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## **Spirituality that Enables and Empowers: Making Spirituality Relevant for Today's Youth**

**S. Stephen Jayard**

Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, India

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*Abstract:* Given the extremely minute fabrications that have gone behind the universe and the innumerable biotic coincidences several scientists tend to think that the universe is not self-explanatory. Though the universe is immense in its size and age yet it is finite; there are more evidences emerging now, to show that the universe had a beginning (Big Bang!) and will have an end; of course there are several proposals to narrate the end of the universe, like Big Crunch theory! As the universe cannot explain its own existence it is not

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difficult to think of an agent outside of it. Catholic Church is among the many believing communities to take this fact to show that human reason can certainly take us to believe in the existence of God: "The world cannot have its origin and its destination within itself. In everything that exists, there is more than we see. The order, the beauty, and the development of the world point beyond themselves toward God. Every man is receptive to what is true, good and beautiful. He hears within himself the voice of conscience, which urges him to what is good and warns him against what is evil. Anyone who follows this path reasonably finds God." So in this article, the author pleads for an enduring and seasoned spirituality that is relevant for the youth of today.

**Keywords:** Spirituality, Seasoned spirituality, Youth, Religious relevance for today, Science and Spirituality.

Spirituality is a word that is usually not attractive to the modern youth; many of them are indifferent to them and some of them run away, and still others would even argue against the very concept of spirituality, saying that it is not only unnecessary and irrelevant in the modern society but also dangerous to the peace and harmony in society. It is in this context this paper takes up this notion of spirituality for some clarification and suggestions to modern society, especially to our youth today.

First, it begins to clarify the very notion of spirituality, by contrasting it against the idea of religion; spirituality goes beyond the 'confines' of religion; it is not proper to identify spirituality with the idea of religion, though both are not unrelated. Since the modern youth is generally

carried away by the contemporary science some efforts are taken to show that science in its real sense is, not only not against spirituality, but in fact it even enriches the notion of spirituality. Thus, in section two, it is shown that modern youth can be very comfortable with the notion of spirituality even in the ethos of science today. In section three, the notions of seasoned and seasonal spirituality are clarified, by showing that seasonal spirituality cannot be genuine spirituality. Finally concluding remarks are made along with some suggestions to make studies of spirituality and meditation as part of the regular curriculum of our education, so that our children get holistic growth and development in life.

### **I. Religion and Spirituality: Some Clarifications**

Today's young people are often disillusioned with religion due to many factors. The number of conflicts at various levels, the number of wars, the amount of violence and bloodshed – ironically all in the name of religions, that instruct us to love everyone, disturb any thinking person, and especially the modern youth. Many regions seem to have unfortunately forgotten their original charism and vitality; they seem to be more of an institution rather than a way of life; they do not affect the value-systems and convictions. The externals and the rituals dominate over the inner convictions and attitudes of the believers. For instance, as Krishnamurthy points out, “[T]oday religion has almost degraded into a vast fund of apparently meaningless rituals and rites, coupled too often with fundamentalist dogmatic attitudes. And on top of this it has come to be massively used as an alibi for acquiring political power and economic domination and for condoning violence”.<sup>1</sup> Religion is identified with its founder(s) and their lives, holy books and worship places, rites and rituals, dogmas and doctrines. But spirituality, though it can have religion as its starting point and an enriching element, goes beyond the ‘limits’ of religion. Tom Boyd has claimed ‘that the current

attempt to split spirituality away from religion is an expression of postmodern thinking', yet he contends that 'spirituality and religion, while distinguishable, cannot be separated.'<sup>2</sup>

Samuel Rayan distinguishes three models of spirituality – *distributive spirituality* (some follow a spiritual life and others don't); *alternating model of spirituality* (same people alternate their activities between spiritual and other engagements) and *interpenetrative model of spirituality*; (all are spiritually engaged in all their actions, in such a way that action and contemplation are integrally connected).<sup>3</sup> Spirituality is today seen as the quest for enlightenment, meaning and purpose in life; for instance, according to Elena Lugo: "Spirituality is the pursuit of meaning, of an intimation of purpose and sense of vital connection to one's ultimate environment – the dimension of depth in all of life's endeavours and institutions. In short, a spirituality functions, as a principle of enlightenment, integration and finality without which our self-reflection, self-realization and self-surrender would become superficial, chaotic and aimless."<sup>4</sup> Nowadays, spirituality has been defined more inclusively: "Spirituality has been described as an attempt to grow in sensitivity, to self, to others, to non-human creation and to God, or as an exploration into what is involved in becoming human."<sup>5</sup> It is now common to see spirituality as a tool to achieve self-transcendence; it is "that dimension of the human subject in virtue of which the person is capable of self-transcending integration in relation to the Ultimate, whatever this Ultimate is for the person in question. In this sense, every human being has a capacity for spirituality or is a spiritual being."<sup>6</sup> The dichotomy between spiritual and secular realms is getting thinner: "New spiritualities are formulated and practised

within a secular context, and these challenge the traditional, homogenized and universal understanding of spirituality in established religions traditions”.<sup>7</sup>

