CLOVERLEAF

Journal of Education in Evolvement and All Encompassing Spirituality

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**JOURNAL OF EDUCATION IN EVOLVEMENT AND ALL
ENCOMPASSING SPIRITUALITY**

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Founding and Chief Editor: Sami Rafiq

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DEDICATION

Author:
Orest Bedrij

This Journal is dedicated to

You

My Absolute Love—the Light of the world

You

Gazing forth from every face

You

In Your infinite splendor and compassion.

Orest

WAKE UP TO YOUR TRUE NATURE

Author:
Orest Bedrij

Omnipresence, Omniscience, and

Omnipotence Is Our Natural State:

Wake Up, My Love, to Your True Nature;

Let Your Eyes See Eternity.

From ignorance we come to belief.

Through belief we achieve knowledge.

With knowledge we reach understanding.

Understanding in deed is insight and wisdom.

Insight and wisdom in action is love and compassion.

Love and compassion in action is altruism and God manifest

Orest.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Author:

Dr. Shiv Talwar, President, Spiritual Heritage Education Network Inc.

Why Cloverleaf: Journal of Education in Evolvement and All Encompassing Spirituality?

The question as to 'why Cloverleaf?' ---is intimately linked with the question as to 'why its publisher, Spiritual Heritage Education Network (SHEN) exists?'

The answer for both questions is the same namely: ---the historic existence of grave human and environmental problems faced by humanity today.

Born in India in 1937, I was 10 years old in 1947 when the country was partitioned in two. The partition was based upon religion. A Muslim majority country called Pakistan was carved out of a Hindu majority India in the month of August in 1947.

India is and always was a pluralistic country where diverse people lived together in harmony, free to practice their own religions. They coexisted for centuries in 'peace' but, perhaps, they never succeeded in building lasting bonds of humanity between the different communities. As a result, unrest on both sides of the partitioned land resulted in large scale rioting, butchery, rape, and homelessness in a shameless orgy of religious hatred.

That identity madness that accompanied the partition affected me deeply moving me to discover and facilitate a possible solution.

We were told in 1947 by the so called 'civilised world' that the identity savagery in India was an act of barbarity by the uneducated hordes of India and things would improve with the advent of modern education. But has the human condition improved in India in the intervening years? Are human conditions any better in the 'civilised' world" where modern education originated and has spread far and wide?

Events between 1947 and now all around the world, indicate that the hearts and minds of humanity are no closer today than in the India and Pakistan of 1947. This is evidenced by the mental health crises all around us resulting in mindless shootings, rapes, murders, inhumanity and terrorism galore. The outcome expected of education did not materialize because the education which we have been pursuing fails to address the raising of human consciousness towards perceiving a common humanity. Instead it has fueled an endless greed for having more, rather blinding us to our humanity and fragmenting us in strong and conflicting camps of "us" vs "them" viciously mistrusting and conflicting with each other.

Modern science and technology have reduced the world to a global village where people travel far and wide to live in pluralistic communities and communicate across the globe with the speed of light, but the human mind is still a prisoner of the past where we lived in isolated and often conflicting communities each with their own tribal values. The human mind is way out of synch with the reality on the ground. Living together may be necessary to broaden the horizons, but it is not enough for the harmonious meeting of the hearts and minds needed, to live as human beings with love and compassion.

Today, humanity is fragmented into conflicting interest groups based upon identities defined by religion, culture, language, nationality, region, race, gender, gender orientation, color of the skin, and so on. The strong are hogging most of the resources and the weak are starving because we lack the fellow feelings to share. There is injustice and inhumanity all around. There are problems galore because of human fragmentation.

SHEN has been founded to take up the cause of helping humanity through an insightful education to rise above our limited identities in favor of a global human identity: we are human beings before we are anything else. We are one human family living in one wider global community sharing one common wealth. It is hoped that it will better prepare us to face the grave human and environmental crises that we face today.

Cloverleaf is being launched to disseminate the goals of SHEN.

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Spiritual Heritage Education Network Inc. (http://spiritualeducation.org)

Kitchener-Waterloo, ON Canada

September 12, 2016

EDITOR'S NOTE

Author:
Dr. Sami Rafiq

The pursuit of spiritual evolvement and enlightenment has become a source of hope and solace in today's world that is being shaken by violence, hate and intolerance. Our journal Cloverleaf is essentially a journey towards redressal, healing and harmony.

It gives me great pleasure to be part of the spiritual journey towards evolvement, hope, global harmony and peace exemplified by this journal and the Spiritual Heritage Education Network that supports it.

The articles in this first issue of Cloverleaf are about the concern for spiritual evolvement and education. The esteemed writers coming from different walks of life and from different cultures, feel and rightly so that the spread of Modern education in the East and West alike has done nothing to bring people closer in understanding and tolerance.

If Rabindranath Tagore the great Indian poet and Nobel Laureate wrote in the early twentieth century, in his poem "Where the mind is without Fear" dreaming about a world that has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls ---- we haven't gone much further in the twenty first century. Perhaps if one were to account for the spate of bloodshed around the globe and the murder of innocents, we are perhaps at the worst possible time in human history.

Poets, messengers, saints and evolved souls have come and gone but neither their examples nor the messages that they have behind have been able to undo the sorrowful state of things today and what is ironical is that in disputing over religion, gender, race and ethnicity, the very humane message of these enlightened ones has been lost.

The articles in the present issue of Cloverleaf serve as a reminder of those forgotten messages of unity and harmony.

In our section on Research Papers there are several papers that focus on spirituality in a detailed manner.

Richard Kropf in his article "Living in the Presence of God," has presented a detailed study of the belief in a Divine Being and the importance of seeing that Divine presence in every human being in order to foster peace, forgiveness and understanding.

Peter Lauricella and Sharon Lauricella in their article "Hitchhiking, Hospitality and Spiritual Communities," have taken up the metaphor of journey in spiritual evolvement. They have given a modern interpretation to the early sadhu, mendicant, troubadour or sufi, in terms of hitchhiking or travelling throughout the world for spiritual understanding and receiving hospitality from likeminded hosts.

Bob Chodos in his article "God of Israel or God of the Universe" examines Judaism and its sacred beliefs and finds the existence of a Universal God though different religions conceive Him in a different way.

Mona Negoita in her article "Why We Need to Unlearn Our Ways of Learning?" writes about the need to change the way our education system works so as to develop altruism, generosity and compassion in the young.

Dr. Rajendra Narain Dubey in his article "A Spiritual View of Life and Existence," dwells at length on the concept of spirituality and its presence in a human being in Vedic literature.

There are several thought provoking papers in the section on Personal Reflections on Spirituality too.

Sandy Milne in "Reflections on Education in Evolvement and All-Encompassing Spirituality highlights issues, goals and experiences related to education in All-Encompassing Spirituality.

Garima Talwar Kapoor in "Meta-Physical Wisdom in Today's Globalized World" reflects on rethinking Education in All-Encompassing Spirituality in today's age of technology.

Dr. V. N. Jha in "Spiritual Education to Discover the Meaning of 'I'" demonstrates how the Indian concept of education can liberate minds from narrowness and promote a state of all-inclusive broadness.

Dr. Ranjit Singh Bharaj in "Relevance of Spirituality in Today's Global Settings" talks about the practical applications and benefits of spirituality in the present day.

Sami Rafiq in "The Idea of Love and Compassion in Sufi Literature" has reflected on the idea of compassion in selected poems and short stories by Sufi writers.

George Rowinski's prose poem "What is "That"? is an invocation to the Divine to whom one can return again and again, for it highlights a spiritual quest in a poetic and mystical manner.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Shiv Talwar, the President of SHEN for giving me the rare and valuable opportunity to edit this journal. Working along with him has been a pleasure and a great learning experience for me.

I would also like to thank Rabeya who is working for a Ph.D degree at Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India, for her invaluable help all along the way.

Sami Rafiq

Aligarh, UP India

September 7, 2016

RESEARCH PAPERS

This section of Cloverleaf contains those articles which in the opinion of the editor are of the nature of academic research on all-encompassing spirituality …

LIVING IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Author:
Richard Kropf

"In Him we live and move and have our being."

About thirty years ago, someone who had heard that I had abandoned the rat-race of academia to live alone as a hermit in the northwoods of Michigan wrote to me asking how someone might go about becoming a saint. The only answer I could come up with at the time was that in my opinion the formula was really quite simple: it was to try to be as much as possible aware of God's presence in everything and to live one's life according to that awareness. And even now, all these years later, although far from being a saint, I am still convinced that it is as simple and as difficult as that – especially that second part, about the living up that awareness. This is especially a challenge in this modern age when there are so many distractions to keep us absorbed in the world around us. It would certainly be nice if it were possible to shut off all these distractions, and to some degree, if we have enough will power, we can do so. After all, there is no law that compels us to have to watch commercial TV or listen to all the racket that is broadcast over the radio. And I have a few friends who seem to get along in life quite nicely without any connection to the internet or who seldom if ever watch TV.

However, I'm not sure that fighting a defensive battle against all the possible sources of distraction in life is the most effective way of trying to become a saint. In fact, such a path of negativity seems to me to be the low road to sanctity compared to the high road of seeing God in everything. This is because the low road leaves us plodding through every twist and turn, confronting one obstacle after another as we trudge toward our goal, which is often obscured by the challenges that confront us. Thus, in the Gifford

Lectures given by the ecumenical theologian Raimon Panikkar back in 1981, we find the following reminder:

Let us only recall that the traditional religious exercise of the "presence of God" is not an act of our mind distracting us from giving due attention to the activity at hand, but rather is a discovery of the divine dimension in the act in which we are engaged. God's transcendence is only visible in his immanence. (Panikkar 2013, Lecture XII, A)

Thus, I am convinced, especially as a theologian, that the first obstacle blocking the high road of seeing God in everything is a faulty *theory* or inadequate concept of God. A theory, in the original Greek sense of the word, is a product of *theoria*, which is contemplation of the nature and actions of God (*Theos*) seen as the origin of all things. Thus, a God who is depicted in anthropomorphic terms – whether the high-culture Father-God of Michelangelo's fresco in the Sistine Chapel, or the low-culture references to "the Man upstairs" – both miss the mark wildly, even when corrected by theologian Carl Barth's transcendental insistence on God's being "totally other". Indeed, even if God is totally incomprehensible in human terms (a fact made all the more evident in the propaganda of the contemporary "New Atheism" movement) this does not excuse us from digging deeper into the theological tradition, particularly that informed or shaped by the classical philosophical reflection on the nature of being and existence.

When the evangelist Luke borrowed the quotation found in his Acts of the Apostles (17:28) with which this article began, he was drawing on a philosophical tradition that scholars have traced back to a poem said to have been composed by Epimenedes of Knossos, a 7th to 6th century BCE sage living in Crete. If so, Epimenedes seems to have been writing what he did to defend his belief in Zeus, the high God of the Greek pantheon, who was not just a deified but dead hero as the Cretans said he was, but the living source of our existence. Thus it was that St. Paul (according to Luke's account in Acts 17:16-34) quoted still another Greek poet, and saw this still largely "Unknown God" as being but another representation of the one and same God worshiped by the Jews and now by the Christians – and, of course, eventually by Muslims.

The same might also be said regarding religious consciousness in India and the Far East, as noted by R. C. Zaehner, an expert on Eastern religions, and the Zen philosopher D. T. Suzuki. Although Zaehner admitted that there is no clear concept of a creator God in the earliest Upaniṣads, nevertheless he quotes the Chāndogya Upaniṣad which speaks of Brahman as "He who consists of mind, whose body is breath, whose form is light, whose conception is the real, whose self is space, through whom are all works, all desires, all scents, all tastes, who encompasses all…" comparing this concept with Aristotle's idea of God as the "unmoved mover" (Zaehner 1960, 41).

Similarly, Suzuki , although he admitted that Buddhism never uses the word 'God', nonetheless used that same quotation from Epimenedes and wrote that

Buddhism outspokenly acknowledges the presence in the world of a reality which transcends the limitations of phenomenality, but which is nevertheless immanent everywhere and manifests itself in its full glory, and in which we live and move and have our being. (Suzuki 1983, 219)

If so, then this emerging monotheistic tradition seems to have been as old as, or possibly even older, than the stories found in the biblical books of Genesis and Exodus, at least in their written form, which biblical scholars date back to the 6th century BCE exile of the Jewish people in Babylon. And while much of the unwritten sources of the first five books of the Bible, is undoubtedly older, the fact is that the very first biblical books to be written, such as Joshua and Judges, and the stories about the earliest Hebrew prophets, amply illustrate that the ancestors of the Jewish people were still far from being unanimously monotheistic during that earliest period of their history. In any case, while it may be argued that belief in a single God is the most characteristic of biblical religion even back in an era when the world was generally awash in polytheism, still it was not entirely unique. In fact, as far back as the 5th century before the present era, the philosopher Xenophanes is said to have remarked, even when he lampooned the forms by which the multitude of gods were depicted by the various nations, that the only true God would have no form whatsoever.

All this becomes even more clearly seen during the 4th century BCE with the advent of the high classical period of Greek philosophy initiated by Socrates (d. 399) who was condemned to death on the charge of having corrupted the youth of Athens by his relentless questioning and his rejection of the polytheistic state religion. His pupil and spokesman Plato (d. 347/8), seems to have been more discrete and have spoken of divinity in more abstract and idealistic terms as "the One", "the Good", or as the creative power (the "Demiurge") that expresses itself in the production of the material world, while Plato's pupil, Aristotle (d. 322), proceeded in the reverse order, reasoning that the physical world of change can be only explained in terms of a first cause which he called an "unmoved mover", and which, although multiple in its expressions, is ultimately an entirely immaterial being that thinks everything else into existence. Thus Aristotle wrote:

And life also belongs to God; for the actuality of life is thought, and God is that actuality; and God's self-dependent actuality is life most good and eternal. We say therefore that God is a living being, eternal, most good, so that life and duration continuous and eternal belong to God; for this is God. (*Metaphysics*, XII, 7)

Given all this philosophical background, it is no wonder that one of the earliest defenders of Christianity, the self-described Christian philosopher Justin Martyr (d. 154), when asked to disclose at his trial where the Christians assembled, answered that it was "Wherever one chooses and can…because the God of the Christians is not circumscribed by place; but being invisible, fills the heaven and earth, and everywhere is worshipped and glorified by the faithful" (Schraff 1885, Justin, *Martyrdom*, II).

