Spirituality : Need of the Hour for Holistic Development of Youth

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Abstract

Our country has the largest population of youth with instable mind and we quote it everywhere with pride. But a question arises here that do we have majority of those youth who have peaceful minds, positive energy ,contentment, values and ethics, accountability and responsibility. The answer will be probably a big NO. Today's youth live a hectic and pressure filled life, full of tension, restlessness, greed and what not. They are unable to live peaceful life because of cut- throat competition. They want to get success at any rate. Hence they are suffering from mental chaos and depression. They have no self control. Materialistic world is controlling them. They are unable to command their thoughts hence they go to wrong path. This is a big question how to show them right path so that they can lead a happy and peaceful life and make a good nation. The answer to this problem lies in the word ***SPIRITUALITY****. Generally people in society have misconception about the word spirituality, they think it is for old age and children, adolescents, youth have nothing to do with it. But actually it is needed the most in early age till adulthood because it teaches us how to control our mind, greed, desires etc. In this paper the author has tried to show the importance of* ***SPIRITUALITY*** *in the life of our youth.*

Keywords: *Spirituality, Emotional intelligence, Stimulus, Meditation, Ashtang Yog etc.*

Introduction :-

"**Education is not filling the mind with a lot of facts and diverse knowledge……perfecting he instrument and getting complete mastery of one's own mind is the ideal of education." – Swami Vivekanand**

Our country has the largest population of youth and a large percentage of this population is facing turbulence, restlessness and chaos in their mind. Here a question arises, do we have majority of those youth who have peaceful minds, positive energy ,contentment, values and ethics, accountability and responsibility. The answer will be probably a big NO. Today's youth live a hectic and pressure filled life, full of tension, restlessness, greed and what not. They are unable to live peaceful life because of cut- throat competition. They want to get success at any rate. Hence they are suffering from mental chaos and depression. They have no self control. Materialistic world is controlling them. They are unable to command their thoughts hence they go to wrong path. This is a big question how to show them right path so that they can lead a happy and peaceful life and make a good nation.

The answer to this problem lies in the word spirituality. Generally in society when the word spirituality is used, it refers to old age persons. It is said that when a person gets retired from worldly affairs, he needs spirituality. Children and youth have nothing to do with this. But it is a misconception of the word spirituality. It is very important because it teaches us how to control our mind, desires, emotions and temptation etc. In other words we can say it teaches us self- control. It is a process of complete transformation of personality.

That's why even corporate world is adopting spirituality today because they have realized that without SQ (Spiritual Quotient) there is no use of IQ (Intelligence Quotient) because an intelligent person cannot take good decision until his mind is peaceful. Successful leader is one who understands emotions of his subordinates , this is known as EQ (Emotional Quotient), that measures emotional intelligence which comes from SQ.

Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to perceive,use, understand, manage and handle emotions. So it is necessary to keep your cool. There are several ways to control one's emotions which are creating turbulence in one's mind. I try to prove this by an example:-

As we drive a car and we are fully aware to avoid an accident in the same way we are the driver of our mind and we must know which type of thoughts and emotions are coming in our mind. If we are able to discriminate between positive and negative thoughts, we have the freedom to choose the correct one hence we create our destiny. For this self- awareness is essential by which self- regulation is possible and that only comes from spiritual knowledge and practice.

Higher Education Research Institute at the university of California at Los Angeles had a project on spiritual development in higher education. A report published by the institute found that efforts were being made many colleges and universities to make the faculty and staff acquire skills for promoting spiritual development in students. (HERI 2007, p.1). The first national longitudinal study of undergraduate's spiritual growth among US students reported:

- Increase in the level of spirituality through programmes such as self reflection and practice of meditation.
- Programmes dealing with "inner selves" facilitating academic pursuits and leadership skills and intellectual self confidence. (Astin, Astin & Lindholm,2010,p.2).
- In the United Kingdom, Ofsted, UK (2018, p.40) states that the spiritual development of students is shown by their ability to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, that inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people's faiths, feelings and values.

In psychology there are several laws given by **Thorndike(1920)**. One is principle of multiple response.

S : (STIMULUS)
O : (ORGANISM)
R : (RESPONSE)

This theory tells us how people behave in a set pattern. How they learn by doing various responses and by this they learn.

I'd like to say in this regard that there is conditioning of mind which develops by repeating a task, an idea, again and again and it becomes our habit. Without breaking this conditioning we can't come out from our comfort zone. But the one who finds the space between stimulus and response, knows one's power to choose the right response that leads to one's freedom and growth. Most of the time when we come out of our confort zone we feel fear and we return to our previous position. But if we continue without caring this fear, learning begins

and we will reach the step that is real growth. This growth defines us as a totally different person.The biggest defect we human beings have is our short sightedness. We don't see what we could be.