Down the centuries various religions and religious ideologies have been upholding various claims about God, Divinity and Spirituality. Given the fact that human beings are not perfect their understanding of God is also not perfect. Every religion and ideology seems to have some lacuna or fallacy in some aspects or the other. In the words of Neale Walsch one can point out a few major fallacies about God and Life, which are responsible for deep crises and wars, killing and violence in our societies: “God needs something; God can fail to get what God needs; God has separated you from God because you have not given God what God needs; ... God needs so badly that God now requires you, from your separated position, to provide it; and God will destroy you if you do not meet God’s requirements.”<sup>8</sup> These fallacies are so harmful that they affect the convictions and value-systems; when fallacious beliefs come together they even create more harmful beliefs and teachings about the very nature of human beings, the purpose, the origin and their destiny. Such harmful teachings claim that: “Human beings are separate from each other; there is not enough of what human beings need to be happy; to get the stuff of which there is not enough, human beings must compete with each other; and some human beings are better than other human beings.”<sup>9</sup>

Walsch looks for refined spirituality which appreciate the efforts and methods of others which try to experience and express the inner drives towards the Divine; it would neither ridicule nor attack the other ways of experiencing and expressing and “This New Spirituality will do more than simply create religious tolerance, however. It will offer a whole new set of basic values around which humanity could choose to organize. [It is] a New way to create and experience

its politics, its economics, its religions, its educational systems, and its social constructions of every kind.”<sup>10</sup> Further, he looks forward to having a new type of spirituality that would make inter- and intra-religious fights unnecessary, meaningless and impossible; that spirituality would be rooted upon the, what he calls, the Big Idea about One God. The basis for that Big Idea is nothing but love... love in its genuine sense: “The Big Idea is that We Are All One. The Big Idea is that there is Only One God, and this One God does not care whether you are Catholic or Protestant, Jewish or Muslim, Hindu or Mormon or have no religion at all. The Big Idea is that all we have to do is love each other, and everything else in our world will take care of itself out of our willingness to act in loving ways with each other... The Big Idea is that all the earth’s natural resources belong to all the world’s people, and this has nothing to do with what land mass that resources is located on, over, or under.”<sup>11</sup>

According to Ursula, the concept of spirituality is today used “as transcending the assumptions of specific religious traditions. It has become a general code word for the search of direction, purpose and meaning related to the deepest dimension of human existence. Spirituality is thus no longer exclusively based on an a priori theological standpoint, but is rooted in a search, in experimentation, questioning and exploring”.<sup>12</sup> It is seen, “not as an idea or concept but as praxis, is a perennial human concern which entails encounter with self-transcendence.”<sup>13</sup> Such a refined understanding of spirituality cannot be inimical to science, and vice versa.

## **2. Science and Spirituality: Mutually Strengthened**

Contrary to the much popularized notion that science is against spirituality, today we realize that science not only

not against spirituality, it can even be seen as contributor towards it. Several hard core scientists do agree that science, with all its discoveries and explorations, can easily add to a sense of awe and wonder, divinity and spirituality. Science can easily take us to the level of spirituality, which cannot be reduced or identified with religion as such.

In spite of all growth in many fields of science and religion, there are some lacunae in understanding their role and relevance to humanity. Integrated and inter-disciplinary approach is sadly lacking in looking at science and religion. The differences between them are focused so much that the similarities are overlooked or unduly denied. That is why, there are several myths about them; for instance, Krishnamurthy points out three such myths, entertained in India and elsewhere: i) “Science and religion are opposed to each other. They cannot coexist for the same personality; ii) It is the exclusive privilege of Science and Technology to do good to the Society and take care of their well-being. Religious education is a superficial luxury that can be dispensed with and iii) Religion and Spirituality are only two different names for the same game that adults play when they have nothing else to do. Religion is the cause of several wars and killings and so Spirituality has no place in the civilized world of Science and Technology”.<sup>14</sup>