Nor was this insistence on the ubiquity of God confined to Christianity. It was over a century later that the Neo-platonist philosopher Plotinus (d. 270 CE), although not a Christian, nevertheless argued with mind-boggling eloquence that,

If God is nowhere, then not anywhere has He "happened to be"; as also everywhere, He is everywhere in entirety: at once, *He is that everywhere and everywise: He is not in the everywhere but is the everywhere as well as the giver to the rest of things their being* in that everywhere. (*Enneads,* VI, 8, 16)

I have italicized part of the above quotation for several reasons: first to get the main point across, and second, to emphasize the influence of Plotinus and his thought in the thinking of, and in fact, the conversion of Western Christianity's most influential theologian, St. Augustine (d. 430), who confessed that before he read Plotinus, he had been unable to grasp the concept of any immaterial being of any sort, much less of one on which the existence of all other beings depends. After this moment of enlightenment, it was Augustine who in his definition or description of God a "Being in itself" (*ipse esse*) was to set the whole future course of European theological thinking and spirituality. And even though Christian theology was to remain almost completely under the spell of Plato and Platonist idealism for the next seven or so centuries, even the great 13th century theologian, Thomas Aquinas, adhered to this basically Augustinian definition of God, albeit with a newly introduced dynamic twist under the rediscovered thought of Aristotle – reintroduced to the West thanks to the influence of the Muslim philosopher Averroes (Ibn Rushd). Thus Augustine's rather static concept of God as "Being" in and of itself became transformed into Aquinas' more dynamic description of God's primary attribute, which is to support his own act of being (*ipse actus essendi subsistens*) as well as the existence of everything else in the process.

However, lest the main and most essential point be missed in this history of what philosophers used to call (before they became distracted by more peripheral concerns) "ontology" – meaning the science of being – is that there is a vital and all important difference between being and existence, even though in everyday speech the two are generally confused, as noted by

philosopher David Bentley Hart (2013, 106-08). "Being", or "to be", is simply that – all by itself, dependent on nothing. "To exist" or "existence" are terms that combine two Latin words, *ex* meaning "from" and *sistere* (the Latin verb meaning "to stand"). Thus existence or to exist denotes or implies reliance on something or someone else for its being. So we might even go so far as to say that God doesn't "exist"; instead, God simply *is*. Without a clear distinction between being and existence, our understanding of our relationship to God, or perhaps to anything else, becomes hopelessly muddled, like that of the little child who, being told that we have been created by God, cluelessly asks, "But daddy, who made God?" Instead it is the other way around. Our existence is but a borrowing of God's eternal being, loaned to us for the short term of our life.

Or to make the same point in a more professorial way, one might quote the 20th century French philosopher Jacques Maritain who said that without the "intuition of being" one can never grasp metaphysics – hence will never understand the most fundamental question of philosophy or "Why is there something rather than nothing?" (Maritain 1966, 19).

Admittedly, this last question is tough to answer, even when one supposes, as did the ancient philosophers, for example Plato (in*Timaeus,* 51a) and even the earliest biblical authors, that there always was something or other (like the *tohu w'bahu*, or "trackless waste" of Genesis 1:2) that God or the "First Cause" acted upon. Even today, when the science of cosmology (at least when it sticks to the scientific method apart from speculative flights of fancy) seems to have established that before "the Big Bang" there was literally nothing, this concept of pure "Being" in and of itself is difficult to grasp. Perhaps this "intuition of being" is something like the *satori* or enlightenment sought by the practitioners of Zen, which even when experienced defies description. Nevertheless, without it one remains on the surface of things. In any case, if without it one can hardly philosophize, it is even more critical when it comes to theology or anything resembling a deep spirituality. Thus, without this grasp or awareness of God as the very "Ground of Being" – as the Protestant theologian Paul Tillich defined or described God

– we are in danger of marginalizing the whole concept of God, or at best, we are confined by the anthropomorphic descriptions of God found in the Bible and most other sacred literature. In fact, even Tillich's understanding of God as the "Ground", which seems to have been inspired by the 14th century Rhineland mystic and preacher Johann Eckhart, may still be too earthbound. Knowing now what we do about the origins of the universe, and the picture given to us by contemporary physics, I'm inclined to think that what a modern spirituality might need is a better understanding or update of the theology once taught by the 7th century Greek theologian Maximus the Confessor. In his view, although God's essence remains unknown, God's activity can be described in terms of an uncreated *energy* giving rise to the universe of created energies.

In much the same vein, Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson quotes the 17thcentury Hasidic Rabbi Moshe Cordovero who wrote:

The essence of divinity is found in every single thing – nothing but it exists. Since it causes everything to be, no thing can live by anything else. It enlivens them; its existence exists in every existent…Do not say, 'This is a stone and not God.' God forbid! Rather all existence is God, and the stone is a thing pervaded by divinity. (Cobb 2012,18)

Granted that the above quotation lacks the fine distinction between God's essence and his energies or activities, or between being and existence, nevertheless, I think it forcefully illustrates the point that both Rabbi Artson and I am trying to make, that the presence of God in everything (what modern process theologians call *panentheism* – as distinguished from simple *pantheism*, or that everything is God) is the dynamic core of existence.

Perhaps to better appreciate the power of God's presence in these energies or activity, we might turn to the implications of Einstein's famous formula, $E=mc^2$. If energy (E) is equal to mass (m) multiplied by the square of the speed of light (c), then it follows that mass, which is the amount of matter in any material object, has the potential of being converted into nearly unimaginable amounts of energy. For example, according to the PBS Nova

website devoted to exploring the implications of Einstein's formula, an ordinary paper clip, if we knew how to convert it into pure energy, would yield the equivalent of 18 kilotons of TNT – which is the approximate amount of energy released by the first atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945. Or there is the astounding estimation that a 2.2 pound chunk of anthracite coal, if completely transformed into pure energy, could keep an old-fashioned 100 watt incandescent light bulb (given enough replacement bulbs) burning for about 29 million years.

Obviously, given these comparisons, we are barely scratching the surface of a deeper reality when we try releasing energy from the fuels that we use to produce heat or energy in its various forms. In fact, all we are able to do (as expressed in the first law of thermodynamics) is convert energy that is in one form into another form. The same goes for matter or mass: according to the basic laws of physics, it can be neither created nor destroyed. Even when we employ nuclear energy in various ways, be it bombs or power plants, all we are really doing, even when we are splitting atoms, is releasing only a relatively small amount of the strong force that binds atoms together. A complete transformation of mass to energy, as described in the previous paragraph, appears to be beyond human capabilities – a good thing, as it has been estimated that the mass contained in a 60 ton building, if it were to be instantaneously converted entirely into pure energy, would be, if strategically placed, sufficient to split the whole planet Earth in half!

My point, in relating these examples, but without confusing God's uncreated energy with the created forces of nature, is to suggest that these fantastic amounts of nuclear energy locked up in the structure of the material universe testify to the creative power of God's presence. Add to this the sheer immensity of our universe, stretching at least 13.8 billion light years (186,000 miles x 60 x 60 x 24 x 365 x 13,800,000,000) in all directions. All this almost defies comprehension.

And yet, this mind-boggling challenge to our imaginations is even further compounded by another realization, which is that in addition to our attempts to grasp the immensity of God's presence in creation, we have the challenge

of coming to grips with the intensity of this same presence when measured on the scale of evolutionary complexity. And it is at this point that I think that our attempts to live consciously in the presence of God are most likely to be severely challenged.

To give an example, in practically all religious traditions, those who would seek conscious union with God are usually instructed, or even impelled by their own instincts, to go off on their own into the desert or wilderness to discover the presence of God in nature, beneath the stars at night, or the burning sun by day, often within the starkest or most barren landscape. Why is this? Perhaps it is because it is in such locations that one finds less distraction than in the surroundings of everyday life. There one is faced with the most fundamental fact of our existence – that it depends entirely on something or someone greater than ourselves. In fact, unless one becomes grounded first in the precariousness of our existence, a lush landscape, teeming with life, might even become a distraction, for unless we learn to see God in the smallest of plants, mosses, or lichen, we probably will not find God among the tallest and most magnificent trees. Likewise, it is also much the same when it comes to animate life. Unless I can learn to appreciate the expression of God's gift of life in even the smallest bug or insect (even if it is trying to bite me) I may be in danger of failing to see it in its most impressive forms, such as in the eagles, elk, deer, and the elusive bears that roam the forest around me.

And this brings us to what is probably for most of us, the greatest challenge, seeing God in our fellow humans. "Animals know", said the Jesuit paleontologist Teilhard de Chardin, which means that they are consciously driven to do what they must do to survive, which in turn means that we can more easily forgive them when they make our life inconvenient. But as Teilhard added, humans "know that they know" (Teilhard 1959, 165) – in other words, we have the kind of reflective consciousness that affords us free will, and with it, the ability to love or to hate, to do good or do evil. And with this ability, comes the challenge of seeing God in my fellow human beings, even when they may seem to disregard or even despise me.

Thus, it would seem that the greatest test or challenge of becoming a saint is not so much learning to see God in all things. Retreats, meditations, prayers, mantras, etc. are all great helps, but the ultimate test is putting this realization of God's presence into practice in our dealings with the world of ordinary people. Perhaps this is why the culmination of the spiritual life has generally been seen, in practically all religious traditions, as being reached when the holy person is able to return into the world of ordinary life as an enlightened one, a sannyasa, a bodhisattva, a wali or a saint in one guise or another, bringing a message of peace, forgiveness, and understanding.

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HITCHHIKING, HOSPITALITY, AND SPIRITUAL COMMUNITIES

Author:
Peter Lauricella
Sharon Lauricella

Abstract

Spirituality has been a metaphor of journey for both scholars of spirituality and spirituality practitioners. In this paper, we address the notion of spiritual hitchhiking and hospitality. The combination of trust and vulnerability in hitchhiking is in keeping with the same elements in spiritual seeking. To date, no academic work has considered spirituality in the context of a metaphor of hitchhiking. We suggest that many spirituality practitioners and seekers have been either spiritual hitchhikers and/or have offered spiritual hospitality, and that the journey to, from, and around being a hitchhiker and offering hospitality is neither linear nor prescribed. The paper addresses newcomers to spiritual hitchhiking, those on a longer spiritual journey, and the notion of spirits as hitchhiking entities. The concept of reciprocity is addressed as an inherent element in the divine nature of hitchhiking, particularly in the spiritual context.

Keywords: Spiritual journey; Hitchhiking; Faith; Hospitality

Introduction

Examining, understanding, and embracing spirituality is a journey -- arguably, a journey with no end. For some, the process of discovering one's spirituality comes after many years of searching, seeking, and contemplation. For others, it is inherent in or subsequent to a peak experience (Maslow 1968), or a powerful, moving, mystical encounter. The means by which we come to

know our own spirituality involves a balance of trust (also known as faith) and risk (feeling vulnerable). Spirituality is particularly fitting in context of the journey and is often described as travelling, moving, shifting, and learning. Redick (2006, 2009) equates spirituality to a pilgrimage in the wilderness, while Kabat-Zinn (2009) suggests that the spiritual can be best understood when we realize that the journey is about being in the present moment. In this article, we suggest that spirituality can be closely associated with metaphors of journey and hitchhiking, which include an integral element of hospitality.

On the Road

Hitchhiking has been a practice almost since the introduction of the automobile. One of the most illustrative yet typical stories of hitchhiking is to be found in Steinbeck's (1939) *The Grapes of Wrath*. The Joad family, having lost their home, property, and livelihood, had nowhere to go but "away." Orange handbills tacked to the trees in the 1930s indicated that the jobs were plentiful and the pay was better westward. The Joads, therefore, left the "dust bowl" and headed out in search of better days in California. Along their journey, they managed to come across someone they deemed even less fortunate than themselves -- a hitchhiker. The Joads showed hospitality by picking him up, and the group continued together westward in search of better days. So it is with spirituality -- being down and out is a pivotal time in which to search for a spiritual identity or solution, and it is a wonderful opportunity indeed when a more spiritually actualized individual or cohesive group acts in support of a seeker or struggler.

While the practice of hitchhiking has been around for at least a hundred years, one need not be desperate or destitute to either be a hitchhiker or to demonstrate hospitality by picking up a hitcher. Some very famous folks have been hitchers, including Ronald Reagan, Janis Joplin, Bob Dylan, and Jim Morrison, who considered hitchhiking far more than mere transportation -- it was a way to seek adventure and experience (Cherry 2013). Further, what could never even have been imagined in the last century – a hitchhiking robot – traveled from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Vancouver, BC just a few years

ago. Conceived, designed and built by Ontario University students, 'hitchBOT' made a successful initial hitchhiking journey across Canada in just 24 days in 2014. The generous strangers who picked up hitchBOT in Canada demonstrated hospitality even to a nonhuman (for a photo gallery see "hitchBOT Completes Its Journey" 2015). Similarly, actor, writer, and creator of the television series Seinfeld Larry David picks up hitchhikers, though is sure to screen them by asking if they are serial killers before letting them in the car (Desta 2013).

Going With the Flow

Perhaps the best known American hitcher was Jack Kerouac, author of the Beat Generation's best seller *On the Road* (1957). Kerouac was a perpetual hitchhiking machine, constantly (and sometimes aimlessly) traveling from his mother's house to virtually all parts of the US. It was the late 40's and early 50's – the war was over and the US economy was exploding with job opportunities for everyone who wanted one. Kerouac's vision and his unique writing style - spontaneous prose - fit the times like a glove.

As demonstrated not only by his style, but also by content and context, Kerouac outlined in his work a spiritual journey. This frequent author-hitchhiker was interested and indeed deeply reflective about Buddhism, as demonstrated in *The Dharma Bums*(1958), the obviously autobiographical story of "more respectable and articulate" characters than in *On The Road* (Ross 1958). Kerouac was submissive to everything, open, and listening. Zen Buddhists call this openness "mushin," "no mind," or "original mind." 'Mushin' or 'no-mindedness' is a state of flow in which the practitioner is not over thinking, and has a fully present, awake mind. In this state, Buddhists say that one is like water (hence the modern adage, "go with the flow").

