

Spiritual Consciousness – The Need of the Hour

Surat Priya Sethi^{1*}, Dr. Archana Satsangi², Prof. Ira Das³

ABSTRACT

Human beings since time immemorial are known for their advanced level of thought and the ability to attend to any stimulus for a long duration, unlike other animals. Humans have a far developed brain than other known species. Thus, this theoretical paper tries to make it evident that the human spirit has the ability to reach higher into the levels of consciousness and is thus meant for a higher purpose. Religion means the establishment of connection again with Supreme Source of Energy or Reservoir from where the spirit has come. Religious practices are pathways to achieve ultimate goal i.e. spiritual consciousness.

Keywords: *Consciousness, Spiritual Anthropology, Need for religion, faith and love*

The human being is broadly described as an amalgamation of biological, cultural and social dimensions according to Anthropology. In order to understand human life from a psychological point of view, one must include spiritual dimension to it. So, one must not keep science away from spiritual dimension; both lay cause and effect and share a strong link on a higher level. “Man is a spiritual being as he is connected with a world which is unseen, supernatural and belongs to the ‘spirit’. He is subjected to transcendental or mystic experience regarding his own self, the universe, and the supreme source. He is himself believed to be a conscious entity or soul or a part of the Supreme Soul. The Supreme Soul is variously known as the ‘supreme being’, the ‘creator of the universe’, the ‘supreme consciousness’, the ‘universal consciousness’, the ‘primeval being’, the ‘source of supreme bliss’, ‘infinite spirit’, ‘great intelligence’ and the like” (Sahay, 1986).

"The spiritual dimension of a man considerably influences his concept of self, basic attitude towards life ethos and worldview which in turn determines his behavioral form, nature and quality of the culture he practices. Besides componential elements, a culture differs from other cultures in terms of ethos, genius or pattern”(Sahay, 1998). The exclusively historical experience of a group, their social perception, ecology, and social environment has a lot to do in forming a culture and religion. Since religion and culture are most private to any individual it is desirable to study them to understand spiritual consciousness. However both culture and religion must not be confused with the grandeur of spirituality as religion and culture have developed from the historical experience of the subjects. Thus, both culture and religion may

¹ Research Scholar, Department of Psychology, Dayalbagh Educational Institute, Agra, U.P. India

² Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Dayalbagh Educational Institute, Agra, U.P. India

³ Professor Emeritus, Department of Psychology, Dayalbagh Educational Institute, Agra, U.P. India

*Responding Author

Received: March 5, 2019; Revision Received: April 1, 2019; Accepted: April 20, 2019

Spiritual Consciousness – The Need of the Hour

have orthodox or conservatism and they can only hint on the belief of the group. Spirituality is beyond both levels. At the same time, spirituality must be understood on the basis of personal experiences and not just by the rudimentary approach.

Spirituality refers to the search for and experiential elements of the sacred, ultimate meaning, higher-consciousness, and transcendence (**Friedman and MacDonald, 2002**). Spiritual intelligence (SI) emphasizes the abilities that draw on such themes to predict functioning and adaptation (**Emmons, 2000**). Hence, spiritual intelligence can be differentiated from spiritual experience (e.g., a unitary state) or spiritual belief. **Emmons (2000)** also mentioned four components of spiritual intelligence as ‘the capacity for transcendence’, ‘the ability to enter heightened spiritual states of consciousness’, ‘the ability to invest everyday activities, events, and relationships with a sense of sacred’ and ‘the capacity to engage in virtuous behavior’.

An important part of spiritual consciousness quotient explores post-autonomous ego development features, including serving others, compassion for the self, transpersonal experiences, Ego as object/construct. Simultaneously the spiritual factor was developed by including the participatory understanding of spirituality: "the spirituality of persons is developed and revealed primarily in the spirituality of their relations with other persons"(**Emmons, 2000**).

