and mind. If you have let go of the things that scare you, such as rejection, loneliness, failures etc. and only focus on grabbing the happy part of it all, then you are on the path to attain spirituality. People consumed by anxiety or dulled by depression have little scope to cultivate a spiritual path when they are under the sway of distorted thoughts endlessly being repeated over and over in their minds. These thoughts are mistaken for facts.

Spiritual development requires successive degrees of freedom based on the realisation that thoughts are not facts but simply transient mental phenomena, as indeed are our emotions.

2. AVOID GOSSIPING:

If gossiping or speaking ill about others disturbs you, then know that you have reached an elevated state of mind and engaging in judgements, criticism and gossip angers you. You try to develop practical ways by which you can develop serenity and quiet attitudes. One way is through your conversation. In a group when the conversation takes a trend that is upsetting, try injecting peaceful ideas into the talk. To have peace of mind, fill your personal and group conversations with positive, happy, optimistic, satisfying expressions. Saturate your thoughts with peaceful experiences, peaceful words and ideas, and ultimately you will have a storehouse of peace-producing experiences to which you may turn for refreshment and renewal of your spirit and it will be a vast source of power.

3. LIKE TO ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE:

The yearn to acquire knowledge and work towards achieving your goals is a sign that you are a spiritual person. It is not textual or monetary knowledge that interests you, but things about the world, emotions, spiritual processes etc. deeply interest you. Introspecting on a regular basis helps you to get in touch with your spiritual side. Vaughan (2002) suggested that spiritual knowledge can be expressed and cultivated by regular training and practices. Various spiritual traits emanates when a person is connected to his/her inner self. Spiritual traits such as acceptance, forgiveness, honesty, purpose, intuition etc. are embraced with three main dimensions of faith, hope and compassionate love.

4. KINDNESS IS SOMETHING YOU PRIORITISE:

A major sign of a spiritual person is that they are always happy and kind to others they don't criticise people. Instead, they always offer motivating and kind words, in hopes to make the world a better place. If you also believe in the same values, then yes, you are a spiritual person.

The benefits to mind, body and spirit are of cultivating compassion. With many of the findings evidenced through research, the list includes:

- Enhanced well-being (Gilbert, 2010).
- Enhanced psychological/mental and emotional health, as well as enhanced physical health.

(HH Dalai Lama & Cutler, 1998).

- Enhanced state of being overall. Armstrong (2011) suggests that: Those who have persistently trained themselves in the art of compassion manifest new capacities in the human heart and mind; they discover that when they reach out consistently towards others, they are able to live with the suffering that inevitably comes

their way with serenity, kindness and creativity. They find that they have a new clarity, and experience a richly intensified state of being.

5. MEDITATION HELPS ACQUIRE INNER PEACE:

Only a few handfuls of people have the ability to meditate with patience and a peaceful state of mind. Some people get distracted and only keep their meditation time limit to a few minutes whereas one should meditate for at least for 5 to 10 minutes. You will also realise that when you attain spirituality, you will find inner peace, when meditating, it will genuinely make you happy and feel elevated. There is a simple solution to help us recognize ourselves as soul and thus function as a whole human being. That technique to connect with our soul is through meditation. In the stillness of the meditation practice, we withdraw our attention from thoughts of the world, our body and our mind. When we sit in silence, we experience our soul. As we identify with the soul, we then begin to perceive through our spiritual awareness. We gain awareness of the answers to those questions that have been perplexing us through our life. We begin to understand that we are more than the body and mind: we are soul, filled with spiritual gifts far more valuable than any we can attain in this world. We become at peace because we learn the answers to the mysteries of life and death.

6. EXPLORING UNIVERSAL THEMES:

Spirituality involves exploring certain universal themes – love, compassion, altruism, life after death, wisdom and truth, with the knowledge that some people such as saints or enlightened individuals have achieved and manifested higher levels of development than the ordinary person. Aspiring to manifest the attributes of such inspirational examples often becomes an important part of the journey through life for spiritually inclined people.

7. ABOVE EGO AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES:

The spiritual journey involves first healing and affirming the ego so that positive states are experienced; with secure self-esteem, belief in self-worth and a capacity for love and generosity, a person becomes less constrained by ego defences. An opening of the heart is an essential aspect of true spirituality. In this regard one may question the spiritual nature of masochistic religious practices such as self-flagellation, which is based on a belief in the wickedness inherent in the body rather than on any real connection with, and therefore compassion for, the body. This illustrates the fact that religion does not always serve the progress of spiritual development but may get side-tracked into practices that create pride, feelings of superiority etc. or else lead to a person becoming bogged down in unworthiness, guilt and shame - all of which emotions are commonly suffered by psychiatric patients. In short, religion will be taken up by a person in a way that inevitably reflects their own level of development.

