

Spirituality and education

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Spirituality and education must go hand in hand. Recently I read 'Ignited Minds' by Abdul Kalam in which he had discussed certain ways in which we could develop our nation. There his maximum focus was on Indian education. But the thing which interested me the most was the topic spirituality and education. In the book he had clearly mentioned that along with science it is really important for our youth to have self-realisation. The book was written in 2002 but still after so many years of its publication and thousands of readers the idea of implementing spirituality in school education is still neglected. The sole purpose of education is that students must have self-realisation they must understand themselves and the thing is they must have a clear mindset but as we all know that in today's education system nothing is more important than grades. Yes of course we all keep saying that personality development is important, being aware about yourself is significant but the lessons, the proper training which must be given to children from elementary level is nowhere. How could we expect that school teachers can give students lessons regarding personality development and consciousness because the teachers themselves are not aware about it. First of all I would like to discuss my experience regarding spirituality and how I implement it in my academic career.

My Experience

To begin with, the very first time when I came to know about spirituality was when I was in grade 6th. Once I attended a seminar hosted by personality development coach Dr. Dattatray Ghode in which he had discussed various ways and ideas through which we could live a successful life. It was a 3-day course in which the maximum part was all about growing your business but the thing was being too young I understood nothing but 30% of that course was regarding spirituality in which he discussed a few interesting practices like Astral travel, third eye and telepathy. Being an 11-year-old girl the fact that you could read others' mind and of course can see with eyes closed just with the help of meditation interested me a lot. But the thing was these topics were not covered in detail all he said was just that these things exist but the proper way of doing this was not explained. Frankly speaking in my schooling days I was a girl who was far away from gadgets and was a bit shy type and so I was not able to learn more about these practices until I was in grade 10, 2018 was the year when I became a bit aware about social media and the internet. Uptill class ninth I kept re-reading the booklet which was provided to us during the course, all it covered was only the definition about these practices and the short method on how we could practice it. But still there was a heap of questions in front of me but there was no one to answer or to whom I could talk or discuss with. In 2019 I started reading articles and books which have given me enough idea regarding this topic. The reason why I found that telling this story is important is because **there are only 5-10% people who are aware about these practices. And if we plan to combine spirituality and education the first step must be making everyone aware about it and the next thing is teachers must be properly trained.** I got the knowledge about spirituality just because I read books but the thing is not everyone is interested in reading books so it is important that someone must be there who should at least give an idea to the students that yes these things exist.

Now one thing **I need to make clear is that by spirituality I do not mean that students must be taught about Astral projection and third eye. All I need to say is that they must be given proper guidance through which they can develop their personality and train their mind through simple practices of meditation.** Now I would like to discuss what techniques I use for learning and its connection with spirituality.

What I do

As I'm a science student, I know that many students face difficulty in learning physics not only physics but there are many others but here let's consider physics as the toughest subject. According to me anything which you are not able to relate you find it difficult, but if you are given a relation of it with real life then of course learning will be fun. Recently I completed the chapter atoms from my syllabus and I would like to tell you how I related it. The theory was all about the composition of an atom, what binds it together and the way it revolves. The very first thing which came into my mind was our solar system, the sun acting as a nucleus with the highest level of energy, the planets as electrons which are revolving around the sun in an orbit. Similarly at microscopic level the electrons revolve around the nucleus. The next thing which came into my mind was that it is possible that every other thing has a similar setup like if we consider earth as an atom then it will be no wrong to say that the gravitational force of Earth acts as a nucleus and we humans are the electrons in it. If we consider humans as an atom then I think the soul can be called the powerhouse of the whole human body and rest is the electron plus free spaces in it. The other thing which came into my mind while reading this chapter was the way an electron gets excited and reaches the next level i.e when transition occurs similarly during meditation our consciousness is shifted to the next level by gaining energy.

I have hundreds of examples I can give when the topic is about the relation of spirituality with studies. Similarly as I do other students too can use their imagination to make the subject easier but before they start doing so they must know the reason why they are studying the subject. If you look at the text books then they are full of derivations and definitions but I think that before starting the theoretical things students must know the reason they are studying that particular subject and also where they could apply it.

But before telling them the importance of that subject they must know why they are being educated. The youngsters mind must be cleared that why are they being educated, the reason behind it and what will be their contribution. And the first step towards this is of course training the teachers.