Studies have shown that spiritual consciousness is very important for a healthy mind and a healthy physical self. **Mishra and Vasishth (2014)** suggested that Spiritual Intelligence has an influence on the quality of life and success for Adolescents in the 21st century. They also believed that it needs to be understood in order to improve their lives as it improves thinking and mental abilities. It can also be understood from their work that spiritual quotient enables a person goal achievement and problem-solving.

A study conducted in the UK by **Anand, Jones & Gill (2015)** showed that though data did not reveal a significant relationship between undergraduates’ spirituality, health and life satisfaction yet students view spirituality in a positive light and consider it an important issue. A great possibility is the way research is being held in understanding the advancement of spirituality. According to **Kumar (2013)**, there are broadly two approaches; namely eastern and western and their methodology of understanding spirituality lies in being subjective or objective respectively. The Eastern approach mostly lies in being inward or inner experience and the west desires to be rational and intellectual. It is here where the involvement of quantum physics is understood. **Chopra (2017)** suggested that the quantum **physicists** believe that the biggest mystery of our own existence is us. Quantum reality; at this level, it is believed that there is no matter ie. what is believed to be tiny particles are basically waves of potential which when collaborate result in various potential outcomes. This reality does not exist in space and time rather space and time exist due to it. It is this potential energy which allows infinite consciousness and creativity.

It may also be concluded that this Quantum potential allows us to gather ourselves into human form and thus the only way one is able to transcendent by meditation. Our thoughts, emotions and experiences make our true identity. In the end, rather than thinking subjectively or viewing the world from one’s perspective only may lead us nowhere. **Durkheim (1893)**, a famous sociologist, also explained the concept of collective consciousness. He suggested "The totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of a society forms a determinate system with a life of its own. It can be termed the collective or creative consciousness."

Spiritual Consciousness – The Need of the Hour

Religion plays an important role in guiding an individual toward spiritual consciousness. However, following rituals in religious practices may not be considered equivalent to spirituality. Being conscious spiritually not only makes the soul wise but also it is the destination which an individual must achieve.

The idea of spiritual consciousness is similar to the idea of 'self-transcendence' (Maslow; 1969). The goals of all religions may be alike but the chosen path influences one's belief and superstitions. These superstitions may be faulty learning which has lost value with the increment of new technology. Creating a religious path is important as it lays down guidelines for the followers. It reduces unnecessary questions. But this path may lead to orthodox beliefs and may be followed without much consideration of today's changed circumstances. Since most of the people are conformist, the earlier followed repetitive behavior turns to practice or convention and family customs. Few customs benefit the society but if they do not mold with the time they become orthodox thinking, stereotypes or mental set. The paper also aims to focus on the goal rather than the path chosen as it will not only give the luxury of open mindedness but also the wholehearted acceptance of one's and other's religious differences. India being a secular country can greatly benefit from the ideology as the country is an amalgamation of various religions and cultures. The beauty of any secular country lies in its vibrancy.

Maharaj Sahab (2009) suggested "The apathy which manifests itself amongst the most intelligent classes, especially amongst scientific men, in respect of religion, is due to the fact that religious matters are more or less shrouded in sentimentality, mysticism and dogmatic faith, and are void of that practical and matter-of-fact research which distinguishes a scientific study"

Deli (2017) suggested that "emotions form in the mind with the participation of the entire body. As emotions affect the body, the muscles, and hormonal system; the body, its muscular and hormonal system, in turn, influence our emotions, but the other way around. So emotions are primary". Thus it can be said that the diverse emotions of the human mind get sorted with the help of consciousness or when the being becomes conscious of the emotions. The entire body participates in the formation of emotions. Thus, the emotions are positive in nature they produce a healthy conscious experience. It is thus indispensable to gain a healthy body and mind for an alike conscious experience. Controlling emotions is primary before one reaches spiritual consciousness. Untamed emotions can lead to dis-balance in the autonomic system and hormonal system. Acetylcholine presence is essential for calming epinephrine and norepinephrine. There should be a balance between the sympathetic and parasympathetic system and then only can immune system get balanced. The balance is very delicate between the emotions and the immune system. They both control each other. Most psychological therapies and cognitive restructuring become possible only when the receiver is a calm patient and receptive. Biology submits that both epinephrine and norepinephrine are responsible for 'fight or flight' response and it is due to the release of Acetylcholine the body again reaches a state of balance.