The flow, the Zen no-mind, the easygoingness is:

- A way of life, according to many, with some guidelines and very little expectations;

- A way of being that opens one's heart, and leaves him/her vulnerable;
- Able to express and recognize the Holy, the Spirit of Life;
- Designed to challenge one to remain open -- even in the face of risk;
- Encourages us to be gentle and kind with one another;
- Suggests that we are welcoming of other human beings; and
- Works to deepen our human relationships (Harding, "Hitchhiking").

Kerouac's 'no-mind' while he was quite literally "on the road" is deeply representative of the metaphor of hitchhiking as a spiritual journey. Both the hitcher (the person getting the ride) and hitchee (the driver) must have mutual trust, vulnerability, and openness. The hitcher must have faith that the driver will deliver him or her safely to the destination. The hitcher is vulnerable in getting into a vehicle with a stranger, and also in the way that he or she may be delivered to an alternate destination that is as good or even better than the original plan. The driver must trust that the hitchhiker is not a dangerous being, and even have faith that he or she has the potential to become a friend. Most importantly, of course, the driver must have enough generosity to offer to be a host on the hitchhiker's journey.

Finding Faith

Hitchhiking is a remarkable demonstration of the juxtaposition of risk and trust on both parties. Scholars have called for increased research on the decline of hitchhiking in modern culture and in different geographical areas (Chesters and Smith 2001). Fewer folks "on the road" Kerouac-style could be for very practical reasons, such as the increase of car ownership, even amongst young people, pedestrians being banned from highways/motorways, and cheaper public transport. Or, the downturn in hitching could be attributable to more nebulous cultural reasons, including a rise in conservative politics (particularly in the UK and US), and subsequent nose-tipping at hippie-type freeloaders. The truth is arguably more complicated, including a combination of the automobile becoming a "snug haven" with ergonomic seats and temperature controls (Moran 2009a) and a concurrent dissolution of the concept of "society" whereby strangers are less welcome

and face-to-face conversation less frequent (Moran 2009b). A complicated cultural shift, which manifested itself in markedly less hitchhiking, is demonstrated in the popularity and later disappearance of Albert Witney's *Man and the Motorcar* (1937). Witney's manual was the ubiquitous handbook for good driving, intimating that good driving was a mirror for good citizenship. Sometime around the time the manual went out of print (the 1960s), so too did polite driving, driving as a metaphor for citizenship and responsibility, and not surprisingly, hitchhiking (Compagni Portis 2015).

A search for spirituality, however, has not experienced the same vanishing act as did hitchhiking. Indeed, the proliferation of "Self-Help" and "Wellness" sections of bookstores offer a cornucopia of titles addressing the metaphysical, spiritual, and mystical, thus indicating that an interest in and enthusiasm for spirituality is increasing. Rainn Wilson (2012), Emmy award nominated actor for his role in the American version of The Office, argues that a spiritual revolution is coming (or is even underway) and is essential in us moving forward as a human race. His media organization SoulPancake (http://www.soulpancake.com/) is directed at spiritual issues for millennial-age people, and includes shareable media content that is smart, uplifting, and meaningful. SoulPancake was named one of Fast Company's 10 Most Innovative Video Companies of 2015, thus indicating that spiritually charged content is very much in demand.

Hitchhiking is about finding - and keeping - faith. There are some helpful guidelines for hitchhiking, including walking backward, facing the traffic, extending the thumb and/or holding up a sign indicating the desired destination, avoiding superhighways, not traveling in large groups, and all parties being visible to the driver. These "rules" help to establish credibility, honesty, and trustworthiness on the part of the hitchhiker. Adhering to the rules makes it easier for a driver to give his or her faith to the hitcher. The notion of generosity and giving is inherent in hitchhiking on the part of the driver. However, reciprocity is also an integral element in the hitchhiking relationship. As Martin Buber's famous "I-Thou" distinction (1937) suggests,

reciprocity brings to the relationship a heightened sense of respect and mutuality.

This "I-Thou" distinction is perhaps best illustrated in modern context by Ania and Jon, two English teachers living in Barcelona (from Poland and England, respectively) who, despite a nearly defunct hitchhiking culture, have managed to hitch for 329 days, traveling 37,228km throughout Europe and Asia. The couple keeps a blog of their travels, tips for hitchhiking, and travel guides -- all online, all for free. They cite in their top reasons to hitchhike that "hitchhiking restores your faith in people." The goal of their currently operating Hitchhiking Cultural Relay is (during which they have quit their jobs, sold all of their possessions, and are traveling through Europe and Asia) "to create a chain of learning, teaching and gift giving" (Mochnaka & Barrett 2015). Their Cultural Relay project includes learning in some places and teaching in others, all while exchanging small cultural tokens and gifts. Their overarching goal, notwithstanding the personal adventure of hitchhiking, is more about others: to demonstrate that there is no need to be fearful, skeptical, or critical of those from cultures other than one's own.

One of the essential elements of this restoration of faith is not being in a hurry. Sometimes, like a sailboat in a course against the wind, hitchhikers must go west and then north to arrive at one's destination, or even change the destination to better fit the ride. If one relinquishes the human need for control, there can exist a relaxing, calm feeling that hitchers experience as they walk. They can see and hear the birds, the air, the roaring sound of approaching cars and trucks and the whoosh of air as they pass by. This "letting go," this faith, is in keeping with Buddhist mindfulness, which has become significantly more popular with Kabat-Zinn's (1990) cognitive-based therapy programs. This paying attention in the moment and being fully present throughout a journey brings a spiritual element to an otherwise larger and longer journey. In this manner, each moment and step is part of the collective journey, just as each person is a part of the overall collective of the universe, working in harmony and in everyone's best interest.

Finding faith in the unfamiliar and unknown is also demonstrated in internet-based means of buying, selling, and exchanging, and is not unlike hitchhiking. Kijiji, for example, an online buy-and-sell/classifieds website, depends upon the trustworthiness of the seller, together with the reliability of the buyer. While sellers post items (from clothing to cottages) for sale, buyers offer to purchase and pick up items, all within a localized area. Perhaps the most illustrative example of internet-based faith in people is Airbnb, a relatively new web-based service which connects property owners ("hosts") with guests. The site circumvents often overpriced hotels and mainstream accommodation, instead offering guests a room in a host's home, basement apartment, or vacation property. The site requires registration and disclosure of personal information, and depends upon mutual reviews of the host and the guest. While money is exchanged and reviews are posted on the site, Airbnb operates on the notion that people are good and will act in respectable, honest ways.

Hitchhiking Is Not Freeloading

Even cursory reads of hitchhiking and travel blogs tell stories about extraordinary hospitality. Accounts of being picked up by the police (who want to help rather than arrest hitchhikers), places in which food is free, advice provided, and friendships made are not uncommon. Such generous acts of hospitality leave us to wonder… perhaps hosts endured a tragic event that started their unusual acts of hospitality? Did severe weather and lack of shelter cause a death or serious change in a family? Or did this unique hospitality just evolve into unparalleled acts of love and kindness, ensuring that travelers were safe and the miles more friendly?

Without the personal care from which all hospitality stems, there would be no hitchhiking. Virtually all religions teach that we should love and respect our fellow travelers on this earthly journey -- in other words, the Golden Rule of treating others as one would wish to be treated (or not treating others in ways that one also finds undesirable) can bind us together as humans and fellow travelers. This ethic of reciprocity is a principle of altruism identifiable in many cultures and religions. For example, Christianity demonstrates "love

your neighbour as yourself." In Islam, the Quran teaches "wish for your brother what you wish for yourself." Hinduism suggests to followers, "that which is unfavorable to us, do not do that to others." This reciprocity is not a matter of being kind or nice so that others will be kind or nice in return. Rather, it is a notion of empathy whereby one is able to identify and commune with others and see the inherent divine nature in all others.

When considered in the context of divine reciprocity, it is clear that hitchhiking is not the same as freeloading. A freeloader is ungrateful and selfish; by contrast, the hitchhiker is immensely thankful and generous, and as demonstrated by Ania and Jon, can offer knowledge, small gifts, conversation, or simply sincere thanks, friendship, and good vibes. We suggest that the scope of hitchhiking can therefore be expanded to include not just hitchhiking via automobile. In addition to moving from one physical place to another, we argue that hitchhiking also includes moving from one spiritual, emotional, religious, or intellectual place to another. This traveling, transfer, or movement can be accomplished in a hitchhiking kind of way, without monetary cost, without a clear definition, and without a rigid timetable.

Consider this example: Someone moves into a new town and decides to "shop" for a church or spiritual community. He or she attends a particular place of worship for several weeks or months, but as is the norm – does not participate in any church activities. He or she does not volunteer at bingo night, doesn't share food at pot luck dinners, and doesn't offer to help at the church yard sale. In many cases, this is perfectly normal and completely acceptable. Such visitors are not shunned or scolded -- rather, they are welcome as visitors, or contributors in ways that are not necessarily tangible. Their peripheral participation could be considered religious hitchhiking. It is a means of benefiting from the warmth of the group without tangibly contributing to that warmth. They're going with the flow, observing, and experiencing a particular spiritual community.

We also offer a personal example. Some 15 years ago, Peter's sister (Sharon's aunt) converted from Catholicism to Judaism. At the ceremony accepting her

and several others into the Temple, Peter heard the story of a longtime member, a woman in her late 70's. She had been a faithful Jew all her life, had married within the faith, and had raised several Jewish children in that same Temple. In the course of discussion, this woman confessed to never having learned to read or write Hebrew and did not have thorough knowledge of the Old Testament. She did not know what the prayers meant, what the responses committed her to, or to what she was specifically agreeing. She was hitchhiking, and she'd been doing it in the Jewish faith for a long time. She was along for the ride, and was benefiting from the community while offering her own kind of reciprocity, if only via her presence. There's nothing inherently wrong with this, and we argue that this kind of religious hitchhiking should not be criticized. People like the woman Peter observed are participating in ways that make sense for them during their unique journeys. We suggest that it takes participants of all kinds in a spiritual community - some who carry, some who are carried - and that hitchhiking should actually be encouraged. If there are no religious hitchhikers, or the practice was frowned upon, very few would have the opportunity to explore or gain any exposure to religious traditions or communities.

There are to be found religious hitchhikers in every faith. For example, many Muslims in western culture do not have the opportunity or permission from their place of employment to pray five times per day as instructed by their holy book. This doesn't make them any less devout or their faith any weaker. Similarly, the pejorative term "Cafeteria Catholic" is one who identifies with the Catholic faith, though chooses particular truths to which to adhere. While this term is critical and implies that Catholics are either "in" or "out," we suggest that having any involvement, exposure, or interest in faith – regardless of the degree - is a meaningful step in one's journey. Those who attend, explore, examine, or visit are hitchhiking. So it is in life; it happens all the time. And so it is that one ought to be carried, supported, and encouraged along the way.

Hitchhiking of Ideas

Another concept associated with the phrase "spiritual hitchhiking" is very productive and potentially beautiful. What if spirits themselves were also able to hitchhike? Rather than focusing on negative spirits (a la *The Exorcist*), we aim to discuss a specific kind of positive contribution that spirits can make. Consider that a spirit eager to improve the quality of life for all humanity comes into the body, or more likely, the consciousness, of an intelligent human and helps that human to develop or discover great things. Many of history's greatest thinkers and doers such as Michelangelo, Mozart, Jane Goodall, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Edison, and Joan of Arc could have been pushed into greatness by benevolent spiritual hitchhikers. Indeed, writer Elizabeth Gilbert, author of *Eat, Pray, Love* (2006) and *Big Magic* (2015), argues that creative ideas operate much like spirits, and search for a willing human host to bring the idea to material fruition. In pages 51-57 of *Big Magic*, Gilbert describes an instance in which she had an idea for a book, which she was unable to complete given personal travel and other challenges. In a face-to-face conversational exchange with author Ann Patchett, in which the book was not discussed in any way whatsoever, the idea literally transferred from Gilbert to Patchett; the duo would not realize this for years in the future. Ideas, then, have the potential to be hitchhikers, too. They travel, try out (or on) different humans in order to find the best "host" for making the idea come to life. It sounds somewhat like Airbnb -- the traveler (the idea) visits different hosts (homes, cottages, apartments) so as to explore and "try on" different opportunities.

Studies of creativity show that often people hatch ideas that truly change the world and then afterward are unable to explain how they came to those conclusions. The ideas seemingly - and simply - jump into their heads. Julia Cameron, author of well-known creative "bible" *The Artist's Way* (2002), argues that one must remain open and willing in order for creativity to thrive and flow. Some time ago I (Peter) saw an interview with Bob Dylan, the greatest and most prolific songwriter of our time. When asked how he could write so many wonderful songs he shrugged and said that he made a deal with the divine, that if he was allowed to write songs, he would devote his life to writing the best songs possible. And he did. Maybe Bob Dylan has a

spiritual hitchhiker. Did the engineers who supervised the building of the pyramids in Egypt have a spiritual hitchhiker? Or those involved with Stonehenge or Easter Island? Building upon Gilbert's (2015) premise about ideas being entities, it can be argued that ideas are transient pieces of the Divine, in search of human hosts, and bring benefits, lessons, and adventure along the way.

Hospitality and the Journey to Spiritual Community

When we offer or accept hospitality, we embrace the opportunity for personal sharing. Peter is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Durham (UUCD). This congregation and virtually all Unitarian congregations offer their hospitality during the "Joys and Concerns" portion of service. During this time, attendees are invited to participate by dropping a pebble in a chalice and sharing a celebration/joy or challenge/concern. These sharings are significant because when one acknowledges an issue, a weakness, or vulnerability, it becomes easier to be supported by others. Such sharing builds community, strengthens personal bonds, and broadens the spiritual community's base. Being spiritual alone is most certainly different from being spiritual by oneself. In fact, the service leader, after the "Joys and Concerns", always concludes with, "...and know that you are not alone."   Hospitality gives us a reason to care.