For example if a person is chasing behind his sensuous pleasure and he gets angry on trifles. In my opinion, he must study and apply the following verses of Bhagavad-Gita:-

"The man dwelling on sense objects develops attachment for them,. From attachment springs up desire, and from desire ensues anger, from anger arises infatuation,from infatuation, confusion of memory, from confusion of memory, loss of reason and from loss of reason one goes to complete ruin." **– Bhagavad-Gita (2/62 & 63).**

"But the self controlled practicant, while enjoying the various sense objects through his senses, which are disciplined and free from likes and dislikes, attains placidity of mind." **– Bhagavad-Gita (2/64).**

"With the attainment of such placidity of mind, his sorrows come to an end and the intellect of such a person of tranquil mind, soon withdrawing itself from all sides, becomes firmly established in God." **– Bhagavad-Gita (2/65).**

He will realize soon that his downfall is inevitable if he doesn't follow the above mentioned message of Lord Krishn.

Every different test that comes your way is not a test, but a learning experience that will make you more and more powerful. This is because in overcoming that test you will use your mind in different ways and come to a positive solution.

But to achieve this stage one will have to keep one's mind cool and calm. It will be possible through only by joining the path of spirituality. Spirituality is nothing but a manual of life. It teaches us the art of living.

Arjun says to Lord Krishn, " The mind is very unsteady, turbulent, tenacious and powerful, therefore I consider it as difficult as controlling the wind." **– (Bhagavad-Gita, 6/34).**

Most of us are like Arjun who are unable to control mind that's why we are easily fascinated by worldly pleasure.

Krishn replied that the mind is undoubtedly unsteady and difficult to control but it can be managed by practice (of meditation) and detachment. **– (The Bhagavad-Gita,6/35).**

On April 3,1900, Swami Vivekanand in his lecture delivered in the United States, pointed out that meditation starts with Dharna, concentrating the mind upon an object. (Advaita Ashram,1985,p.228).

Youth must know the power of meditation if they want to excel in life. Generally people think that meditation is a boring practice that creates passiveness. But it is not so. It is of two types- one is active and the second one is passive . In active meditation we pay our full attention on what we are doing and it gives you the power to see the things as they are. Passive meditation means when you are tired of working continuously for hours and your mind does not work properly then sit silently and see your breath. During this process many thoughts will come and go. Don't go with those thoughts; just observe them. After some time frequency

of thoughts will be less and you will feel relaxed and refreshed. Now you are ready to face challenges ahead with full zeal and enthusiasm.

As you cannot see your face in turbulent water similarly you cannot take decision with restless mind. By practice of meditation your mind will be at peace and its strength will be increased. So power of decision making increases and restlessness comes to an end.

This proves that the word spirituality is not related to saints only. It is equally important for materialistic persons also. If you want to groom your personality you must adopt spiritual practice in your daily life. I give you another example why we need spiritual practice ?

As computers and smart phones work faster when they have more space. But when we download lots of applications and files they hang because of less space. We need to restart and refresh them. But if problem persists, we need to format them for free space. Our mind works in the same manner. When we have lots of unnecessary information it hangs and we get disturbed and depressed . Spiritual practice like yog and meditation is just like formatting our mind to work smoothly.

Maharishi Patanjali suggested *Ashtang Yog* in PatanjaliYog Darshan saying, "*Yamniyamasanpranayampratyahardharnadhyansamadhyaoashtavangan*" **–(YogDarshan,2/29).**

In the above mentioned sutra, eight steps have been suggested viz. *Yam, Niyam, Asan, Pranayam, Pratyahar, Dharna, Dhyan and Samadhi.*

These eight steps must be adopted for self control.

We are chasing behind our senses.

"Our senses are like horses, their objects are like roads, mind is rein, intellect is charioteer and soul is the Master of this body (vehicle)." **– (Kathh Upnishad).**

If we (intellect) control rein (mind), horses (senses) will be tamed and we reach on supreme goal, that is attainment of liberation. And this is the ultimate goal of education. Education is that which liberates.

In other words we will not indulge in bad practices. We will be able to say "**NO"** even to the biggest temptation or allurement. Hence we can maintain our character and justify our birth on this earth.

As Abraham Maslow mentioned hierarchy of needs in his theory of self actualization.

- Physiological Needs
- Safety Needs
- Belongingness Needs
- Prestige Needs and
- Self-actualization Needs.

This must be kept in our mind while living our lives that we are on this earth for a special purpose of self-actualization, not for materialistic pleasure only. Food, sleep, fear and sex is common in animals and human beings. What makes human beings superior is his wisdom to discriminate between truth and falsehood, moral and immoral. This must be explained to our

youths. According to Tagore (1917,p.145), meditation brings individual closer to the eternal being.

At last I would like to suggest that energy of our youth should not be drained by chasing materialistic pleasure, on the contrary it must be plugged and channelized in positive way so that our nation can rise high in every sphere of life. Once we have full control on our mind , horses of our senses won't be able to harm us. This is what the purpose of spirituality is. According to Sri Aurobindo, (1998,p.445), it corrects the restless wandering of the mind and trains it its simple form. Spirituality is the foundation of the Indian mind.

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