However, contemporary science gradually discovers umpteen number of biotic coincidences hidden nature. Some of them so extremely fine-tuned and minutely fabricated that one cannot but think of some design, and thereby a designer, behind these fabulous structures. Just to mention a few of the mysterious coincidences in the universe: a) A stronger nuclear strong force (by as little as 2 per cent) would have prevented the formation of protons – yielding a universe without atoms. Decreasing it by five per cent would have given us a universe without stars; b) Gravity is roughly  $10^{39}$  times weaker than

electromagnetism. If gravity has been  $10^{33}$  times weaker than electromagnetism, ‘stars would be billion times less massive and would burn a million times faster’; c) The nuclear weak force is  $10^{28}$  times stronger than gravity. Had the weak force been slightly weaker, all the hydrogen in the universe would have been turned to helium (making water impossible)<sup>15</sup> d) The very nature of water, so vital to life, is a big mystery – unique among the molecules, water is lighter than its solid than liquid form; ice floats. If it did not, the oceans would freeze from the bottom up and earth would now be covered with solid ice and no life would have survived in the oceans.<sup>16</sup>

The origin and the nature of life seem to be another mystery for science. Is life available only on the earth? So far, no substantial evidence of life as we know on the earth, or in any form for that matter, has been obtained from anywhere in the vast known space. But this does not rule out the possibility of some sort of life in the billions of planets. It is estimated that there could be one hundred billion trillion Earth-like planets in space, and it is inevitable that some sort of life exists there. Edward J. Weiler, Director of NASA, points out that “We know the number of stars in the universe is something like one followed by 23 zeros. Given that number, how arrogant to think ours is the only sun with a planet that supports life, and that it’s the only solar system with intelligent life”.<sup>17</sup>

Whether life is found only on the earth or on some other planets as well, it is still a mystery. Paul Davies<sup>18</sup> wonders about life on the earth: “Most textbooks focus on the chemistry of life: which molecules do what inside the cell. Obviously, life is a chemical phenomenon, but its distinctiveness lies not in the chemistry as such. The secret of life comes instead from its informational properties; a living organism is a complex information-processing



system.”<sup>19</sup> Complexity is said to be a criterion for all known forms of life; even single-celled bacteria is amazingly complex. But even hurricane, galaxy and all the known and the unknown universes are also extremely complex, but are they living? That is why, Francis Crick rightly wonders: “the origin of life appears... to be almost a miracle, so many are the conditions which would have had to be satisfied to get it going.”<sup>20</sup>

The very notions of life, origin and destiny of the universe and everything in it including humans, meaning and purpose of human life, the fact of human consciousness, memory, emotions and so on, the nature and functions of human brain – are some of the areas in which science realizes that it has to go beyond itself to make any meaningful investigations. Biologically humans and all other creatures are the same in terms of some fundamental features and functions, but humans totally differ from the aspects of consciousness, and its derivatives like morality, spirituality, and different degrees of commitment and dedication. As Krishnamurthy points out, “Hunger, sleep, insecurity and sex urge are common to man and animals but the understanding of dharma is the extra quality of Man.”<sup>21</sup> Several philosophers of science point out that even to justify its very existence, science has to go beyond itself. Thus we are made to realize that ‘science alone’ is neither possible nor desirable! When we take science in its larger sense it becomes more productive, relevant and vibrant; it gets more human and humane. Science cannot prescribe values. “Science is know-how without know-whether. Science describes what is (or was, or will be), not what ought to be. Scientists, *qua* scientists alone, are not *ipso facto* wise. After science, we still need help deciding what to value; what is right and wrong, good and evil; how to behave as we cope. The end of life still lies in its meaning, the domain of religion and ethics.”<sup>22</sup>

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz (1646-1716), the mathematical and philosophical genius, who had invented differential and integral calculus independently of Isaac Newton, argued that God should be the wall that stopped all further questioning; in his *Principles of Nature and Grace*, he declares: “Why does something exist rather than nothing? For ‘nothing’ is simpler than ‘something’. Now this is sufficient reason for the existence of the universe... which has no need of any other reason... must be a necessary being, else we should not have a sufficient reason with which we could stop.”<sup>23</sup>

Finally, Krishnamurthy gives an analogy to show that there is no contradiction between science and spirituality. “We need both. The same person has to be a father at one time, a husband at another time, a son in another context, and a subordinate under a boss in a totally different circumstance – these are not contradictions but different presentations of the same personality. So also science and spirituality are different presentations of the same ultimate Truth.”<sup>24</sup>

### **3. Signs of Seasoned Spirituality**

What I mean by seasonal spirituality is that spirituality which emerges in a person only in a given situation, say, during the time of stress and difficulties; it is like thinking of God only when one becomes sick, one faces some challenges in life or finds oneself in a situation beyond one’s control. If one tends to think of God only when one becomes ‘old’, then that spirituality is seasonal; if one thinks of God only when one gets into some trouble, only when one wants to be delivered from some difficulties, then that spirituality is seasonal; if one experiences the presence of God only during one’s visits to some holy

shrines or in the charismatic conventions and prayer meetings, then one's spirituality is seasonal.