It is not a mistake that Unitarian Universalists, Christians, Jews, Muslims, and most religions or congregations offer an undeniable hospitality after service. Tea, coffee, cookies or other refreshments are very often served at the conclusion of a meeting. This important part of the service is an opportunity for discussion and personal sharing. Discussion could lead to better understanding, heightened familiarity, and increased opportunities for sharing of our blessings. As a church and as a community, we function better when we communicate about both religious and social matters. It is hospitality that opens the door and facilitates this sharing.

We (Peter and Sharon) have both been spiritual hitchhikers. In Peter's case, about 20 years ago, when he and his wife (Sharon's mother) Marilyn were

"church shopping", at Sharon's suggestion they visited First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, one of several UU churches near their home in Massachusetts. Peter and Marilyn had planned to visit the four UU churches closest to them, and then decide where to call their spiritual community home. The friendliness, warmth and hospitality extended to them at First Parish brought them back repeatedly. They never did visit those other three churches... Hospitality was like a magnet, drawing them closer and closer. Sharon's story is somewhat different in that being a seasoned yoga practitioner; she was in search of a studio to attend close to her home in the Toronto area. After searching online for some possible "fits," she visited Power Yoga Canada (PYC). In her first class there, the instructor offered her the chance to come back, complimented her on her established practice, and most importantly, remembered her name. For a few months, Sharon hitchhiked at a few other studios that offered a physical challenge or meaningful instruction. However, none of them offered the sense of community that Sharon witnessed at PYC. She's since become a yoga teacher herself and her primary groups of friends are now fellow PYC studio members.

Many people, including Unitarians and yoga practitioners, are frequently hitchhikers. In these cases in particular, they usually come from another religious or spiritual community, and sometimes return, staying for a while and then returning or moving on. Sometimes they become, as both authors did, leaders in the spiritual community. As hitchhikers there would be no travel without the generosity and hospitality of others, and when visitors come to the church or the studio, it is the smiles and the welcoming tones and friendly faces that bring them back. In contrast to Kerouac's perpetual hitching journey, most hitchhikers establish roots somewhere. Ania and Jon feel very much European. Peter has settled in the Unitarian community. Sharon is at home with Ashtanga and power vinyasa flow yoga.

Typically newcomers - those who have recently decided to attend spiritual communities such as church, yoga, or meditation, but have not yet officially joined, are hitchhiking. That's okay. These folks attend, watch and listen. If

they are entirely new to the spiritual community, this hitchhiking might last several months or even longer. Then they might join a committee in the church, help with operating the studio, or commit to spreading the word about the community in order to become more active. And once that happens, a shift occurs and instead of just receiving, one also is providing hospitality. Hospitality is an expression of love. It is an opening of the heart. It is a welcoming and an invitation to strangers and visitors, limited only by the physical space and the size of the community. Hospitality is like a door that swings both ways: a welcoming is extended and a thankful acceptance is offered in return. Relationships then shift from "I-You" to "I-Thou," as Buber suggests; there becomes evident more reverence, reciprocity, and intimacy.

Peter sometimes wonders what might have been if, while hitchhiking for a church, rather than being so warmly greeted at First Parish, he and Marilyn were ignored. Would they have given Unitarianism a second chance or would they have continued to be religious dropouts? Would they have become religiously lost? Sharon wonders if while she was hitchhiking for a yoga studio, PYC had been insular and pretentious, would she still be hitching around, looking for an inclusive community, a circle of friends? For both of us, it was friendliness and hospitality that brought us into our spiritual communities. We were both hitchhiking, and got picked up by the grace of others. We both became leaders in our spiritual communities and contribute to picking up others on their journey. This does not imply that we are immune to the need for others in our own continuing journey. Rather, the reciprocity continues.

Conclusion

We suggest that spiritual hitchhiking is an iterative process, and is one that many experience throughout the course of their spiritual journeys. Sometimes, people are in search of a spiritual community and hitchhike from congregation to congregation, group to group, or church to church. Other times, people may be transitioning from one spiritual level to another, and can benefit from being part of a group that is able to support and assist. No part of this spiritual hitchhiking journey costs in monetary

form, and we argue that it is not expected to be completed at a specific time or rate. Along the journey, people may have no idea where their spirituality is headed, though they do know that they're on the road, whether it be via a difficult emotional time, geographical change, or intellectual seeking. When the traveler and the host meet, reciprocity is essential in recognizing common humanity, and a reverent relationship, as Buber suggests, is able to be formed. Hitchhiking is therefore an illustrative and fitting metaphor for spiritual growth and change. Each individual's search for truth and meaning continues. We suggest that fellow travelers get "on the road." Adventure awaits.

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GOD OF ISRAEL OR GOD OF THE UNIVERSE?

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We Jews think of ourselves as monotheists, which means that we believe in only one God. This God created the universe and rules over it. *Bereisheet bara Elohim et hashamayim v'et ha'aretz*[1] says the first verse of the Hebrew Bible: "In the beginning God created heaven and earth" or "When God began to create heaven and earth," depending on which translation you favour. God is referred to as *melech ha'olam*, king or ruler of the universe, and as *ribono shel olam*, master of the universe.

And yet God is also, in some special sense, the God of the people Israel, representing a fraction of one per cent of the human population on one of the septillions of planets in the universe God created. God reached out and established a special relationship with our first ancestors: Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob, Rachel and Leah. When their descendants had become a people, God made a covenant with them on Mount Sinai.

So who is our God, the God the Hebrew Bible calls yhwh[2]: the God of Israel or the God of the universe? Can yhwh be both? If yhwh is the God of Israel, does that mean other peoples have other Gods? If yhwh is the God of the universe, why don't other peoples recognize yhwh in the way that Jews do? There are many different ways of resolving this tension, leading to different understandings of the relationship between the universal and the particular.

One avenue of exploration is the possibility that the particular God and the universal God are referred to by different names in the Bible. At the time of creation, God is referred to as *Elohim*, a generic term for "God," while the God who appears to Moses at the burning bush to give him the task of freeing the Israelites from slavery is referred to as *yhwh*. In other words, Elohim could be the universal God and yhwh the particular one. Unfortunately, this usage is by no means consistent. For example, in chapters 2 and 3 of Genesis, which

carry the story from the creation of man and woman to their expulsion from the Garden of Eden, God is referred to as *yhwh Elohim*. The use of different names of God is generally explained as resulting from the presence of works by different authors in the composite text we now have, not by any distinction between the universal and the particular God.

Another possibility is that yhwh will be recognized as the universal God in the longed-for but still distant messianic age. Thus, Amy-Jill Levine, the Jewish New Testament scholar whose work has been instrumental in promoting understanding between Jews and Christians, writes, "Both church and synagogue ... claim to be children of Abraham, and both claim a future vision premised on the idea that the God of Israel is the God of the world."[3] This vision appears frequently in the writings of the biblical prophets. "On that day," says Zechariah, "yhwh will be one, and God's name one."[4] Isaiah proclaims a beautiful vision of this future time:

It will be in the end of days:

Established shall be the mountain of yhwh's house

As the head of mountains

And it shall be raised above the hills
And all nations shall stream to it.

And many peoples shall go and say:

"Come, let us go up to the mountain of yhwh,

To the house of the God of Jacob

And God will teach us of God's ways

And we will walk in God's paths."

For out of Zion shall go forth Torah[5]

And the word of yhwh from Jerusalem

And God shall judge between the nations

And shall arbitrate for many peoples

And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares

And their spears into pruning-hooks.

Nation shall not lift up sword against nation

And they shall not learn war any more.[6]

In this passage, yhwh appears as the God of all the world, ultimately to be recognized as such by all peoples, and eventuality that will lead to universal peace. Inspiring as this vision is, it has a shadow side: the implication that for universal peace to be realized, everyone has to come to our God. Jews deplore this kind of spiritual imperialism in other religions; we need to guard against its creeping into our own.

Other passages frame the relationship between yhwh, Israel and the other nations differently. Perhaps most striking is a line from the Song of the Sea in Exodus that is recited daily in Jewish liturgy: *Mi chamocha ba'eilim yhwh.*[7] Traditional commentators have been uncomfortable with the literal meaning of these words, and so have translated them as "Who is like you among the mighty, yhwh?" or "Who is like you among the Gods that are worshipped, yhwh?" But the literal translation is "Who is like you among the Gods, yhwh?" This line suggests that yhwh is superior to other Gods, but not that other Gods don't exist.

The Song of the Sea, sung in triumph by the Israelites after they crossed the Sea of Reeds on dry land and Pharaoh's soldiers who were coming after them in hot pursuit were swallowed up by the waters, is one of the oldest passages in the Bible. Its reference to other Gods can be explained as coming from a time that preceded strict monotheism. But a similar implication can be drawn from passages that are not so old. Psalm 33 praises yhwh's great deeds and

suggests that all the earth should be in awe of yhwh. However, it does not say that all peoples should adopt yhwh as their God. Rather, it turns its attention to Israel and says,

Happy is the nation whose God is yhwh,

The people chosen as yhwh's own inheritance.[8]

This line too, in slightly different form, is a staple of Jewish liturgy. If the "nation whose God is yhwh" — that is, Israel — is happy, that would imply that other nations are not so favoured. They have other Gods, or no God at all. Once again, there is no sense here that yhwh is the unique God of the universe. But there is also no sense of a transcendent reality beyond the Gods of particular peoples.

Yet another twist is provided by the prophetic book of Micah. Micah was a younger contemporary of Isaiah's, and one of the curious features of his book is that it contains, almost word for word, the same vision of the end of days that we found in Isaiah — perhaps it was a common prophetic trope of the time. There are differences between the two passages, but they are trivial variations in wording that do not affect the meaning. Except for one.

At the end of the passage in Micah is a verse that does not appear in Isaiah:

Ki chol ha'amim yelchu ish b'shem Elohav,

va'anachnu nelech b'shem yhwh Eloheinu l'olam va'ed.[9]

A straightforward translation of this verse is: "For every people shall walk in the name of its God, and we will walk in the name of yhwh our God for ever and ever." This statement puzzled traditional commentators and translators, for it seemed to contradict what Micah had just said. Some tried to mitigate its disturbing implications by introducing an element of contrast between the two halves of the verse. The prefix *va* at the beginning of the second line is thus interpreted as "but" or "while."[10] But this element of contrast is not inherent in *va*; it usually just means "and." In any case, the heart of the puzzle

remains. What does it mean for all nations to stream to the mountain of yhwh if those nations then walk in the name of their own Gods?

However, this final verse does not need to contradict what comes before. Rather, it could offer a way of interpreting the prophetic vision that frees it of its imperialist implications. Perhaps the nations are streaming to the mountain of yhwh not to worship our God but to learn how better to worship their own Gods. We know that even though only a tiny proportion of the world's population is Jewish, Torah has indeed gone forth from Zion. Jewish teachings and stories are an essential component of Christianity and Islam, our siblings in the family of Abrahamic religions, and through them have indirectly influenced other religions such as the Baha'i and Sikh traditions. His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in exile from his birthplace and spiritual home of Tibet, has written that "the image of Judaism as a religion that has helped a people to survive in exile for so long is deeply inspiring. When I first came in contact with Jewish leaders, I used to ask them, 'Tell me your secret!'"[11]Modern Jewish thinkers such as Martin Buber, Abraham Joshua Heschel and Emmanuel Lévinas are read well beyond the Jewish world.

Of course it works the other way as well. I have known since I studied as a child at a Hebrew day school that social justice is a central component of the Jewish tradition, but I gained a much fuller appreciation of what it meant when I saw Jesuits I worked with put their lives on the line in places like El Salvador and Jamaica. In the weekly Jewish Sabbath service, the Torah scroll is treated like an ancient king, but I've still found I had much to learn about how to revere a sacred text from the attitudes and customs of my Muslim and Sikh friends surrounding the Qur'an and the Guru Granth Sahib. It is no secret that Jewish observances are linked to the rhythms of nature and the cycles of the sun and the moon, but becoming acquainted with Wiccan and Pagan practices has helped me understand just how deep that connection is.

It is sometimes difficult for monotheists to acknowledge that the God we worship is not, in itself, the transcendent and infinite God but rather what the medieval Muslim mystic and poet Ibn 'Arabi called a "God of belief." Ibn 'Arabi warned against what he called "binding" — identifying the God of

one's belief with the total reality of God.[12] We have grasped, at best, one small part of the divine, while other peoples have grasped other parts.

The central Jewish statement of monotheism, repeated twice daily in our prayers, is compatible with this view: *Shma Yisrael yhwh Eloheinu yhwh echad*.[13]

Once again, translations differ, but one possible interpretation of these words is "Hear, O Israel, yhwh is our God, yhwh alone." Yhwh alone is *our* God, our particular way, as Jews, of approaching the divine. We do not say that this way is the true way of approaching the divine and others are false ways — only that this way is our way.

So perhaps the prophetic call to the nations to stream to the mountain of yhwh is a call not to conversion but to mutual learning and exchange. It is a call for us to live our tradition in a way that others can learn from us, as well as to be open to learning from others. And perhaps that is what will ultimately lead to nations beating their swords into plough shares and to people not learning war any more.

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[1] Genesis 1:1.

[2]Hebrew is written without vowels, and since the original vowelization of this name has been lost, we don't know exactly how it was pronounced. Therefore Jews never pronounce it, and substitute *Adonai* ("the Lord") or *Hashem* ("the Name") whenever it appears. Rabbi Arthur Waskow of the Shalom Center in Philadelphia has suggested that the name was not meant to be pronounced but rather breathed ("yyyyyyhhhhhhwwwwwwhhhhhh"), and that it represents the interbreathing of all life in the universe. See Rabbi Arthur Waskow, "Do We Need to ReName God?", December 28, 2015,

retrieved from https://theshalomcenter.org/do-we-need-rename-god1] Genesis 1:1.

[3] Amy-Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (New York: HarperOne, 2006), pp. 212–13.

[4] Zechariah 14:9.

[5] The word *Torah* means "teaching," and is used both in the narrow sense of the first five books of the Bible, contained in the Torah scroll read in the synagogue on Sabbaths and festivals, and in the broader sense of the whole body of Jewish teaching. See, for example, Tzvi Freeman, "What Is Torah?: Beyond Wisdom," *Chabad.org*, retrieved from http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1426382/jewish/Torah.htm

[6] Isaiah 2:2–4.

