SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE, SPIRITUAL SENSITIVITY AND TRANSCENDENT VALUES IN EDUCATION: AN EMERGING ISSUE OF DISCUSSION IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION

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ABSTRACT   *This article explores different aspects of spirituality, awareness, self-knowledge and transcendence. Explications draw on the teachings of selected spiritual teachers from the contemplative tradition. Their understanding of these aspects offers valuable insights into the meaning and form of spiritual development in education. A central theme is that spiritual development starts with work on the self, it involves an inner search, which begins with thought control, requires mental silence and results in a freedom from desires and egoist motives. Emphasis is placed on the process of understanding ourselves and with this a clear distinction is made between mechanical and self-knowledge, a distinction that ultimately changes the meaning of intelligence. Education has a role to play in encouraging the right balance between these distinctions. A central theme is that the function of education is to cultivate an intelligence born of an atmosphere that allows children the freedom to face the world, understand it and not just conform to it. Recent research is beginning to describe aspects of spirituality and education that have much in common with the material presented in this paper.*

Introduction

Spiritual is an important dimension of human well-being and is a unique power that creates a harmony between physical, psychological and social dimensions. It is a basic motivation and feeling to look for a long life in order to find a goal and meaning in life. Spirituality is often an intuitive and basic motivation in all people including beliefs in something greater or more than oneself which causes life to be positive. Also, it is one of the basic components of human experience and covers one's belief in spirituality and experiences which do not focus only on corporeality.

Spiritual well-being, as one of the dimensions of well-being, causes the integration of the other dimensions and it itself includes two existential and religious dimensions. Religious well-being focuses on the quality of well-being and on how one perceives it in spiritual life while connecting to a superior power, and existential well-being focuses on social and psychological worries and on how one relates to God, society, environment, and oneself. Spirituality and religion, which something are referred to as spiritual well-being and religious practices by people usually overlap. It means that both of them present some frames through which one can understand the meaning, purpose and transcendent values of one's life. A lot of people can achieve spirituality through religious. Considering people's differences, something which may provide somebody with comfort and well-being may be ineffective for others. Today, religion and spirituality play important roles in people's lives and are important predictors of the comfort of these persons who believe in religion and its concepts.

Considering the role of religion and religious orientation in health and prompting psychological well-being, the importance of spirituality and human's spiritual growth has increasingly attracted the attention of the psychologists and mental health experts since the past decades. Apart from paying attention to the role of the religion and spirituality in the field of treatment and health, what is attractive at the global level is attention to spirituality and transcendent values in education about health sciences and specially education about life skills, spiritual life skills and healthy lifestyle for patients' family, especially young people and students. Although spirituality has played a key role in civilization evolution and human society, education about spiritual skills in the field of psychology and behavioral sciences does not have a long history. Since care based on spirituality is among the main practices of health authorities, education based on spirituality and spirituality education seem essential and indispensable. Some researchers have reported that practicing spirituality and religion has an effective and positive relationship with health habits in the study population it also has beneficial effects on the health of students in developing countries. Spirituality is a set of beliefs and attitudes of people and spirituality education leads to important effects on people's psychological health. In spite of all theoretical improvements in the area of health dimensions in the majority of health

promotion programs has been neglected. Desired improvement in spiritual well-being is very slow and its development in the field of health and disease prevention has been postponed.

Spirituality is about feeling a part of some community, 'about being lonely, about being in harmony with mother earth or even feeling a sense of alienation' (Rolheiser, 1998:6-7). Spirituality reflects 'a broader dimension of day-to-day activity' (Coffey, 2002:5). A person needs to find himself or herself spiritually in order to become, as Vardy (cited in Coffey, 2002:5) says, fully human. For religious schools, 'the importance of embracing life with enthusiasm and to approach it as a gift of God to be enjoyed' (Chittenden, 2003:16) permeates their philosophies. Indeed, religious schools argue for the building of individuals in the image of God (Chittenden, 2003). In the secular context, schools seek to ensure that students are in caring, educative environments which ultimately lead to human growth and fulfillment (Beck, 1992). Both contexts seek to counter the current popular culture and its attendant problems such as vandalism, hooliganism and the health problems of young people. Spirituality shapes our actions and is directly related to our values and to our ethical behaviour (Chittenden, 2003: 16). Schools need to identify and promote appropriate behaviour. As Tew (cited in Best, 2000: 175) suggests, values permeate a school community and reflect the organisation of a school.