Spirituality, being an experiential reality, cannot be captured in clear, precise and absolute definitions. However we can think of ten measures to understand the nature and the meaning of, what I call *Seasoned Spirituality*. First let us see what seasoned spirituality is NOT: i) **To be spiritual does not mean** being found always at the places of worship, nor to be found carrying the Sacred Books. For, a goat that is housed in the library will certainly not become intelligent or wise! It is not the place where we are but with what dispositions we are, that matters; ii) **To be spiritual is not merely** in performing the religious rituals all the times. One can perform them very diligently but still can be very far away from God and people. It is not uncommon to see people who attend the Holy Mass in the church (or the *Namaaz* at the mosque or perform *Puja* at the temple) in the morning and during the very day getting bribe to do their duty or exploit innocent people in dealing with them. Their conscience does not prick them, probably because they think they pacify God by offering something to God from the bribery that they receive!; iii) **To be spiritual is not** to be ignorant of facts about life, world, scientific developments, one's self, religion, Sacred Scriptures etc. It is in fact glory to God when one fully uses her / his reasoning power and equips oneself in every aspect; iv) **To be spiritual is not** in hiding under the shield of 'God-will-take-care-of' attitudes. God will, in fact, pity those, for having given them the intelligence which is one of the fundamental distinguishing characteristics of being humans; v) **Genuine spirituality does not depend on** how long we pray, but how deep we pray! It is not in how holy we look, but in how holy we think! It is not in the good certificates given by people, but by God! Yes, the more spirituality is seen outside, perhaps, it is less likely that is found inside.

Let us now see what seasoned spirituality is: vi) **To be spiritual means** to be consciously aware of God's presence, not only in the places of worship but also on the dusty streets of one's locality; it is the ability to see God in the suffering humanity, to see him who longs for consolation, who longs for a ray of hope and meaning in one's life. Yes, it is the ability to see God in all, and all in God; vii) **To be spiritual means** to see God in people, not only in those, whom one loves, which is relatively easier, but also in those whom one does not like, or does not like even to think of them.<sup>25</sup> viii) **To be spiritual implies** being genuinely human and genuine humanness has certainly room for occasional stumbling and unintended mistakes. Yet, one is truly sorry for the sins, and is determined not to repeat them with the strength that comes from God. We need to be practical in having expectations about ourselves; being over-angry for our mistakes, or being scrupulous or pre-occupied about our sins are, in fact, signs of not trusting the forgiving mercy of God; or it may even be the indication of our arrogance that makes us think of ourselves too big to sin! ix) **To be spiritual means** being firm, without being harsh; being principle-oriented, without being arrogant; being compassionate without being compromising and being humble without reducing oneself to nothingness. (Genuine humility means the constant awareness of my dependence on God, others and nature for my very living); x) **To be spiritual means** to be cool, calm and serene even in the midst of the moments of uncertainty and anxiety. Such a person is convinced of doing one's best and leaving the rest to God; she/he never doubts the fact that God always gives the best to those who leave the choice to him; it is easy for such people to drop their ego; dropping one's ego is, in fact, a real challenge, even to a yogi, who has dropped everything else!

The idea of 'seasoned' spirituality is also related to the notion of 'seasoned' understanding of God. I have elsewhere elaborated the 'seasoned' notion of God, under the title: "*The God I Don't /Can't Believe In*". True, there are millions in the world who don't believe in God, who deny God's existence, who even just ignore the whole issue, or just humbly accept that they don't know whether there is God. On the other hand billions of believers are convinced of God's existence and they dedicate their lives to religions or spiritual movements. All these, of course, conceive God in their own ways, according to the teachings of their religions or the revelations received by the saintly seers of those traditions. The understanding of God differs from religion to religion, time to time, culture to culture and place to place; there is nothing wrong in that and, in fact, it has to be like that; for it is not humanly possible to confine God, who is infinite, into our limited concepts. If we succeed so, then perhaps God ceases to be God, because by the very definition of God, we all understand, including those who deny God, that God must be infinite in every positive quality, like, truth, love, mercy, forgiveness, compassion, presence, existence, time – in all possible positive aspects God must be infinite. Of course this must not make one think that God can be infinite in having negative aspects as well. For instance, God is infinite in telling lies and having hatred! No, because God being TRUTH cannot violate himself by telling lies, and God being LOVE cannot violate himself by hating anyone and this in no way diminish his omnipotent (all-powerful) nature! Therefore as long as we are limited by space and time, we can never ever have the final and absolute understanding of God, as God is. May be the day when we see God face to face, as most of the religious traditions believe, we will understand God totally.