[7] Exodus 15:11.

[8] Psalm 33:12.

[9] Micah 4:5.

[10] See, for example, the 1917 Jewish Publication Society translation, the New Jerusalem Bible and the New International Version. The classic King James Version, however, resists this interpretation and translates *va* as "and."

[11] His Holiness the Dalai Lama, *Toward a True Kinship of Faiths: How the World's Religions Can Come Together* (New York: Doubleday Religion, 2010), p. 93.

[12] See Michael A. Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 97–105.

[13] Deuteronomy 6:4.

WHY WE NEED TO CHANGE HOW WE EDUCATE?

Author:
Mona Negoita

Most of us wander for years from place to place, from activity to activity, searching for meaning in our lives. Most of the time we are not aware of why we do this, we simply follow the persistent buzz of our inner dissatisfaction and restlessness. We seek solace in religious beliefs or self-help books, we go to spiritual gurus and psychotherapists, in an attempt to find the elusive "inner dimension" that would bring peace and equanimity even though we are unable to articulate what we are actually looking for.

Victor Frankl made it clear a long time ago that even in the direst of circumstances man can preserve independence of mind and spiritual freedom, given his attitude to his existence. An active, creative life in the service of others will cultivate love and compassion, will give meaning to one's inner life and develop his connection with a bigger purpose, thus dissolving loneliness and isolation.

It is unfortunately all too common a trend in our current educational systems to support individual success and expertise at the cost of collaboration and team work. Too early we are taught that "you gotta' be the best!" and " if it ain't fun, don't do it" so, if there is any hint of hardship and suffering in any task, it will diminish our oh-so-important, "must win" self. We have gone beyond acclaiming success: we now cheer for the slightest whiff of common sense and effort and create a sense of overconfidence and overestimation in our students. If you do not believe this, look at assignments given to college or high school students and at the rates of passing! Over inflated self assessments lead to incompetence (Krueger-Dunning 2003,83-87), an ever increasing avoidance of any constructive criticism, and potentially additional moral ambivalence or even deceptive behaviour (Park 2010,471-488).

Now, I do not subscribe to the idea that only things that are difficult are worth pursuing! I will be the first one to expand on the benefits of lying under a tree on a sunny day, dreaming the clouds away. I would argue though that the path to self- discovery and evolvement is a difficult one and (too many times!) not very pleasant, nor very easy. We seem to do very little to support qualities such as altruism, generosity, or compassion in our educational curriculums, yet we somehow expect our societies to evolve towards that.

I can only hope that we will be able to change the way we educate and support change in years to come, for it is foolish to believe that continuing the way we have done so far will lead to a better world. If we cannot look at ourselves critically, we cannot move forward, since, as Victor Frankl so clearly stated: *"What is to give light must endure burning".*

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A Spiritual View of Life and Existence

Author:

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The aim in Science is to search and discover the origin of existence. The aim in Philosophy is to analyze all available information and use it to prove the existence of this origin. The two together aim to propose a theory of everything. Such a theory, if established, should be able to explain all phenomena of the universe in sequence and with conviction. It should also be able to predict future phenomena.

Both Science and Philosophy use human observation and experience as their starting point. Observation consists in the acquisition of information regarding objects. Experience is the outcome of the acquired information. This exercise results in knowledge of the object under observation. A possible outcome from the knowledge is development of a philosophical theory that explains all aspects of existence associated with the object. People can accept or reject the theory or, when in doubt, seek clarification by subjecting the object to further observation.

Such a sequence as this, from observation to theory, regarding material objects, forms part of Secular education. In other words, Secular education uses the material object as the *subject* of study. There is yet another kind of education that is Spiritual in nature. In Spiritual education, the objects are not the subject of study; rather the *subject* itself is both the object and subject of study. The difference between the two types of education can be put in a proper perspective through an explanation of how people acquire information and process it. Education provides techniques for accessing and processing of the information that finally leads to knowledge.

In Secular education, the focus is on objects that can be atomic or subatomic particles or their combination. Information from the object is observed, experienced and analyzed. The process makes use of different branches of

Science and employs different parts of the human body. The entire process of observation, experience and analysis is known as *darshan* in Sanskrit. An English equivalent of this Sanskrit word is *vision* provided it is not restricted only to human eyes and what it does.

Information from the object, observed either directly or through scientific instruments, is received by human beings through the five organs that are used to acquire information. These organs are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. The information so acquired is a form of physical darshan. How information from an object is transmitted to human organs is explained by Physical Science. This information is transmitted from organs to the brain through a neural network. Neuroscience explains this part of the process. The mind is that part of the brain on which the neural network projects information regarding the object for the purpose of identification and classification. This process is called mental darshan. It involves the human psyche and the associated field (of study) is Psychology. Neither the physical darshan nor the mental darshan nor the two together yield complete information about the object. It is so because these two forms of darshan, either separately or together, are fragmentary or incomplete so far as the knowledge of an object is concerned.

The information regarding the object created due to the physical and mental darshan is then presented to the intellect or *buddhi*(Sanskrit word for intellect) that analyzes and makes a determination as to its quality, usefulness and application in life. This is an example of intellectual darshan and it is associated with a branch of education called Philosophy. The three forms of darshan are associated with the physical, mental and intellectual aspects in human beings. The picture presented by them is secular in nature. It is still fragmentary and therefore incomplete. The enquiry must be taken to the next level of darshan for complete education and total knowledge.

The next and the final step in education involves an enquiry regarding the origin, evolution and final destination of the object together with who is conducting the quest and why and how it is being done. That is, the search now is also to find a connection between the subject, the object and the

method of study. The picture that appears in response to this search is Spiritual darshan. When coupled with the darshan of the physical, mental and intellectual form, it provides a complete picture of all objects both animate and inanimate. It leads to total knowledge about life and existence.

The search outlined above indicates that information is processed in steps that begin with physical leading to the mental and then to the intellectual darshan which is concerned only with the material aspect of the object. It is secular in learning and involves a bottom up approach. A quantum step up to Spiritual darshan completes the process of education and with it comes a spiritual angle to all existence. The quantum jump to spiritual education cannot possibly be accomplished by those whose aim is limited to secular education only.

In a top down approach, the sequence of education begins with a spiritual angle and gradually filters down to the intellectual and then to the mental and finally ends in the physical aspects of existence. Thus, in top down education, the focus begins on Spiritual existence and shifts down gradually to material existence. In the bottom up approach to education, the initial focus is on matter and its composites and it gradually shifts to Spiritual existence. An emphasis on secular education alone is likely to exclude any consideration of the Spiritual aspect of existence.

The next obvious question is this: Is there any written reference anywhere in the world that points to Spiritual existence and Spiritual education? If so, how old it is and how has it been framed and what are its implications. Should it be accepted on faith or is it possible for a human being to verify its implications in their day to day experience? A statement that spiritual knowledge and education cannot be verified and should be accepted on faith alone prompts a person, especially those who cannot think beyond secular education, to suggest that it is is like a blind man telling another blind person in a dark alley that there is a light around the corner. An answer to this question can be found in the Vedic literature that not only deals with the philosophy of life and existence, it also provides clue that can remove the doubts of secular skeptics.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE VEDAS

The Vedas from India are now accepted as the oldest literature in the world that is available even today. The oldest of the Vedas is Rig Veda. Nasadiya sukta, also known as the hymns of creation, is the 129th hymn in its tenth mandal. It contains a remarkable statement. Its simple translation can be stated thus; in the beginning there was neither *Sat* nor *Asat*. What existence then was *tad ekam* or That One. The statement is remarkable in the sense that it clearly states the principle of Absolute Monism that laid the foundation for Spiritual education in India.

A question may be asked at this point. If there is only one existence, who educates, to whom is the education imparted and through what medium. The answer forms part of Spiritual education introduced in Sankhya. It uses the concept of *Sat* and *Asat* of the hymns of creation to erect a structure for education. Unfortunately, the interpretation commonly used to explain the meaning of the two words led to confusion. Because of it, Sankhya was thought to promote a system of dualistic philosophy based upon the existence of two independent principles. Sankhya did not attract the recognition that it deserves for introducing a top down approach to Spiritual education. It is in fact a theoretical exposition of the Science of Life and Existence that first found expression in the hymns of the Vedas.

The reason for confusion about Sankhya is perhaps the word used to interpret *Sat* and *Asat.* The word existence used for *Sat* and non-existence for *Asat* is perhaps the reason for confusion. If *Sat* or *Purush* is associated with existence, it must be real. Hence, *Asat* or *Prakriti* being non-existence cannot be real. It is hard to believe of a real outcome from unreal source except through negation. In fact, negation of truth attached to any and everything experienced in human life is the recourse taken by some Vedantic philosophy.

Consider an alternative. Suppose *Sat* and *Asat* are two aspects of That One rather than two independent principles. One aspect is *Sat* as *swabhav* or innate nature of That One. The other aspect, *Asat* is *Shakti* or its creative

power. Sankhya uses the word Purush for *Sat* or innate nature. It uses *Prakriti* for *Asat* or *Shakti* of That One. The later philosophies of India use a combination of three words for the innate nature: The words are sat-chit-anand and its literal translation is existence-knowledge-bliss. As such, existence-knowledge-bliss is self nature or *swabhav* of That One.

The creative power of That One comes from its *Shakti*. It is the practical aspect or Prakriti. When split in three parts as pra-kri-ti, it describes its qualitative power of prakash or light, kriya or activity and sthiti or stability. The role of the three parts becomes obvious in the cosmology of Sankhya when the qualitative power is expressed in traditional terms of satoguna, rajoguna and tamoguna.

Prakriti or the creative power of That One uses its swabhav to bring its first manifestation into existence. It is called Mahat when associated with the universal presence, or buddhi in reference to human beings. It is predominantly satoguni in quality but incorporates, in totality, all attributes of Sat and Asat. If the innate nature turns Mahat (or buddhi) into an efficient cause, the creative power makes it a material cause. This attribution is merely a rephrasing of the introductory hymn in Ishopanishad of the Yajur Veda. The hymn says; that is purna (complete in all respects), this is purna, because whatever is purna can come out of something that is also purna. That in this hymn refers to mahat whereas this stands for buddhi. Both are purna (perfect and complete) for their standpoint and the two are aspects of That One, which is also purna.

The next step in creative activity as it applies to human beings is to individualize buddhi to form aham or ego. Under the influence of ego, rajoguna becomes a dominant influence in manifesting manas or the mind. Driven by its Swabhav of existence-knowledge-bliss inherited by the mind, it proceeds to use its knowledge to create stable structure in which to look for bliss or happiness. For this purpose, it creates fields of five media for transmission of knowledge along with the quality or power associated with each of the channels. It also creates five organs in a human body with the individual capabilities to receive each of those qualities. In the universal

cosmology of Sankhya, the names of the media are agni or fire, water, wind, earth and akash. Neural network is its counterpart in the human body. The network is often considered part of the mind. The quality they are associated with are form (created due to light of agni or fire), taste, touch, odour and sound. Sense organs or the organs of knowledge that participate in receiving and corresponding information through eyes, tongue, skin, nose and ears. Neuro-science explains how the information is transmitted in the form of electro-chemical impulses inside the human body. Physics teaches the manner of its transmission outside of the human body.

Next in order of creation for a human being is the structure of the physical body. Tamoguna plays a predominant part in creating the structure that provides dwelling and a sustaining environment for all organs of a human body. In addition to internal organs, there are ten external organs that interact with the external world. Information from the objects of the external world is transferred to five organs of knowledge of the internal world of human beings. Five organs of action work on the world outside.

Thus, the top down order of human existence follows the sequence; Spiritual, intellectual, mental (sensual activities are incorporated in it) and physical. All four are manifestations of That One through its two aspects of Sat and Asat. Because of its swabhav of sat-chit-anand, spiritual existence of human beings can be associated with Sat. Because of the presence of sato-, rajo- and tamo-guna, the power (Asat) of That One can be thought to manifest in the form of intellectual, mental and physical bodies of human beings. The dominant presence of satoguna in Intellect makes it more analytical and rational compared to the other two. Mental body displays more activity due to rajoguna being dominant in it. Due to dominance of tamoguna in physical body, it helps in anatomical stability that can also turn to laziness.

This in short is the cosmological theory of evolution of Sankhya. It is quite reasonable to call it a spiritual theory when considered in relation to the human race.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

This section of Cloverleaf contains those articles which in the opinion of the editor are of the nature of personal reflections on all-encompassing spirituality ...

REFLECTIONS ON EDUCATION IN EVOLVEMENT AND ALL-ENCOMPASSING SPIRITUALITY

Author:
Sandy Milne

To consider "education in evolvement and all-encompassing spirituality" presumes a degree of common understanding of the terms used. To that end, this reflection suggests some definitions, offers some insights, and reports on some lived experience.

As a child of the 1950's growing up in Canada, the idea of education was fairly obvious. There existed a body of knowledge, a set of facts, a way of behaving that was given, that pre-existed, that belonged to the experts in my life, be they family, teachers or religious leaders. My task, as a child, was to absorb and accept, to learn what was. Questions were permitted for clarification only and the usual answer to "Why?" was "Because I said so."

It was a time of certainty, about almost everything. Or at least it seemed so from a child's point of view. Looking back, I wonder if that certainty was a facade, meant to nurture and protect. From the vantage point of half a century later, such certainty seems suspect. The possibility of evolvement seemed remote. And yet …

I feel like I've always been teaching. Maybe it was helping other students with their reading while the teacher was busy with another grade in my two-room school house. Maybe it was asking the question that prompted the professor to explain the concept that I was aware was baffling my peers at university. Maybe it was helping my children figure out why their classmates were so mean on the playground. Maybe it was sympathizing with newcomers struggling with the irregularities of English spelling and pronunciation. Maybe it was encouraging fellow-worshippers to raise the

voices God had given them in songs of praise. But was I really teaching? If so, what was it? Or should it be who?

In all these situations, and many more, there has been a tension. Am I teaching people? Or am I teaching facts, concepts, and techniques? Is it, indeed, actually possible to teach anyone? I can present ideas. I can encourage and explain. I can provide an environment that is supportive and affirming. I can cite examples from my own experience. But in the final analysis, I cannot compel learning. It is up to the learner to do the learning. To update the old adage about horses and water, you can offer people information but you can't make them think!