Emotions influence our actions and are often governed by our values and morals. These morals become deciding factors of how we perceive varying situations in life. Thus, whenever riots or terrorism on the basis of religion happen, emotions related to destruction arise causing upheaval in society. In a real sense since religion has only taught the value of love, faith and peace then humankind should respect and imbibe the very pillars of its religion or in other words spiritual consciousness. It is a must in such situations that people should

Spiritual Consciousness – The Need of the Hour

look inward towards peace rather than outward by displaying violent actions. The understanding of this level can only be developed when people are taught the value of secularism, free will, acceptance, open-mindedness and the need for not making religion an issue of egotism.

A culture plays an immense role in deciding an individual's goals and sadly for today the only truth people are aware of is that money is the cause of their happiness. Though, unfortunately, in the materialist world, people don't ever have 'enough'. Happiness, as a major goal, is disruptive in this form and it can never be achieved. It would be wrong to understand that there is absolutely no need for wealth. The solution has been presented in a beautiful Doha by **Sant Kabir**, the famous poet and social reformer (Kabir's Couplet, 2018):

*“Saiitnadijiye ,
jamekutumsamaye
Mai bhibhukhanarahun
sadhunabhukhajaye”*

‘God give me only that much in which my family can survive I do not remain hungry and the guest should also not go hungry.’

Also, the society should encourage the understanding that the goal of life is not happiness but rather reaching a point of stability and true bliss. Extreme emotions whether positive or negative (such as anger, sadness, and happiness) are never helpful and thus considered unfit for even decision making. **Teguh (2010)** stated, "Never make a decision when you are upset, sad, jealous or in love". Thus it is highly unlikely that in that case, one should be able to achieve. The legion with God or be able to attain consciousness, the state of balance along with resilience should be a priority for each individual. Also, this is why one must focus on the need of becoming a wise soul. According to **Wanderer (2018)**, a wise soul can be described as following:

1. “The mature soul is beyond its desires and ambitions bound to shapes and forms.”: A mature soul will always understand that in reality reaching goals or accomplishing is not true happiness and when one’s soul becomes mature. It may bring temporary satisfaction but not lasting happiness.
2. “The mature Soul has experienced the nature of desires”; A wise soul will understand that change is bound to happen and nothing is permanent.
3. “The mature Soul is able to abandon its materialistic desires and ambitions”: A wise soul understand that true happiness is in connection of souls rather than materialistic gains and that objects can only bring temporary happiness.
4. “The mature Soul, when the question ‘What do I expect from life?’ is posed, provides the following answer: I want to find the real center of my life in order to reach the lasting happiness afforded by the independence of shapes and forms, the joy of existence and the state of unity.”
5. “The mature Soul does not insist on itself”: The soul is pleased to surrender to the Great Will and eventually dissolves with it. It gradually abandons itself ie his/her ego understanding that consciousness has no shape.

The immature Soul is always full of desires and thus cannot think beyond worldly pleasure. Thus, emotions play a huge role in making an individual conscious as it allows a person to think and rationalize and once an individual rationalizes and thinks beyond his emotions he/she becomes a wise soul. The journey towards a wise soul starts when the person

Spiritual Consciousness – The Need of the Hour

questions everything and understands how and why other people think or how they make choices. It is when the individual understands that people make choices in accordance with their perspective and thus this is how individual differences take place.

