

Spirituality: A Much Needed Path for Global Peace & Well Being

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Abstract: *More and more youths becoming integral part of industrial processes and machines with sole aim to produce and sell products in bulks to boost the profits of their companies. The situation is, therefore, turning them into narrow minded population which cannot find mental peace and well being due to lack of basic knowledge of spirituality. There needs to be a greater recognition of absence of spirituality coursework in the educational curriculum as an academic-problem. To cope with the dilemma, it is necessary that every student of Higher Education must have at least preliminary knowledge about spirituality, so that they may truly become global citizens who might accept the criticism of their belief-systems as a praiseworthy thing like they accept the writings of the sacred scriptures of their own religions. Throughout human history, there have been people of faith, and people who do not believe in any Super Being. Problems occur when one side misunderstands the other. This article aims towards imparting preliminary knowledge of Spirituality, Religion, Belief about God, Religious Beliefs, Difference between Religion, Spirituality and Superstition, Experiencing God, Approaches to God to the students.*

Key words: *Higher Education and Spirituality, Social Remedy for well being, Types of Belief about God, Types of Religious Beliefs, Difference between Religion, Spirituality and Superstition, Beliefs about God, Experiencing God, Approaches to God.*

Introduction

The present era youths are either totally ignorant about the spirituality due to almost absence of Spirituality as a coursework in the pro-industry-curriculum of education or they have meagre knowledge of any particular 'belief-system' which was imposed upon them in their childhood by their parents. Both these extreme situations are not in good taste in the present era of globalization. These situations apprehend turning the youths into enemies of religion or transforming them into blind-followers of any 'belief-system'.

After completing professional or technical courses more and more youths are becoming integral part of industrial processes and machines with sole aim to produce and sell products in bulks to boost the profits of their companies and ultimately the economy of the country whereas they should not be merely the 'market-creators' but the responsible citizens of country.

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The situation is turning them into narrow minded population which cannot find mental peace due to lack of basic knowledge of spirituality. Resultantly they cannot turn themselves into broad minded, optimistic and visionary persons in the emerging global order.

There needs to be a greater recognition of absence of spirituality coursework in the educational curriculum as an academic-problem. To cope with this dilemma, it is necessary that every student of Higher Education must have at least preliminary knowledge about spirituality and religion so that they may truly become global citizens who might accept the criticism of their belief-systems as a praiseworthy thing like they accept the writings of the sacred scriptures of their own religions.

Throughout human history, there have been people of faith, and people who do not believe in any Super Being. Problems occur when one side misunderstands the other. This article aims towards imparting preliminary knowledge of Spirituality, Religion, Belief about God, Religious Beliefs, Difference between Religion, Spirituality and Superstition, Experiencing God, Approaches to God to the students.

Types of Belief about God

- Theism - In the broadest sense, is the belief that at least one deity exists. In a more specific sense, *theism* is a doctrine concerning the nature of a monotheistic God and God's relationship to the universe. *Theism*, in this specific sense, conceives of God as personal, present and active in the governance and organization of the world and the universe. As such *theism* describes the classical conception of God that is found in Christianity, Judaism, Islam and some forms of Hinduism.
- Atheism – Atheism is, in a broad sense, the rejection of belief in the existence of deities. In a narrower sense, atheism is specifically the position that there are no deities. Most inclusively, atheism is simply the absence of belief that any deities exist. Atheism is contrasted with theism, which in its most general form is the belief that at least one deity exists.
- Deism - According to deists, God never intervenes in human affairs or suspends the natural laws of the universe. Deists typically reject supernatural events such

as prophecy and miracles, tending instead to assert that a god (or "the Supreme Architect") does not alter the universe by intervening in it. This idea is also known as the clockwork universe theory, in which a god designs and builds the universe, but steps aside to let it run on its own.

- Henotheism - Henotheism is the belief and worship of a single god while accepting the existence or possible existence of other deities that may also be worshipped.
- Monotheism - Monotheism is the belief in the existence of one god or in the oneness of God. Monotheism is characteristic of Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sabianism, Sikhism and Zoroastrianism.
- Pantheism is a word derived from the Greek (*pan*) meaning "all" and the Greek (*theos*) meaning "God". It is the view that everything is part of an all-encompassing immanent God, or that the Universe (or Nature) and God (or divinity) are identical. Pantheists thus do not believe in a personal god. Pantheism denotes the idea that every single thing is a part of one Being ("God") and that all forms of reality are either modes of that Being or identical with it.
- Polytheism - It is the belief of multiple deities also usually assembled into a pantheon of gods and goddesses, along with their own mythologies and rituals. Polytheism is a type of theism. Within theism, it contrasts with monotheism, the belief in a singular God.
- Apatheism – It also known as pragmatic atheism or (critically) as practical atheism, is acting with apathy, disregard, or lack of interest towards belief or disbelief in a deity. Apatheism describes the *manner* of acting towards a belief or lack of a belief in a deity; so applies to both theism and atheism. An apatheist is also someone who is not interested in accepting or denying any claims that gods exist or do not exist. In other words, an apatheist is someone who considers the question of the existence of gods as neither meaningful nor relevant to his or her life. Apatheists acknowledges that any amount of debate can neither prove, nor disprove, the existence of one or more deities, and if one or more

deities exist, they do not appear to be concerned about the fate of humans. Therefore, their existence has little impact on personal human affairs and should be of little theological interest. Atheists hold that if it were possible to prove that God exists, their behavior would not change. Similarly, there would be no change if someone proved that God does not exist.