I was first exposed to this distinction as a young professional presenting courses designed to help our customers deal with intricacies of the computer idiosyncrasies of the day. The courses were structured physically much like my high school classrooms had been. The "students" were seated at desks all facing towards a screen. I stood next to the screen, equipped with an over-head projector and slides with information I planned to teach. Periodically, the students broke into small groups to complete some assigned task meant to demonstrate that they had learned what I has just taught.

To my intense frustration, many of my customers, with whom I had previously worked collaboratively and successfully to implement solutions to their business problems, exhibited behavior I can only describe as juvenile. Whether it was snide asides, returning late from break or goofing off during group work, the respectful and reciprocal working relationship that I thought I had with them seemed to disappear. It was as if being in a classroom situation had made them revert to adolescence. What was going on?

Soon afterwards, our company hired a person skilled in adult learning. With his guidance, we came to the realization that we needed to revamp the whole idea of customer education. We needed to focus instead on facilitating customer learning. The problems to be solved needed to be their problems, not ours. The questions to be answered needed to be their questions, not

ours. We could show them techniques and remind them of constraints, but it was up to them to learn to choose which techniques to use to circumvent the constraints to get the job done.

So, what has all of this to do with "education in evolvement and all-encompassing spirituality"? Just this: you and I and every human person needs to do the hard work of spirituality personally, for oneself. I would contend that such hard work belongs to children as well as to adolescents and adults. It begins with the first breath of life and continues until the last heartbeat. The best that "teachers" or "educators" can do is facilitate learning.

Furthermore, there is a huge diversity among learners. It derives not only from their various ages and stages, but also, from the relative strengths of their intelligences, for example, visual–spatial vs. verbal–linguistic;[Wikipedia 2016) their personality types, for example INTJ or ESFP;(16 Personalities 2016)not to mention their differing live experiences, among many other things. Given such diversity, it is only reasonable that there is no one right way that will facilitate learning for everyone. To that end, I offer a survey of some of the insights that have helped me to learn and that have helped me to help others to learn.

One insight is to pay attention to the words I use. I sometimes find it helpful to examine the etymology of common words. Their origins and the changes in their meanings over time and space can point to underlying biases in how they are used today.[3] Take, for example, "education", which shares the same root as "induce" and "deduction". It is the Latin word "ducere" which means "to lead". However, where "induce" has the sense of "lead someone or something into" and "deduction" has the sense of "taking something away from", the prefix "e" has the sense of "out of", which is somewhat different. Thus, when we educate, the sense is to "lead or take or draw out". For me the sense is that education "draws out" from learners not only what they already know but also what they don't yet know and want to.

This brings me to an insight about a pattern that learning often takes. (Etymonline 2016) I have the honour and the privilege to watch this pattern in action as our 18-month old granddaughter encounters the world. When her parents first brought her to visit at the age of one month, she existed in a state of unconscious incompetence. Beyond the basics of respiration and digestion, neither of which she controlled in any way, she was competent at nothing. She couldn't walk, couldn't talk, was not interested in the world around her, could not, in fact, distinguish any separation of that world from herself. And that was just fine with her and with us all. That state of unconscious incompetence was absolutely appropriate for her then.

But that didn't last long! It began with her noticing something, wanting it, being frustrated that it was out of reach, stretching and stretching until eventually, to her surprise and our delight, she rolled over, first from tummy to back and then, with much more hard work from back to tummy. It was a time of conscious incompetence, being aware of not being able to move and working to do something about it. From rolling to crawling to creeping to pulling up to cruising to walking – it was an ongoing struggle for self-locomotion, consciously to overcome her incompetence.

The day she took her first independent steps was almost exactly a year later. With great daring, she let go, with one hand, with the other hand, set out with a look of triumph to get to her mother across the room. The steps were halting, the pauses long and the look of concentration was intense. She knew she could do it! She placed her feet carefully and slowly, conscious of her competence to walk.

Now, some 6 months later, that walking is taken for granted as she hurries to bring a book to be read, scurries to the front door, shoes in hand, wanting to go to the park, makes a bee-line to the dining room table when snack time is announced. She no longer pays any attention to how to get there. She just does it. She has reached the stage of unconscious competence, with respect to walking.

I've taken some time to outline the stages of this pattern for two reasons. First, it is helpful for me to be aware of my own learning stage with respect to any given task or issue or concept. This is especially true when I consider my own spiritual path. Others seem so much more advanced. The more I learn, the more it seems there is to learn. My best intentions are often waylaid by other, more urgent, concerns.   I need to be gentle with myself, to give myself time to get from one stage to the next, to realize that unconscious competence in one matter does not negate the likelihood of unconscious incompetence in another.

Perhaps more importantly, it is helpful to be aware of which stage of learning others are at. There is absolutely no point in encouraging someone to learn something until that person has moved beyond the unconscious incompetence stage. If they are not even aware that there is something to learn, they cannot possibly do the hard work of learning it.

Further insights follow from a question which arises in observing our granddaughter as she learns one new thing after another. (As an aside, I'm sure her father, our son, learned in much the same way, but we were far too busy being parents to pay attention!) What we observe is that she continues to pursue unconscious competence in many things. Nobody taught her to walk. She just did it! So it is with climbing and speaking and preferring green beans to green peas. The question is two-fold: what drives her to continue to learn and why these particular skills?

Our granddaughter and I would suggest, all of us learn what we do because that is what is accessible to us. If we grow up in France, we learn French. If we are surrounded by people who read books, we learn to read. If, on the other hand, we live inland, it is unlikely that we will learn to sail. Turning to why we learn, the same general pattern holds. We want to connect with the world around us. We want to get along with the people we live with. We want to make sense of "life, the universe and everything", to borrow from the title of a book by Douglas Adams.(Wikipedia 2016)

When it comes to spiritual matters, the same answers hold true. We have a common human drive to find out, to fit in, to interact. We respond to that drive within the systems, the beliefs, the codes, the creeds, the examples that are available to us. Consequently, achieving education in evolvement and all-encompassing spirituality for ourselves, or facilitating the learning in evolvement and all-encompassing spirituality in others, depends both on what realities are available to us, or them, the freedom to choose from and according to our, or their ability to respond to the human need to make meaning. What the educator can do is provide evidence of the wide variety of possibilities and support for the process of making meaning.

Here several maxims come to mind. Perhaps some of them will resonate with you as they do for me. "Faith is better caught than taught." Thus, how I behave is more important than what I say. "One learns best by teaching." Thus, others learn best when I learn from them. "If you can get the questions right, the answers are obvious." Thus every question is worth considering. "It is in encountering the other that one learns to know oneself." Thus difference is key to identity. "Catechesis differs from instruction insofar as it awakens echoes of faith already within." Thus the source of spirituality lies within the human spirit. Like all maxims, none of them stands alone but each points to something I know to be true.

This brings me to my last insight, mine to share but originally formulated by Canadian Catholic Jesuit mathematician and theologian Bernard Lonergan. He spent hundreds of pages and much of his life describing how it is that the human person comes to know. For Lonergan, knowing is much more than either "taking a good look for yourself" or "believing the experts." Knowing requires one to engage in a dynamic pattern of operations consisting of experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding. Here is one of Lonergan's more poetic descriptions:

From slumber, we awake to attend. Observing lets intelligence be puzzled, and we inquire. Inquiry leads to the delight of insight, but insights are a dime a dozen, so critical reasonableness doubts, checks, makes sure. Alternative courses of action present themselves and we wonder whether the more

attractive is truly good… by a specialized differentiation of consciousness…we …devote ourselves to a moral pursuit of goodness, a philosophic pursuit of truth, a scientific pursuit of understanding, an artistic pursuit of beauty…ever going beyond what happens to be given or known, every striving for a fuller and richer apprehension of the yet unknown or incompletely known totality, whole universe.(Lonergan 2007,13)

Lonergan calls this pattern "Transcendental Method". It is a method insofar as "it is a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results." It is transcendental insofar as it transcends any "particular field or subject" but "is concerned with meeting the exigencies and exploiting the opportunities of the human mind itself. It is a concern that is both foundational and universally significant and relevant."(Lonergan 2007, 14)

Lonergan's Transcendental Method provides an important tool in the quest for "education in evolvement and all-encompassing spirituality". In our striving to draw out what we know and what we wish to know, constrained by the possibilities that surround us, moving again and again from unconscious incompetence to unconscious competence, it is our response to the call to be attentive, to be intelligent, to be reasonable, to be responsible that situates our striving within the best that the human spirit can undertake.

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META-PHYSICAL WISDOM IN TODAY'S GLOBALIZED WORLD

Author:
Garima Talwar Kapoor

Here is a simple question for you—when was the last time you opened up a newspaper, clicked on your news media app, or connected on to social media, and found that the front-page news story, or trending topic, was a "bad news" story?

I'm guessing that happens every single time.

In today's interconnected, fast-paced, and increasingly globalized world, we are presented with unprecedented challenges and opportunities unseen by the generations before us. The way that we address these challenges and opportunities will shape the world for generations to come.

Whether the topic is global warming, economic downturns, or the outbreak of an infectious disease, the way in which we react to the front-page news requires thoughtful, strategic, and compassionate thinking. The ability to understand the interactions between the issues that confront our world shapes how we respond. The ability to create opportunities for progress shapes the type of future we will live in.

To think strategically and compassionately in a complex maze of information and ideas requires a skill set that that transcends academic disciplines, technical skills and professions. Today's global-setting requires a greater understanding in all-encompassing spirituality, so that we can inform our responses to today's challenges with meta-physical wisdom—whether they are religious, philosophical, or political.

The distinction between the skills used to navigate today's world and the knowledge gained by meta-physical wisdoms is important to explore, as it as

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it forms one of the greatest ironies of our time. Despite having the most information available—ever in our collective history at our fingertips—we create our own narrow realities. Depending on the search terms we use, the friend lists we cultivate, and the algorithms that websites use to pre-determine what we would like on our screens, we are not using the information available to us because we are instinctively drawn to ideas and thoughts that are similar to our own. While we have the ability to seek to know more than any generation before us, we are continuously exposed to information and ideas that align with our own world-view. Despite the opportunities presented by today's technology, we are using it to bolster *what* we think and not *how we* think.

Education in all-encompassing spirituality provides an insight into the world views of others, and enables an ability to think deeply and precisely about the world around us despite its complexity. In my perspective, the time of education in all-encompassing spirituality is now. If we are to turn the daily "bad news" stories into challenges to be faced and opportunities to be created, we need a society that can think deeper than the veneer that is passed off as news and information today.

I am excited by the promise that Cloverleaf holds. Given the ever-changing nature of our world today, Cloverleaf provides a space for thinkers across the globe to articulate the importance of all-encompassing spirituality. It is my hope that Cloverleaf will be accessible so that topics that are discussed in the journal are relatable and available for the broader public.

SPIRITUAL EDUCATION TO DISCOVER THE MEANING OF 'I'

Author:
Dr. V. N. Jha

Introduction

Indian Culture is one the most ancient cultures of the world. It has a time-tested tradition of thousands of years of reflection. Over thousands of years it has generated thousands of books of wisdom. Right from the very beginning we find sages asking very deep questions regarding the source of our plural world. They enjoyed complete freedom of thought and expression and so we find numerous responses to those questions. But whatever may be the response, one thing is amazing and it is the discovery of unity in diversity.

In this small article I would like to highlight the concept of education of that time which would teach the students to see unity in diversity. This concept is universal in nature and can be implemented anywhere in the world. This is the need of the hour since all other forms of education have failed to generate the required eyes to see the one in all. In the absence of such a philosophy of education, human beings will continue to remain divided and self-centered which is the root cause of all prevailing unrest, agitation, and sufferings all over the world.

Concept of Reality

Indians have been reflecting since times immemorial on the nature of the referent of 'I' and the sages have attempted to see oneself in all that one ordinarily considers to be different. This idea had origin in the most ancient text of the Hindus called the Rigveda. The later reflections in all the philosophical and non-philosophical texts continued to reconfirm those very ideas throughout the ages. Thus the Upanishads, the Geeta, the Brahmasutras, the great epics like the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and all

the traditions of cognizance kept on emphasizing on this sense of unity. In this tradition of reflection what is amazing is the concept of Reality. There were idealist and realist philosophers, no doubt. But so far as the concept of Reality is concerned unequivocally all wanted to promote the vision of 'One-ness' everywhere. This vision taught to include and not to exclude. That is what education must aim at. All distinctions are man-made, the Reality remains all-inclusive.

All that exists is Real. Some philosophers like Vallabhacharya have gone to point out that Plurality is the manifestation of Singularity. All that exists is the Brahman, the ultimate Truth, be it animate or inanimate; living or non-living. If this is the Truth, where is the scope for discrimination of any kind in the world?

Our living world

Ancient Indian literature kept on painting our planet, the earth as a nest. We are members of one family. We are brothers and sisters. This is the real familial bond which should keep us united where we can share our joy and sorrow. Education, therefore, must promote this and Indian ancient wisdom has the capacity to materialize this ideal. Unfortunately, modern education does not focus on this.

Human Mind

Indian sages discovered that the human mind itself has created this unwanted situation of unrest and misery. But it is possible to condition the human mind in such a way that it can come out of its narrow state and promote universality. In fact, Indians have created a complete system of training of the human mind to bring about the desired transformation in man. The system of Yoga has, in fact, this aim in mind although the world has missed this message of Yoga and takes it to be merely a system of physical exercise.

What is urgently needed is the training of the human mind to make it universal. Education must focus on this. The system of Yoga has a great capacity to contribute to education towards creating a universal mind. This

system has analyzed human behavior threadbare, and has given the road map to transform the human mind from its conditioned state to a de-conditioned state.

Indian Concept of Education

The ancient thinkers and philosophers have pointed out '**that is education which liberates the human mind from narrowness.'** I have not seen a better definition of education than this. If this aim of education is kept in mind and the education planners all over the globe can plan education accordingly right from the early age, the products of such an exercise will be worthy of being called 'human beings'. This, if materialized, will indeed convert the globe into 'a nest' where there is no scope for discrimination of any kind and purpose of coming to this planet is fully achieved.