Training the teachers

Now the topic is regarding teachers in India so firstly I have to highlight this point that I feel really sorry to say that in India teaching field is one of the underrated field yes of course there are many enrollment in this sector but the truth is that in India almost 70% of students opt to become a professor or teacher just because they are not able to find any other way, yes this is true because only 30% of students are genuinely interested in teaching and only 5% of them are aware about what education actually demands and how it must be brought on a proper way. It is obvious that the education field, especially the job of school teachers, is underrated because the wages are really very low. Government sector teachers are paid enough but if we talk about private schools the wages are very less. Whereas if we talk about foreign countries like America and Japan then professorship is the most respected and reputed job one can have. But whatever it is now we need to focus on how the students who are being trained to become a teacher can contribute in combining education and spirituality. Firstly we need to include these things in the curriculum. Of course there are subjects like child psychology and the way you must council children. But we all know that nothing is done except rushing with the syllabus and giving lectures about materialistic things. Schools do have psychologists but only one person is not enough each and every teacher must have the skill so that they may relate their own subject to real life. Along with this students must know the real meaning of success, they must be thought about how to handle failures, teachers are experienced and therefore they must share their own experiences with students it is obvious that everyone must enjoy the life's journey but as teachers have gone through the phase that is of teenage they must help children to differentiate between what is right and what is wrong. Also another important point which needs to be highlighted is that equal attention must be paid to every student.

I know a girl who was bullied in school just because of her looks, personality, her way of speaking and this unnecessary criticism had made her depressed. The fact is not that she was bullied but the thing which hurt me the most was that the teachers never bothered to know what's wrong. They never

even tried to figure out what is disturbing her or they never tried to make other students understand that this was not the way to behave. The job of a teacher is not only to teach the students but a teacher must also be a guide to train every student to be a good person. **But the sad reality is that in every institute there are only two to three teachers who are actually dedicated towards their work and deserve to be called as true leaders.**

Other benefits of being spiritually conscious:-

Spirituality and self consciousness, this is a vast topic with many levels ,different practices and methods. Even if you spend hundreds of years gaining knowledge or researching spirituality then every time you will get something new you will explore new things. This topic is limitless. **But , even if one reaches the first level of spiritual consciousness then that person will be at peace for life time. The concept of spirituality revolves around ourselves; it is not about discovering the outer world but it is more about knowing who you are, what's inside you. Being spiritual helps you become more aware about yourself and as you go deeper into the level of consciousness you start realising that nothing is different, do the bodies the physical bodies are different but the soul is one.** And the most important thing which human beings need now is peace and brotherhood among themselves. And if our young generation are taught about this then the wars conflicts will definitely get reduced. A spiritual person has high self esteem, inner peace and is optimistic. School children are taught these practices from elementary level then it is obvious that they will be able to focus more and the best thing is that they will at least have an idea about what life is. Their focus will be more on satisfaction than on money. They'll try to become a good person before being successful. And **if we talk about teenagers then getting addicted to something or making wrong decisions in life is a huge problem nowadays because of the unnecessary contents on social media the young minds are getting corrupted and it is really important that these youngsters must have a guide who may show them the right path. It is really very essential that teachers must discuss these topics like addiction ,bad habits and of course the relationships nowadays teenagers have.** It's OK to have fun in life but everything has a time and students must be aware that they must differentiate between what is good and what is not.

Depression and how spirituality helps to fight with it :-

Suicide cases are increasing day by day. And most of the victims are teenagers. Spirituality of course helps you have higher self esteem and it's a way you could have self realisation but at the same time it increases your willpower. **Most of the suicide are committed because of loneliness but you know by practicing meditation you reach a level where you you realise that you are enough for yourself.** Even you don't have any greed for something. All you do is just work for humanity and dedicate yourself to the universe. We see that people attend many courses such as personality development and people visit psychologists to recover from anxiety and depression but if children are able to handle their own stress and become quite matured then of course the suicidal rates will decrease.

Winding up the topic I would like to mention the lines written by APJ Abdul Kalam in his book:-
"Spirituality must be integrated with education. Each one of us must become aware of our higher self. We are links of a great past to a grand future. We must Ignite inner energy and let it guide our lives. This will bring prosperity and bless to our nation."