However, every now and then we need to critically evaluate our understanding of God and our claims about God; if they

are oppressive and negative they will do more harm than good. In fact, no religion or no faith is much better than a wrong one! When our concepts of God are wrong and faulty, dehumanizing and enslaving, we end up justifying many wrong ideologies, and even go to the extent of harming and destroying one another! It is a sad, undeniable yet, fact that in today's world violence, massacre and blood-shed are perpetuated and justified in the name of religions, though, paradoxically, no religion advocates it. Many people deny God and religions because of the negative witness borne by the followers of religions. That is why, the need to constantly introspect our convictions, to evaluate our own belief-systems and to critically look at the religious rituals, arises very strongly.

Here I would like to spell out certain ideas and convictions that don't suit the 'real' nature and attributes of God.<sup>26</sup> It is, perhaps, easier to spell out in what sort of God I don't believe in rather than what sort of God I believe in! *Yes, I shall never believe in the God or the God who does not deserve my faith and surrender is:*

The God who is heartless not to answer the painful cries of an honest man / woman in agony...

The God who enjoys seeing his own people in pain and delights in their sufferings, which cannot be explained with sufficient and convincing reasons...

The God who makes himself so dreadful that people hesitate to approach him and to have an enslaving and oppressing allegiance to him ...

The God who reserves a set of sins as too big for him to forgive, when the sinners approach him with sincere repentance, genuine remorse and deep resolutions of not committing them again...

The God who makes certain people suffer from cancer or sterility or impotency and is happy about it...

The God who abandons those who, in spite of their sincere and eager search, have not known him...

The God who does not take initiative to meet even those who, for some reasons or the other, have abandoned him... like a loving mother reaches out to her child, who in a moment anger shouts at her, "go away, I don't want you, I don't love you"...

The God who does not make everything and every person that he touches, new and fresh creation...

The God who does not create everyone with a specific purpose and goal in his / her life...

The God who does not get 'melted' in the cries of the child for food and in the tears of its mother who is incapable of feeding that child...

The God who will be happy with someone who goes through his / her life without making even a single person happy and giving them hope and meaning in their lives...

The God who destroys nature, which is his own creation, and the God who delights in those who disfigure and deform the environment...

The God who would not incarnate himself into the world to love and participate in the daily joys and struggles of humans...

The God who does not delight in the discoveries and inventions of humans, who achieve them by legitimately and wisely using their intelligence and reasoning power...

The God who cannot be the bedrock of all my hopes...

The God who causes some accidents, even fatal ones, just to teach others some strong lessons...

The God who does not bring under his justice those who deliberately exploit others, violate their human dignity and live a selfish and meaningless life...

The God who does not fill with his grace and presence, those whom he touches...

The God who does not get drenched himself in the painful tears of those who have lost their loved ones and culture, language and land, due to the mindless warfare and inhuman exploitation...

The God who hesitates to create human beings with the gift of 'freedom', in spite of the dangerous possibility of denying him with the wrong use of the very freedom given by him...

The God who does not delight and strengthen those who toil for human rights and dignity, who risk their lives to establish harmonious and egalitarian society...

The God who does not light a ray of hope and give a sense of meaning to those who sincerely turn to him...

Yes, I can't believe in such God... I don't want to believe in such God... and such God does not deserve my surrender and worship... because, my God is a *God with a DIFFERENCE!*<sup>27</sup>

### **Concluding Remarks and Suggestions**

Given the extremely minute fabrications that have gone behind the universe and the innumerable biotic coincidences several scientists tend to think that the universe is not self-explanatory. Though the universe is immense in its size and age yet it is finite; there are more evidences emerging now, to show that the universe had a beginning (Big Bang!) and will have an end; of course there are several proposals to narrate the end of the



universe, like Big Crunch theory! As the universe cannot explain its own existence it is not difficult to think of an agent outside of it. Catholic Church is among the many believing communities to take this fact to show that human reason can certainly take us to believe in the existence of God: “The world cannot have its origin and its destination within itself. In everything that exists, there is more than we see. The order, the beauty, and the development of the world point beyond themselves toward God. Every man is receptive to what is true, good and beautiful. He hears within himself the voice of conscience, which urges him to what is good and warns him against what is evil. Anyone who follows this path reasonably finds God”.<sup>28</sup>