There is a beautiful statement in the Panchatantra, the earliest book of fables in Sanskrit:

'He is my family member and he is not my family member, such consideration is entertained only by those whose mind is narrow, but for those who possess a broad mind the entire world is their family.'

It was this feeling that brought applauses for Swami Vivekanada, the great spiritual and social reformer, who began his address in the World Religion Conference in Chicago by saying "My brothers and sisters of America ! "

Conclusion

The world has progressed, no doubt. We have developed the best system of education too to contribute to this progress. The world is now called a village due to the advancement of science and technology. We have added comforts to our life. But all this has happened only on the physical level. Unfortunately, the contemporary education systems have failed in promoting the sense of humanity. I hope, you will agree with me. If that feeling is lost the very purpose of our being on this planet is lost.

The only hope left now is **spiritual education** in which the focus is not to understand 'Reality' in isolation but to understand 'It' in totality. Once we understand 'Reality' in totality, the scope for celebrating difference gets minimized since spiritual education provides training for liberating our mind from narrowness and promotes it to the state of all-inclusive broadness.

The Indian classical tradition of spirituality and philosophical reflection can contribute a lot towards achieving this goal.

RELEVANCE OF SPIRITUALITY IN TODAY'S GLOBAL SETTING.

Author:
Dr. Ranjeet Singh Bharaj

Most religions believe in One God and that he is the Creator of our Universe. One has to marvel at His Creation:--the Earth, the Sun the Moon, Stars and other Galaxies all exist in harmony.

There are so many things to be grateful for in life. We should take time to reflect on them and acknowledge how fortunate we all are for family and friends and endless opportunities; but we are also aware of all the millions of people suffering all over the world from natural disasters or self made constant wars.

People need to believe in religion. Religion and spirituality are intertwined. Religion consists of scriptures, temples, churches, mosques and communities whilst spirituality is defined in numerous ways including the belief in a greater power operating in the universe that is greater than oneself, a sense of interconnection with all living creatures and an awareness of the purpose and meaning in life and the development of personal values. It is a way to find meaning, hope, comfort and our inner peace either through meditation or yoga in your life.

Although spirituality is often associated with religion, personal spirituality can also be developed through music, art or a connection with nature. People also find spirituality through acts of compassion, selflessness, altruism and the experience of inner peace. Many people especially the western people have become interested in the role of spirituality so they spend some time in the Ashrams to learn. They come back having experienced inner peace. This is essential because in the West life has become very hectic and there is no time to spend on ourselves. Many westerners are also becoming interested in the role of spirituality in their health and health care, perhaps because of dissatisfaction with the impersonal nature of our current medical system, and

the realization that medical science does not have answers to every question about health and wellness.

In most healing traditions, body and spirit were intertwined. Today a growing number of studies reveal that spirituality may play a bigger role in the healing process than the medical community previously thought.

Spiritual practices tend to improve coping skills and social support and foster feeling of optimism and hope. This promotes healthy behavior that reduces depression and anxiety-the cause of many illnesses- and encourages a sense of relaxation.

By alleviating stressful feelings and promoting healing, one's spirituality can possibly influence the immune system as in AIDS, cardiovascular system, hormonal and nervous system.

Those people who have faith in God and compassion towards others, possess a sense of inner peace and have a better chance of long term recovery.

American scientists have said that yoga and meditation particularly the age old Indian practice of "Kirtan" for ten minutes may help boost memory and fight Alzheimer's disease.

Thus forgiveness, love, social support and prayers with a strong spiritual component such as demonstrated in Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) shows that spiritual discipline may be especially effective for drug and alcoholic addiction.

Results from several researches have shown that people with strong religious and spiritual beliefs heal faster from surgery, and are able to lower blood pressure and cope better with chronic illnesses such as arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, cancer and spinal cord injuries.

THE IDEA OF LOVE AND COMPASSION IN SUFI LITERATURE

Author:
Sami Rafiq

Sufi literature draws its inspiration from the core of the Quran, the sacred book of the Muslims. With its unique perspective on life and living, Sufi literature can offer solace and wisdom in the face of the trials and tribulations of modern existence such as existential alienation, exile, fragile peace, loss of values and meaningless violence.The paper attempts to explore sufi literary texts for the hope and redressal they offer in a world that is a constant struggle against risks which could be material, emotional or spiritual.

The paper will take into consideration the Sufi literary texts by Ibn Arabi, Muhammad Iqbal and Idries Shah. Ibn Arabi was a seminal thinker and Sufi of the 11th c.

The great poet, writer, philosopher and mystic, Mohammad Iqbal belongs to the 20th century whose works are inspired by the great mystic poet Jalaluddin Rumi.

Idries Shah also called a modern American Sufi writer has been very popular for introducing Sufism to the west.A close study of these texts will reveal the spiritual and the transcendental elements in the esoteric Sufi mind.

Modern society and the modern world could be defined as a synonym for risk because of the precariousness of human existence which is poised between many forces which could be political, commercial or psychological (pertaining to the self). The combined impact of all these forces puts the individual at risk that could be defined on many levels. But the gravest, is the fear of losing one's identity or values.

The paper will demonstrate how Sufism addresses the redressal of risks through a spiritual point of view. Great spiritual leaders have offered human

beings a salve and a source of hope through their lives and writings. In this context Sufism doesn't owe its origin to any single leader, rather it is based on a spiritual essence that is shared by the spiritually evolved everywhere irrespective of race or religion. The word Sufi is derived from the Persian word 'suf' meaning wool corresponding to the cotton gown of the seeker. For the Sufis 'seeking' is a metaphor that can be associated not only with religion, but also with art, dance and music.

The Sufi is essentially a lover of God and his/her life is devoted to preparing the soul for a meeting with God. There have been different Sufi systems in various countries which have variously interpreted Sufism, but the basic tenets of the relationship between the Sufi and God are the same.The Sufi's vision of life is profound for it demonstrates a path to God through learning and soul testing.

The events of Sufis' lives of simplicity and self discovery hold the keys to redress and resolve the risks of modern life. To study Sufism in its entirety would lead one into entirely unrelated fields such as philosophy and psychology.

The Sufi texts under consideration are in different forms such as poetry, stories and anecdotes.

In the poetry genre Jalaluddin Rumi's *Masnavi* is perhaps the most famous of all mystical poetry and has inspired and influenced many writers in the East and West alike and has been translated in many languages around the world. The poetic work titled *Payam -e -Mashriq* by Allama Iqbal has been strongly influenced by Rumi's *Masnavi* and is important as a valuable resource for ideas related to spiritual evolvement.

In his book of verse *Payam- e –Mashriq* (originally in Persian) Iqbal talks about identifying one's soul and one's goals through different images and different couplets.

The following verse:

Dil e man roshan soz e duroon ast

jahaan been man az ashk e khoon ast

Ze ramze zindagi begana tar baad

Kasi ko ishq ra goyad junoon ast

These lines could be translated as --the talks about the heart being aglow with the inner light of love and the eyes weeping tears of blood have changed my vision of the world. The real secret of life and the real passion of life is love.(translation mine).

The next verse expresses that the purpose of a Sufi's life as service to humanity.

Na paiwastam dar in bostansara dil

Ze bande in wa aun azade raftam

Chu bade subh gardidam dame chand

Gulaan ra aab wa range dade raftam

My heart does not stagnate in the garden of the world

Not bound by the world here and there

Like the short lived morning breeze

Giving dew and colour to the flowers and disappearing (translation mine)

This idea of death is an oft repeated subject in Iqbal's writing and Iqbal sees death as something that is feared by all.In the following lines he says that one should not fear death and rather learn the true secrets of life which would lead to an understanding the immortality of the soul.

Dilat mi larzat az andeshai marg

Ze beem ash zard maninde zareeri

Bakhud baaz aa khudi ra pukhte tar geer

Agar geeri? Pas az murdan na meeri

Your heart trembles with the fear of death

It turns yellow with fear

Return to yourself and strengthen your self

If you have caught it, you will die even in death (translation mine)

This idea has relevance to the risks of modern life where doubts and insecurities make a person weak and vacillating leading to a host of other ills. But to understand the immortality of the soul gives one focus and stability.

Iqbal also sees risk or strife or struggle as essential to the soul's spiritual development in the following lines.

Myara bazm bar sahil ke anja

Nava e zindagani narm khez ast

Ba darya galt wa bamoujash dar awez

Hayat e javidaan andar sateez ast

Do not decorate the shore with hope

Where the sound of waves is soft

Drown in the sea and join the wave

Eternal life can only be found in strife (translation mine)

Therefore living life in all its struggle and strife is a must to develop wholeness of personality and to gain eternal life. According to Iqbal it is neccessary to engage in the turbulence of trials and agony in order to realize one's true self.

Iqbal gives importance to spiritual strength and wisdom. He contrasts material prosperity with spiritual wisdom and shows how acquisition of wealth cannot contribute to the spiritual enlightenment.

Bisaatum khali az murg e kabab ast

Na dar jamum mai aine taab ast

Ghazal e man khurd barg e gyahi

Wale khoon e dil e ou mushq e naab ast

My plate is empty of chicken kebabs

Niether does my goblet hold the glitter of wine

Like the deer I feed on grass

And its blood turns into musk (translation mine)

In other words he doesn't need expensive food to produce spiritual wisdom.

He has used the life of Hazrat Ali as an example to show that physical strength does not come from expensive food. The life of the seeker is an example to show that material progress is more a hinderance than an incentive to spiritual evolvement. In relation to the risks of modern life which come from material prosperity, the idea is that material prosperity corrupts the soul and weakens the personality of the human being.

In yet another verse he refers to the mythical Narcissus which in Urdu poetry is 'nargis' a flower shaped like an eye that weeps at its blindness. In the following verse Iqbal uses the image of narcissus to suggest blindness towards the spiritual world. To save one's self from getting trapped in risks of stagnation and death found in the material world, Iqbal suggests that one awaken to the universe and the unseen spiritual world.

Chu Nargis in chaman na deede maguzar

Chu bu dar guncha e pecheda maguzar

Tura haq deeda e roshan tari daad

Khirad bedar wa dil khabida maguzar

Don't leave this garden blindly

Don't stay hidden like fragrance in flowers

God has given you brilliance of vision

Don't have an awakened mind and sleeping heart (translation mine)

In another verse Iqbal talks about finding one's own way and not blindly imitating others.

Tarash az teesha e khud jada e kheesh

Barah e deegraan raftan azaab ast

Gar az dast e tu kar e nadir ayad

Guna hai hum agar baashad swaab ast

In his mystical poetry which is about the sufi/lover seeking God the beloved there is the transmutation of all material things into spiritual.

Muhyi-ad-Din Ibn Arabi (1165-1240) was a great Spanish mystic who wrote mystical poetry, Quranic commentaries, and works of philosophy, jurisprudence, theology, cosmology and spiritual psychology.

William C. Chittick in his book *Ibn Arabi Heir to the Prophets* writes thus about Arabi's concept of soul and consciousness:

Human knowledge then is an internal image of an external image....The internal image is more real than the external image. The external image, after all, pertains to the physical, inanimate realm of being and corruption, but the internal image pertains to a higher level of existence and reality, a realm that is identical with life, awareness and consciousness (Chittick 2005,108)

The inner world is the spiritual world which according to the Sufi is all important and its wakefulness and alertness determines how one deals with

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the risks of life. On a higher level the awakening of the soul is brought about by risking the loss of the material world along with all its attractions.

The lover in Ibn Arabi's collection of poetry titled *Tarjuman Al Ashwaq*, is one who sacrifices everything in order to reach God.

In Verse LVII the following lines express the Sufi's proximity and distance from the beloved. He is the seeker as well as the sought and has risked everthing to reach that point:

7. Is this a vague dream or glad tidings revealed in sleep or the speech of an hour in whose speech was my happy fortune?

8. Perchance he who brought the objects of desire (into my heart) will bring them face to face with me, and their gardens will bestow on me the gathered roses.

The material objects are symbolic of spiritual stages and stations that the Sufi passes through in order to unite himself with the Divine. The gardens are stations of beauty and illumination that the sufi experiences and it is a vague dream (7. 'Is this a vague dream?' (cf. Kor. xii, 44), i.e. this union is impossible, for my spirit cannot escape from the corporeal world).

The phrase vague dream counter poses the material and spiritual world and shows the difficulty of crossing over into the spiritual realm because of the material existence of the Sufi. This agony of being imprisoned in the material world is heightened even though the sufi has sacrificed everything.

In another verse there is a link created between God and creation showing the necessity of such a relationship for the seeker.

In verse X the seeker is proud that he has gained a vision of God in creation:

1. She said, 'I wonder at a lover who in conceit of his merits walks proudly among flowers in a garden.

'2. I replied, 'Do not wonder at what thou seest, for thou hast beheld thyself in themirror of a man.'

Here the flowers refer to created things and garden is Gods essence.

To her (who represents a quality of God) he answers that Man has found Gods essence reflected in creation

In verse XI the attributes of the heart have been brought out.For the Sufis the heart is a source of love. When the heart falls sleeps and only the intellect reigns supreme, human beings cannot determine their identity in a risk ridden world.

Yet another verse has been very popular among the spiritually inclined:

13. My heart has become capable of every form: it is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks,

14. And a temple for idols and the pilgrim's Ka'ba and the tables of the Tora and the book of the Koran.

15. I follow the religion of Love: whatever way Love's camels take, that is my religion and my faith.

These lines have inspired many sufi poets down the ages

In verse XXIV Ibn Arabi mentions a certain verse that he had heard from someone else and he tried to use the verse in his own writing. This verse shows how some people are blessed with Gods benedictions and some are not. Ibn Arabi happens to be one of those denied those benedictions which are lightening and rain which are symbolic of knowledge:

The author says: A dervish recited to me the following verse, to which I knew not any brother—'Everyone who hopes for thy bounty receives copious showers thereof; thy lightning never breaks its promise of rain except with me.'

The deeper significance of Arabi's predicament is applicable to a human being's overwhelming identification with material possessions, because of which he/she will not risk forgoing material wealth for the sake of spiritual wealth and knowledge. Ibn Arabi has actually reached such a high station that he cannot gain anymore knowledge. In a sense he has reached that station because he has taken the risk of sacrificing his ego and his material wealth for the love of God. In the context of the modern world, certain risks have to be taken to gain higher knowledge which would liberate one from fear and helplessness.