Types of Religious Beliefs

- Pluralism - People with pluralist beliefs make no distinction between faith systems, viewing each one as valid within a particular culture.
- Syncretism - People with syncretistic views blend the views of a variety of different religions or traditional beliefs into a unique fusion which suits their particular experience and context
- Exclusivism - People with exclusivist beliefs typically explain other religions as either in error, or as corruptions or counterfeits of the true faith.
- Inclusivism - People with inclusivist beliefs recognize some truth in all faith systems, highlighting agreements and minimizing differences, but see their own faith as in some way ultimate.
- Humanism – Humanism specifically with a capital H to distinguish it from other forms of humanism) embraces human reason, ethics, social justice, philosophical naturalism, while specifically rejecting religious dogma, supernaturalism, pseudoscience or superstition as the basis of morality and decision-making. It posits that human beings are capable of being ethical and moral without religion or a god.

Difference between Religion, Spirituality and Superstition

- Religion and Spirituality - Religion implies a particular faith tradition that includes acceptance of a metaphysical or supernatural reality, whereas spirituality is not necessarily bound to any particular religious tradition. Thus William Irwin Thompson suggested that "religion is the form spirituality takes in a civilization." Those who speak of spirituality outside of religion often define themselves as "spiritual but not religious" and generally believe in the existence of different

"spiritual paths," emphasizing the importance of finding one's own individual path to spirituality.

- Religion and Superstition - Religion is age old since the civilization came into existence. It began when human's brain advanced to realize to have faith, and worship the systems of the society. Human lived in small groups, regulations and systems were formed to maintain discipline in the group. So religion is a system of belief in society. Religion is based on faith, belief are defined as including philosophical beliefs, such as humanism, and guiding the humanity, showing a good way. A superstition is anything that people believe that is based on myth, magic, or irrational thoughts. They are beliefs that are steeped in lore or tradition, and it is usually difficult to pinpoint the exact origin. Superstitions are also known as old wives' tales, legends, and traditions. They may involve animals, graveyards, ghosts, inanimate objects, or even other people.

Experiencing God

- Through Faith – For many people, the experience of God is something that happens to them, not something they seek after. Many people are said to have a natural relationship with God. The attitude of faith is said to invite God's presence in one's life. It requires trusting that God exists and is watching over the faithful.
- In the Heart - In the West, the conscience refer to a faculty hereby human beings come to know the basic moral truths. This faculty has been described as "The voice of God", because it represents God's universal law. The Eastern conception of this inward, divine self is variously called the "Atman", "original mind" or "Buddha nature".
- Through Reason and Arguments – The 'ontological argument' claims that God must exist based on the simple fact that the human intellect can conceive of such a supreme power. The "cosmological argument" claims that all being and movement cannot originate from nothing and therefore, must have an 'original cause' or impulse. The "teleological argument" or the "argument from design"

contends that the instances of order and purpose which can be witnessed within the natural world suggest it has been “designed”. There can be no such cosmic design without a Designer, who is God.

- The Via Negativa - Rather than asserting what God is, then, negative theologians discuss what God is not. The via negative is akin to the spirituality found in Eastern religions. The Upanishads state – “The Self is” not this, not that (neti, neti)”, it is finer vibrations of the divine spirit.
- Through Devotional Practice – By quieting the mind and stopping the desires of the body, and by focusing one’s attention and action towards transcendental things, a person becomes receptive to the finer vibrations of the divine spirit.
- Asceticism – Asceticism teaches abstinence from worldly pleasures and denying the body’s desires in order to prepare a foundation for God to dwell within the self- Fasting is a very common ascetic practice. Hindu ascetics do some extreme forms of devotion such as non-use of one leg and the holding of one arm in the air for a very long period of time.
- Prayer, Meditation, and Contemplation - Prayer is verbal communication to the divine. It involves praising and honoring the divine, confessing sins, sharing one’s thoughts and feelings, and requesting guidance and assistance. Meditation is about one-pointed concentration without involving any word or image. Its purpose is to first clear the mind of surface thoughts and feelings, then to attain higher spiritual states on the path to enlightenment. Contemplation is to focus the mind on a text, an image, or an idea.
- Service and Charity - Many religions encourage their adherents to care for the needs of the poor, the sick and disabled, widows and orphans. This service is called ‘charity’ in Christianity, ‘zakat’ in Islam and ‘dana’ in Buddhism.

Other Approaches to God

- Nature – Native Americans and Africans primal religions revere Mother Earth and all Her creatures as sacred. According to Christians “natural theology”, all people can have an indirect understanding of God through the created world of nature. Beautiful flowers and singing birds display God’s love.

- History – The Jewish people encountered God in the events of their history, notably the Exodus from Egypt. The Christian Bible testifies to the historical manifestation of God in Jesus of Nazareth. Belief in divine providence among the Puritans and American colonists meant that they saw God’s hand in the discovery of the New World as a heaven for dissenting believers who faced persecution in Europe.
- Art – People have created religious art and awe-inspiring architecture as expressions of the divine. The great cathedrals of Europe with their roaring arches lift the spirit heaven ward. Iconic religions such as Hinduism, Greek Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and later Buddhism use images both to express divinity itself and to tell stories of the saints.
- Music – It is another medium that inspires religious emotions. Hymns and songs praising God are, of course, a time-honored form of devotion.

Conclusion

In order to achieve the vast goal of global-sustainable peace and well being of the masses through the strength of educated youths it is necessary that every college whether government or private should include the Spirituality as a main Course of Study in their curriculums, besides as an additional or supplementary subject of all the streams of education whether Science, Commerce, Technology or Humanities. The end goal is that there should be peace and tranquility everywhere.

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