8. BEYOND THE LIMITS OF ORDINARY HUMAN EXISTENCE:

Spirituality is the indefinable urge to reach beyond the limits of ordinary human existence that is bounded by unconscious forces and self-interest, and to discover higher values in ourselves and to live them consistently in our relationships and roles. It involves developing practices that aid us in rising and expanding, perhaps beyond the merely good to the transcendent, in the process of looking inwards rather than outwards for our own morality and guidance. Above all, it means becoming a more loving and compassionate human being, in thought, word and deed. The inflow of Higher power is of such force that in its inrush it drives everything before it, casting out fear, hate, sickness, weakness, moral defeat, scattering them as though they had never touched you, refreshing and re-strengthening your life with health, happiness and goodness.

9. OVERCOMES NEGATIVE SITUATIONS AT WORKPLACE:

Workplace spirituality in this case has a significant effect on organizational performance because when a person is able to feel the spiritual presence in the organization, they will be able to increase their work effectiveness and when they feel an attachment to their peer friends, feel loyal to the organization, they will be able to build a psychological approach to organization and become more productive towards organizations which of course will be able to improve organizational performance. On the other hand, significant influence between these two variables can also help organizations to overcome negative situations that occur due to the culture of working hours and other negative aspects of achieving employee personal goals. Workplace spirituality is also able to increase productivity and profitability of the organization by giving meaning to the work of their employees, feeling connected with the organization and also providing a place for employees to channel their personal beliefs.

10. GRATITUDE AS A POWERFUL FORCE:

The spiritual practice of gratitude is a powerful force that can be a state of mind as well as a way of life. Being grateful for what you have, instead of worrying what you lack enables to let go of negative thoughts and attitudes and to reduce stress, anxiety and depression. Being grateful increases feelings of love, knowingness and awareness (Eliopoulos, 2004).

11. BROADER SOCIAL VIEW:

One's relationship with others are also seen as a pivotal to spirituality. Hay (1989) suggests that spirituality occurs in the context of the communities in which one is a part. This gives a broader social view and alerts the reader to the notion that spirituality can acquire different perspectives according to the context of the individual. Many authors also give credence to the notion that the state of the self is largely reliant upon one's relationship with others. Renetsky (1979) identified an increased will to live in those who believed in themselves and others, and links between hope and one's relationships with others have been proposed by

Hinds (1988) and Millers and Powers (1988). This sense of relatedness and connectedness is also described in terms of harmony-harmony with the self, others and sense of relatedness to 'God' (Burkhardt, 1989).

12. SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE:

Spiritual Intelligence is the inner journey of human beings. It is the quality of self-realization that can be analyzed effectively by an individual. "Spiritual Intelligence" is the inter relation of mind and spirit that exists in all human beings. It can be fostered and increased with the help of regular mindful training and practices (Vaughan, 2002). The spiritual power comes from inner resources of an individual that enhances resilience and encourage a sense of meaning from the comprehensive experiences of life leading to spirituality.

13. QUALITY OF LIFE:

"Everyone who is seriously involved in the pursuit of science become convinced that a spirit is manifest in the laws of the universe- a spirit vastly superior to that of a man and one in the face of which we with our modest powers must feel humble" (Albert Einstein). All religious teachings of the world spread the message of compassionate, love, peace and non-violence in the society. These scriptures teach significant lessons of life such as effective ways to control on one's senses and also to lead a contented life in this materialistic world. The reality of life is hidden in the power of true self i.e., "soul". To control the speed of thoughts, one need to control one's mind. It is a well-known example in Bhagvada Gita that the master of the chariot is the atman (soul) and chariot as a body; intellect a charioteer (driver), regulating the command mind and five sense organs. A wise person can integrate atman (soul) with the senses, the mind and the body and this state as enjoyer. Thus, a person who thrives in regulating the mind and creating a state of inner silence, ultimate peace, contentment, wisdom and bliss, is a spiritual person, who leads a virtuous life with true meaning and purpose.

14. BEAUTY CREATED OUT OF WOUNDEDNESS:

We can seek ways to embrace the transpersonal/ spiritual gifts that potentially lie in life's more difficult experiences. One such gift is Beauty. O'Donohue (2003) writes about the notion of beauty being created out of woundedness. He suggests that things in life that almost destroy us can also be the 'very things that want to talk to us' - even years down the line. He acknowledges both dark and bright sides to beauty, and that we can often (although not always) 'find slow, dark beauty' in those times when we are most in pain and despair. And he makes the link with compassion: Where woundedness can be refined into beauty a wonderful transfiguration takes place...compassion is one of the most beautiful presences a person can bring to the world and most compassion is born from one's own woundedness...The greatest evil and destruction arises when people are unable to feel compassion. The beauty of compassion continues to shelter and save our world (O' Donohue, 2003).

15. WISDOM:

Finally, we can think of wisdom as another transpersonal gift. There is something here about the wisdom that comes from an examined life, from increased self-awareness and insight, and what we can learn from our own life experiences. In the words of the Venerable Khandro Rinpoche (2000) The human heart is basically very compassionate, but without wisdom, compassion will not work. Wisdom is the openness that lets us see what is essential and most effective.

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