The stories of Sufis that have been icluded in the books by Idries Shah are especially illustrative of Sufi ideals and values that strenghten the soul to survive the risks of modern life.

In his book titled *Seeker After Truth* (Idries Shah 1982,27-29) there is a story titled "Recital of the Cave" taken from the Hadith or sayings of the Prophet. The Prophet narrated this tale to his companions that three men were going on a journey and got trapped in the cave where they were resting for the night. The cave was blocked by a large boulder.

Each began to recount the good deeds he had done in order to please God and perhaps be saved by a miracle.

The first one narrated how he stood by his sleeping parents all night and served them milk and food. After this the boulder moved a little.

The second one narrated how he had fallen in love with a beautiful blind girl, who refused to marry him. He sent her a large amount of gold with the message that she could have it all if she spent a night with him. She agreed, but he realized with the fear of God, that he was not doing the right thing. He therefore allowed her to have the gold and repented for his intentions. The boulder moved still further but the opening was not large enough to let them get out.

The third one said that he had hired some workers to do his work.When he paid their wages one worker had disappeared.

So the man put aside the man's wages and bought a sheep with them.That one sheep multipled into many. Many years later the worker appeared and asked for his wages. The man told the surprised worker to take all the sheep. The worker took away the sheep after the narrator convinced him that they belonged to him.

The three men in the story represent the three virtues (sabr) patience, (tauba) repentence and (khidmat) service to mankind. This story amply demonstrates that compassion and kindness are the common heritage of mankind.

In another story titled "The Man who found Fate" (Idries Shah 1982, 153-155) lies hidden the power of the human heart. The man who reasoned too much and did not let his heart express itself was the loser in this story.

A certain man called Najaf Kuli considered himself so unlucky so that he said even the waters of the river would recede when he went near them. He set out to find Fate and question him about his misfortune.

On the way he met three troubled beings: a wolf with a headache, a gardener with a walnut tree which would not bear fruit and a fish which suffered from wakefulness. They all wanted him to report their problems to Fate. When he finally found Fate (an old man with a long beard) he was overjoyed. To his query Fate replied that he should return and that he would find good fortune on the way. The prescriptions for the problems of the three others were thus:

That the fish had a huge pearl stuck in its nostril and removing it would bring it comfort; the wolf should eat a foolish man to banish his headache and the gardener should dig out the box of treasure at the root of the walnut tree which would free the tree to bear fruit.

When Najaf Kuli told the fish about the prescription the fish asked for his help but he refused saying that his good fortune lay ahead. He said the same thing to the gardener who asked him for help and was even ready to share the treasure. When he gave the prescription to the wolf, the wolf said ''I'm ready to eat you because you are the world's greatest fool.''

Realization then dawned on Najaf that he had closed his eyes to his good fortune. He saved himself somehow from the wolf and went back to the fish and the gardener.

By helping them he became comfortably established himself.

The story clearly reveals that Najaf represented human beings who will not risk the heart and will be losers. But when they open their hearts to love and compassion they acquire the wealth of wisdom and enlightenment symbolized by the rewards in the story.

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WHAT IS "THAT"?

Author:
George Rowinski

There is only THAT.

IT is manifest and unmanifest.

IT is not anything, yet it is within all things.

IT is the essence and presence within and behind the visible, and unseen, by /human/ eyes

YET I AM THAT, WE ARE THAT, EVERY THING IS THAT.

THAT is highly integrated within a human being.

THAT is CONSCIOUSNESS.

THAT is AWARENESS in a human being.

Without THAT, the human body dies.

THAT, continues on forever.

THAT is a UNIVERSAL PRESENCE and ONENESS,

INDIVIDUALIZED into innumerable aspects of ITS (THAT-NESS), IS-NESS, BEING-NESS.

THAT, always was, IS now, and never non-existent.

IT is called, (1), (0), GOD, SOURCE, THE TAO and by many other names.

(1), THE ONE, a zero point,

Individualizes ITS THAT-NESS, AM-NESS, BEING-NESS into innumerable aspects,

Hence ongoing creation.

There is a figure eight flow of THAT,

As energy, luminescence,

From THAT ITSELF, THE ALL,

O its creations and a return unto ITSELF,

And perfect life is sustained.

At its CORE, THAT, THE ALL, THE ONE, THE STILL, THE SILENT, THE VOID, LUMINOUS BEING IS PERFECT.

The human being at its CORE IS ALSO PERFECT.

The cosmic law of free will permits the outer human mind to modify

And change the perfect state of its INDIVIDUALIZED GODSHIP as HARMONY

And BLISS into any and all imperfections known throughout human history.

Humans modify their CORE state of harmony and bliss,

Through their vehicles of thought, word, feeling, actions

And physicality into every possibly imaginable outcome.

All wars and injustices in human history were initiated,

In the name of the INNOCENT ONE,

(1), GOD, THE DIVINE STATE OF BEING.

In reality humans as INDIVIDUALIZED GODS,

Fight, and have fought their own GODSHIP,

And their neighbors as GOD,

Often in the name of religion,

and a God patterned after the human concept.

Oh! woe of woes! What a tragedy!

God unleashed against ITSELF.

Yet, the DIVINE ONE,

individualized within all humanity,

Remains passive, observing ITSELF

And saying, do with ME as you will,

But your disqualifications of MY PERFECTIONS

Will result in negative karma,

Energy, to be re-qualified in this lifetime,

Or some future incarnation.

How do we return to our individualized state of GODSHIP awareness?

PERFECTION AS HARMONY, JOY, BLISS, AND THE GREAT SILENT STATE OF EQUILIBRIUM

While functioning as the human manifestation in the realm of physicality?

Some ancient pearls of wisdom, tried, true and tested to return the outer human AWARENESS back to our GODSHIP:

1. Our individualized God Presence has no mother and no father.
2. Stilling of the outer mind is the primary approach to our awareness of our GODSHIP.
3. Universal God Presence is like an engine running in the background of life.
4. The universal God Presence is self sourced, never created.
5. An effort must be made to fix and maintain our outer consciousness upon our God Presence as luminosity.

6. Harmonious feelings result in so called miracles in our individual universes.
7. Universal and individual God Presence manifest as an emptiness-silence-stillness of consciousness that contains all and any potential when thought- feeling is initiated.
8. We are indvidualized God creators.
9. We are awake when our mind is still and subsequent thought and feeling is harmonious.
10. Hold no opinion and remove all potential for resultant karma.
11. Jesus said, "If thine eye be single, your body is full of light" Peace ensues when we fix attention upon our individual God luminosity.
12. Objectless awareness is like entering a chamber of riches at our disposa.
13. See only perfection in the world and our world will become perfect.
14. At its core, the world is already perfect.
15. Removing all limitation from our consciousness is like residing in an ocean of perfection.
16. How should we define PERFECTION, for THAT is our original state of Being?
17. Jesus said, "YE are Gods."
18. Place your consciousness upon your consciousness, your awareness upon your awareness and see that you are already enlightened.
19. Listen for, and hear the soundless sound.
20. Hold fast to the clear mind that contains no thought.
21. Shhhhhhhhhhh, peace, quiet, silence to the outer mind and YE have found your GODSHIP.
22. Envision light, light, light, from within the mind and send, send, send the light to the world.
23. Breathe in light and you will breathe out God, perfection.
24. The same God Light is within the killer, rapist, thief, cheater, as it is within Buddha, Jesus, Saints and us.
25. The divide resides between choosing perfection over imperfection.
26. There is NO THING behind all outer appearance, there is only luminous Presence that gives life to all THINGS.
27. There is only one Presence within all, all is One and One is all

28. Wherever we place the outer attention, there we see the universal (THAT), manifest, there we also see our SELF as THAT

So much for THAT, yet THAT is not all there IS, for THAT is just the beginning with no end, Oh! Holy of Holies, WE ARE THAT.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Bedrij, Orest. A theoretical physicist, a space scientist, an author and multidisciplinary researcher into the foundation of nature. For the past forty-five years, Dr. Bedrij has been doing research into the unity of nature, the science of awareness, and into the physics and philosophy underlying ultimate reality and the laws of physics, i.e., searching the answers to our questions about why nature is the way it is and who we really are by way of physics and direct experience.
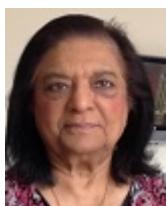
Bharaj, Ranjeet Singh. Recently retired from the practice of dentistry in Vaughan, Ontario in Canada where she now lives with her son and daughter-in-law. She was born in Nairobi, Kenya where she received her early education. Then her parental family moved to London, UK where she received her university and professional education. She practiced dentistry in the UK before moving to Montreal, PQ. She has had a long dentistry practice in various places in Quebec and Ontario.

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Dubey, Rajendra Narain. (b.1938) Educated in mathematics and civil engineering. With early education in Bihar, India, he was awarded a Ph.D. in civil engineering by the University of Waterloo in Canada. Dr. Dubey's interest in spirituality and Indian Philosophy began in 1977 under the guidance of his guru, Brahmarishi Vishwatma Bawra. He translated two of his guru's books from Hindi into English and is a founding member of Spiritual Heritage Education Network Inc.

Jha, V.N. Taught Sanskrit at Pune University, India from where he retired as the Director, Centre of Advanced Study in Sanskrit. He served as a visiting professor in Humboldt University, Germany; Nagoya University, Japan; University of Lausanne, Switzerland; and Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Mauritius. He also served as the first Chair of Special Centre for Sanskrit Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India. He supervised 35 Ph. D. scholars, edited and authored numerous publications.
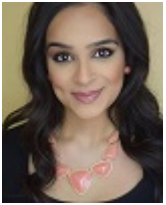
Kapoor, Garima Talwar. Executive Assistant and Special Policy Advisor to the Assistant Deputy Minister of Income Security and Pension Policy at the Ministry of Finance in Ontario, Canada. Her main interests are in understanding how various sectors of society (government, civil society and private industry, for example) can work together to improve the well-being of populations worldwide. She holds a Masters of Public Health from the University of Toronto, is an avid reader and dancer.

Kropf, Richard. Richard William Kropf was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1932. He graduated from Sacred Heart Seminary, Detroit, with a Bachelor in Liberal Arts, in 1954 and from St. John's Provincial Seminary, Plymouth, Michigan, in 1958 with a Bachelor degree in Theology awarded by the Catholic University of America. After ordination to the priesthood in 1958, he worked as a parish priest in the Diocese of Lansing,

Michigan until 1968. He went on to earn masters and doctoral degrees in philosophical and systematic theology from the University of Ottawa in 1971 and 1973 and, after research in France, was awarded a doctorate in sacred theology by the Université and the Université St-Paul.

Following a decade of teaching courses in philosophy, religious studies, the psychology of religion, and theology in various colleges and seminaries in Michigan, and after further study in the Holy Land followed by travels in Egypt and Greece, Kropf sought official Church permission to live in solitude as a hermit or anchorite, taking permanent vows in this state in 1985.

Lauricella, Sharon. Sharon Lauricella is a Communication scholar and Associate Professor in the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities at UOIT in Oshawa, Ontario in Canada. She holds a doctoral degree from the University of Cambridge (UK), and a BA from Wheaton College (Massachusetts). Sharon's research focuses on spiritual communication, digital feminist identities, and the use of mobile technologies in higher education. She has been recognized for her teaching excellence with a variety of teaching awards at the faculty and university level. Web address: www.sharonlauricella.com

Lauricella, Peter. Peter Lauricella was born in Boston, and spent most of his life in southeastern Massachusetts before retiring to Port Perry, Ontario, Canada, where he and his wife of 49 years now reside. He taught in the public school system in Massachusetts and holds a Bachelor's Degree from Bridgewater State University. A hospice volunteer and a member of the local arts council, Peter is also a talented polychromatic segmented woodturner, designing and turning wooden bowls and other vessels using contrasting woods from almost every continent in the world. Peter is Sharon's father and supports her in her academic endeavours. Sharon considers her father a most esteemed Professor Emeritus in the School of Hard Knocks. This is their first coauthored academic article. http://PeterLauricella.com   Peter.Lauricella@powergate.ca

Milne,Sandy. Sandy is a home-grown Canadian woman, born and raised in rural Southern Ontario and holding and undergraduate degree in Computer Science from University of Waterloo and a graduate degree in Catholic Thought from St. Jerome University in Waterloo. She has worked in the fields of information technology, education and religion. Since retiring from paid employment, she has volunteered in a variety of activities, mostly music or faith-related. In additions to serving as past chair of Kitchener-Waterloo Council of Churches, steering committee member of Interfaith Grand River, and music librarian for the *Inshallah* Community Choir at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, she is deeply involved in the lives of her mother, her husband, her children and their children, as well as the rest of her extended family.

Negoita, Mona. Mona Negoita is a physiotherapist working in intensive rehabilitation in Kitchener, Canada. She received her physiotherapy degree at the University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, after immigrating to Canada from Romania where she worked as a general physician. She has always been passionate about health care and education and has pursued a Masters in Medical Education at the Karolinska Institute, Sweden. Mona is also involved in developing a charitable organization (Abrazos Canada), working with the disabled and disadvantaged in Latin America.

Rafiq, Sami. Professor of English at Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India. She is a translator, writer, poet and novelist who celebrates human values.

George was born in 1945 in Karachi, India of Polish parents who were liberated from concentration camps after the Second World War. He frequently ponders why he chose to incarnate in the epic centers of holy teachings in the East, and why there is currently so must unrest in that part of the world. George subsequently found answers to his spiritual questions in the Gita, Upanishads, Buddhism, Taoism and Zen texts, the manuscripts of Blavatsky and to date, The Temple of The Presence.

Talwar, Shiv. Received his undergraduate degree in civil engineering from the Punjab University, India and his graduate degrees from Lehigh University, USA and the University of Waterloo, Canada. He retired from his career in 1996 and established Spiritual Heritage Education Network Inc. in 2000. He has been serving as its President since its inception. He owes his spiritual education to his parents, his school teachers in India and his mentor, Swami Vishwatma Bawra to whom he is eternally indebted

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