CONCLUSION

The human form is the most cherished, wished and valued among saints for its capability and capacity to be able to transcend on a higher spiritual level. Thus, maximizing its utility is important. Often the undervalued human form's ability can be used to maximum potential with the help of meditation. Humans have the ability to feel, emote and understand and that is what makes the human form incredible and important. Also, from a research perspective it is must that spiritual consciousness must be viewed from all possible angles and not just psychological or from the school of physics. It is of extreme importance to view the concept with widened horizons of not only the various schools of thoughts but also with a liberal mind. Subjective experience must be given importance since it will help portray the inner most experiences of an individual.

McKenna (2012) suggested that **“Our world is in crisis because of the absence of consciousness.”**

REFERENCES

- Anand, V., Jones, J., & Gill, P. S. (2015). The relationship between spirituality, health and life satisfaction of undergraduate students in the UK: An online questionnaire study. *Journal of religion and health*, 54(1), 160-172.
- Chopra, D. [Infinite Possibilities] (2017, Aug 30). What is Consciousness?[Video File] <https://www.facebook.com/1975293189394717/videos/1975297026061000/>
- Déli, E. (2015). The science of consciousness: How a new understanding of space and time infers the evolution of the mind. Self-published. USA/Hungary.
- Durkheim, E. (1893). 1964. The division of labor in society. Trans. WD Halls. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Emmons, R. A. (2000). Is spirituality an intelligence? Motivation, cognition, and the psychology of ultimate concern. *The International Journal for the psychology of Religion*, 10(1), 3-26
- Kabir's Couplets; <https://www.bharatdarshan.co.nz/magazine/literature/226/kabir-ke-dohe.html> as on 15.12.2018
- Kumar, P. Foreword; In, *Spiritual Consciousness*. Ed. P. Sriramurti, Prem Prashant and Anand Mohan, New Age Books, New Delhi, pp. 351-355(2013).
- Macdonald, D. A., & Friedman, H. L. (2002). Assessment of humanistic, transpersonal, and spiritual constructs: State of the science. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 42(4), 102-125.
- Maharaj Sahab [Pandit Brahm Sankar Mishra Sahab] (1960). Discourses on Radhasoami Faith. Agra, India: Radhasoami Satsang Sabha, pp. 1
- Maslow, A. H. (1969). Various meanings of transcendence. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 1(1), 56-66.
- Mishra, P., & Vashist, K. (2014). A review study of spiritual intelligence, stress and well-being of adolescents in 21st century. *International Journal of Research in Applied Natural and Social Sciences*, 2(4), 11-24.
- McKenna, T., (2012). Terence McKenna: The absence of consciousness; <http://vineofthesoul.com/terence-mckenna/> as on 05.03.2019
- Sahay, K. N., (1986). Dharma and Purusartha and Its Relevance to the situation of Cultural Crisis in Modern India. In *Journal of Social Research*, Vol. 28-29

Spiritual Consciousness – The Need of the Hour

Sahay, K. N., (1998). *Spiritual Anthropology?: The Spiritual Dimension of Man*. Ajay Verma for Commonwealth Publishers. pp. 2-5

Teguh, M. (2010). <https://quotefancy.com/quote/1784108/Mario-Teguh-Never-make-a-decision-when-you-are-upset-sad-jealous-or-in-love> as on 15.12.2018

Wanderer, M. F. (2018). 5 Universal Traits of A Wise Soul; <https://www.science-of-the-soul.com/index.php/2018/11/27/5-universal-traits-wise-soul/as> on 15.12.2018

Acknowledgements

The authors profoundly appreciate all the people who have successfully contributed in ensuring this paper in place. Their contributions are acknowledged however their names cannot be mentioned.

Conflict of Interest

The authors carefully declare this paper to bear not conflict of interests

How to cite this article: S P Sethi, A Satsangi, I Das (2019). Spiritual Consciousness – The Need of the Hour. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 7(2), 4-9. DIP:18.01.002/20190702, DOI:10.25215/0702.002