Among the traditional arguments proposed to prove God’s existence, the one put forward by John Henry Newman (1801-1890) is known as the ‘Moral Argument for God’s Existence’. We feel good when we do good, and we feel bad when we do wrong; he is wondering about the origin or the cause of the good / bad feeling. There is a natural drive within us to reach out to those in suffering or pain; we spontaneously express sympathy / empathy with those in struggles or dangers. Why do we have the feeling of moral responsibility over our actions? That is why, he is convinced that “If... we feel responsibility, are ashamed, are frightened, at transgressing the voice of conscience, this implies that there is one to whom we are responsible, before whom we are ashamed, and whose claims upon us we fear.”<sup>29</sup>

In spite of enormous growth and scientific achievements among the rich nations there are millions who find no meaning in their lives; having lost it they don’t find life worth the while in spite of huge possessions and big positions. The material riches don’t satisfy the inner longing of the human spirit; in a way, there are poor everywhere, both in the poor countries and the rich as well – either economically poor or emotionally

poor. One may have everything to make one's life comfortable and enjoyable but may not have the basic thing that makes life meaningful. That is why, St. Teresa of Kolkatta, a modern saint who can certainly inspire the modern youth, is convinced: "There is hunger for ordinary bread, but there is also hunger for love, kindness, and mutual respect – and that is the great poverty from which people today suffer so much".<sup>30</sup> Thinking along the same lines, she explains how the lack of real love makes human lives a tragedy and drudgery. Lack of love leads humanity to emptiness, both individually and collectively. That is the reason why St. Teresa abhors this type of 'sickness' of all others sicknesses: "Tuberculosis and cancer are not the most terrible sicknesses. I think that a much more terrible sickness is to be unwanted and unloved"<sup>31</sup>

Today what the youth needs is intellectual clarity and spiritual experience. Often they get only instructions and orders about do's and don't's in their traditional religions. Their parents, elders and the religious authorities make sure that they follow certain rules and regulations that give them the clear identity of belonging to certain religious or believing community. The modern youngsters, exposed to more of rational approaches by the contemporary science around, look for rational basis for their beliefs and faith-claims but the followers of the traditional religions are often unaware of such rational explanations for their faith and therefore they are not able to convince most of the youth about the need and relevance of following a religion. So what the modern youth need today is intellectual clarity of what they are asked to believe. Of course, though purely rational and logical approach to religion, or even to life in general, is neither possible nor desirable.

Today's youth need to be taught that only rational or scientific approach is neither desirable nor possible in

every aspect of our life. There are lots of grey areas where reason and logic seem to be insufficient to explain everything. We need to stop at certain brute facts and have to accept as they are; for instance, no one can give the rational justification to the inductive reasoning, which uses the assumption that ‘the future will resemble the past’ – this can never have complete logical justification; to justify this principle one has to assume the very principle of inductive reasoning, that since it has worked in the past it will work in future as well! Further, for virtues and moral principles one cannot have pure scientific basis. As Einstein points out, “You are right in speaking of the moral foundations of science, but you cannot turn around and speak of the scientific foundations of morality.”<sup>32</sup>

Nevertheless, some rational basis and clarity is very essential so that one is not misled by superstitions and illogical practices in the name of their religion. So the religious leaders, parents and elders are bound to help our youngsters to have intellectual clarity about what they believe and without this they cannot be rooted in what they believe. If at all they want to have conviction of certain principles and ideals they need to know them with clarity and this can lead them to spiritual convictions. Perhaps some suggestions and guidelines such as given below can be thought of.

It is high time that our education system became holistic. It must involve dimensions of spirituality in the syllabus of the students from the early stages. There must be elaborate plans “to incorporate the habits of spirituality, like introspection, meditation, analysis of human behaviour through study of Biography and Religion – in the curriculum from as early a level as possible”.<sup>33</sup> It is unfortunate that our education focuses only upon the rational aspects of our human existence, but obviously there are many more aspects to our existence in addition to rationality. Krishnamurthy argues that humanity is educated only half, in the sense only science is taught and

spirituality is ignored. We can progress holistically only with the integration of science and spirituality, because only science and technology cannot give the real and meaningful progress of humanity. We may be successful in conquering the space out there, but not the 'inner' space; "it may be possible because of science and technology to talk across the vast emptiness of space but it is important to know and decide what to talk".<sup>34</sup>

Fortunately, today some schools in India and abroad include yoga classes as part of their curriculum. They need to be taken more seriously by both the students and the management. It is often seen as mere physical exercise-techniques. Along with it, the young minds need to be trained in various techniques of meditation as well, which will draw out the spiritual powers from them. "Meditation, being the higher and better use of the enormous spiritual force lying hidden in us, should be included as a compulsory part of a curriculum for value education right from the school level" and this will enable them to be familiar with the Absolute and the Supreme Wisdom: "just as the scientific pursuit of Truth consists of the sole reliance on rationality, the spiritual pursuit of Truth relies on the omnipresence of the Absolute in our own consciousness in everything that we do or think."<sup>35</sup>

Krishnamurthy proposes a nine-point master plan for value education to be symbolically embedded in the educational system: "i) Human qualities of sympathy, compassion, kindness and brotherhood must be inculcated into the minds of young children for the sake of family, nation and the world; ii) Biographies of great men and women of the world to be taught at every level of the education, according to their age and background – scholars, saints, innovators, leaders, reformers, religious heads, social workers, scientists, devotees of the Lord, writers, poets,

thinkers, philosophers, performers of the arts, managers, administrators, entrepreneurs, and professionals; iii) Awareness of the disasters of the ecology and the urgent need for protecting the planet must be given to the students; for that they need to learn that the whole planet is one living entity; iv) They must be encouraged reading books and classics; v) As early as the age of 5, the practice of silent prayer must be a daily routine irrespective of the religious denomination or religion; they need to be taught God-experience; vi) From the age of 7, they need to be taught the habit of sitting for an introspection and meditation; vii) From the age of 11, regular lessons on meditation should form part of the curriculum; viii) From the age of 15, the basic elements of genuine spirituality must be taught to them; to teach them objectively the commonness of spirituality in all religions; they must be motivated in comparative religion... If religion is totally left to the individual private affair, the students will be left out without the means of understanding any culture beyond a limited subset of their own and ix) They should be taught history, not as history of the different countries but as history of humanity; peace is not just the absence of war, but mutual understanding and respectful attitude towards the rights of the others".<sup>36</sup>

The absence of such spirituality in the modern society has created violence and hatred, vacuum and meaninglessness in life; being bogged down with the materialistic approaches and short-cut gains, there is a lack of transcendent horizon; no depth dimension, no degrees of interiority; a sense of soul is lost, sense of the spiritual nature and destiny of the human being is dwindling. There is now an effort to see spirituality as an academic discipline; many universities have it as their regular course; many encyclopaedias include this topic and volumes are written every year.<sup>37</sup>

This seasoned spirituality would keep us virtuous, and therefore we can be free from anxiety; wise and therefore we can be free from perplexity; brave and therefore we can be free from fear; and faithful and therefore be *free from meaninglessness in life*. As Krishnamurthy puts it, “the consummation of spirituality is to gradually move towards that perception which sees all beings in the Self and the Self in all beings and consequently hates none”.<sup>38</sup> and, I am convinced, that is the type of *seasoned spirituality* is what our modern youth needs today.

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<sup>1</sup> V. Krishnamurthy, *Science and Spirituality: A Vedanta Perception* (Mumbai: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 2002), p.186.

<sup>2</sup> Tom Boyd, “*Is Spirituality Possible without Religion? A Query for the Postmodern Era*”, in Ann W. Astell (ed.), *Divine Representations: Postmodernism and Spirituality* (New York and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1994), pp. 83-101, p. 83.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Rayan ‘The Search for an Asian Spirituality of liberation’, in V. Fabella, P. K. H. Lee and D. Kwang-sun Suh (eds), *Asian Christian Spirituality: Reclaiming Traditions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992), pp. 11-30.

<sup>4</sup> Elea Lugo, ‘Reflections on Philosophy, spirituality and Mariology’ in Astell (ed.), *Divine Representations: Postmodernism and Spirituality* (New York and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1994), pp.248-66; p. 252.

<sup>5</sup> Tom Boyd, “*Is Spirituality Possible without religion? A Query for the postmodern era*”, in Ann W. Astell (ed.), *Divine Representations: Postmodernism and Spirituality*, p. 100.

<sup>6</sup> Sandra Schneiders, “Spirituality as an academic discipline”, in *Christian Spirituality Bulletin*, 1.2 (Fall 1993), pp. 10-15, p. 11.

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- <sup>7</sup> Ursula King (ed.), *Faith and Praxis in a Postmodern Age* (London: Cassell Wellington House, 1998), p. 11.
- <sup>8</sup> Neale Donald Walsch, *Tomorrow's God – Our Greatest Spiritual Challenge* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd, 2004), p. 111
- <sup>9</sup> Neale Donald Walsch, p. 390.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>11</sup> Neale Donald Walsch, p. 241. As a follower of one particular religion, one may be convinced of the teachings and doctrines of that particular religion, but one need not absolutize them to the extent of claiming superiority over all religions, still worse, going to the irrational extent of eliminating others just because their beliefs are different from one's own; this sort of approach is basically illogical as no one can comprehend God in totality and it goes against the very love (for God, for humans and nature!) that every religion professes.
- <sup>12</sup> Ursula King "Spirituality in a Postmodern Age – Faith and Praxis in New Contexts", in *Faith and Praxis in a Postmodern Age*, 94-112, p. 96.
- <sup>13</sup> Ursula King "Spirituality in a Postmodern Age – Faith and Praxis in New Contexts", in *Faith and Praxis in a Postmodern Age*, p. 97.
- <sup>14</sup> V. Krishnamurthy, *Science and Spirituality – A Vedanta Perception* (Mumbai: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 2002), p. 184.
- <sup>15</sup> John Leslie, *Universes* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 4-5, p. 34.
- <sup>16</sup> Barrow and Tipler, *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle* (Oxford: OUP, 1988), pp. 143-144.
- <sup>17</sup> *Washington Post*, 20 July 2008.
- <sup>18</sup> Paul Davies an internationally acclaimed physicist, cosmologist and astro-biologist at Arizona State University, where he runs the pioneering BEYOND centre for Fundamental Concepts in Science; he has authored more than 20 books, including *The Mind of God*, *About Time*, *How to Build a Time Machine* and *the Godlike Enigma*. The asteroid 199920G was officially renamed Paul Davies in his honour.
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- <sup>19</sup> Paul Davies, *The 5<sup>th</sup> Miracle – The Search for the Origin and Meaning of Life* (New York: Touchstone, 1999), p. 19.
- <sup>20</sup> Francis Crick, *Life Itself: Its Nature and Origin* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1981), p. 88.
- <sup>21</sup> V. Krishnamurthy, p. 2. By dharma, “it means Righteousness, duty, law; the inner characteristic of a thing without which it cannot be what it is; (also) the path which a man should follow in accordance with his evolutionary nature and Ashrama in life; (also) religion, responsibility, justice”; p. 222.
- <sup>22</sup> Holmes Rolston III, *Genes, Genesis and God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1999, pp. 161-162.
- <sup>23</sup> Quoted by: Ann Druyan, (ed.), *Carl Sagan – The Varieties of Scientific Experience* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006), p. xvi.
- <sup>24</sup> V. Krishnamurthy, p. 185.
- <sup>25</sup> Loving and liking can be differentiated this way: it is easier to love someone when there are things to like in him/her, but one is called to love someone even when there is nothing ‘likable’ in him/her; precisely that is what God does with us – even though there is nothing to like in us, he still loves us!
- <sup>26</sup> I put the word real within quotes, because we don’t know the ‘really real’ nature of God but given our limited understanding of his infinite love, knowledge and power, we can hold certain claims with sufficient confidence!
- <sup>27</sup> S. Stephen Jayard, *A Book That Cannot Be Titled* (Christian World Imprints, New Delhi), pp.111-113. Some ideas for this reflection I owe to Juan Arias’ book, *The God I Don’t Believe In*, 1973. One may look at my book for more reflections on God, Faith and Spirituality.
- <sup>28</sup> *Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church*; trans from German, Michael J. Miller (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, California: Ignatius Press, 2010, pp.5-6.
- <sup>29</sup> *Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church*, p. 171.
- <sup>30</sup> *Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church*, p.282.
- <sup>31</sup> *Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church*, p.203.
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- <sup>32</sup> See: <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/449844-you-are-right-in-speaking-of-the-moral-foundations-of>. Accessed on 28 Nov, 2019
- <sup>33</sup> V. Krishnamurthy, *Science and Spirituality – A Vedanta Perception* (Mumbai: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 2002), p. 179.
- <sup>34</sup> V. Krishnamurthy, p. 180.
- <sup>35</sup> V. Krishnamurthy, p.197.
- <sup>36</sup> V. Krishnamurthy, pp. 187 – 195.
- <sup>37</sup> The 25-volume cross-cultural series on World Spirituality where each volume concentrates on a particular faith is worth-mentioning - J. R. Hinnells (ed.), *A New Handbook of Living Religions* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997; London: Penguin Books, 1998).
- <sup>38</sup> V. Krishnamurthy, p.198.

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