Spirituality also needs to be reflected in a teacher's everyday role. Teachers have an obligation to inculcate in their students positive values which reflect sound ethical and moral judgement, as inherent spiritual dimensions of education. They need, for example, to assist students to confront the vicissitudes of life, and to confront corruption, drug abuse and even threat of war. Before they connect with the lives of their students, however, teachers need to be cognisant of, and connect with, their own lives and their inner world. Best (2000) notes that the spirituality of young people can be developed in many ways: for example, by religion, thinking, prayer, meditation and ritual. He adds that for some, spirituality is awakened through feelings of awe and wonder at nature and the universe. It can be developed through positive relationships with others, particularly as an important component of pastoral care. There needs to be a view about spirituality which does not necessarily become totally immersed in its religious connotations.

For this to occur in schools, teachers need to embed their notion of spirituality in their subject work programs. Schools could consider the development of Howard Gardner's (1993) multiple intelligences in leading their staff and students to a spiritual intelligence. These curriculum experiences could be imparted in a cross-curricular approach, thus supporting Gardner's view that an holistic approach to education needs to address a range of intelligences, with a child-centred focus designed to develop the uniqueness of each child.

Religion and spirituality

The meanings given to the concepts of religion and spirituality have evolved over the centuries. William James (2003 (1902): 32) defined religion as 'the feelings, acts and experiences of individual men in their solitude'. Since the time of James, few psychologists have taken a serious look at religious institutions and the roles they play in shaping character. Today some writers use the terms 'religion' and 'spirituality' interchangeably to add linguistic variety to their terminology. However, many researchers define spirituality in contrast to religion. In these definitions, religion is usually defined as the organizational, the ritual, and the ideological. The spiritual then refers to the personal, the affective, the experiential, and the thoughtful. The reminder that an individual can be spiritual without being religious or religious without being spiritual, has become a standard theme of many papers on spirituality (Pargament 1999). It seems clear that spirituality must be seen as a wider concept than religion. This kind of understanding of these concepts indicates that religion and spirituality share some common areas but that they also have their own areas of interest (Stifoss-Hanssen 1999).

Spirituality and Spiritual Growth

Spirituality and spiritual practices have the ability to transform individual lives and help eliminate the evils we find in the communities, institutions and world in which we live. This transformation process can begin immediately, but, like any organic growth process, will necessarily take time and go through several stages as it moves toward fruition. Like the physical growth of a plant or person, change may not be noticeable from moment to moment. Sometimes growth happens more quickly or dramatically, but always occurs one cell and one step at a time.

Spiritual growth requires effort and patience. Some may feel the energy and see the progress that comes from these practices right away while others may have to work harder and longer to see or feel progress. Like any physical endeavor for health, determination and discipline are needed. Pursuing the path toward true spiritual growth requires a complex of qualities and tests one's will power and motives. Each person

begins at their own level and gradually develops the spiritual muscle power needed to meet the challenges in their life and world. Perseverance is necessary to experience real growth.

We can more effectively meet the hardships and problems we face in our individual and collective lives through spiritual growth. By taking our energy from materialistic endeavors and putting it into spiritual efforts, we will raise ourselves above the changes and chances of this world. In Western economies, most people now live in a condition in which they do not need to be preoccupied with survival or meeting their basic physical needs. As several leading thinkers now suggest, we live in a time of abundance (Pink, 2006). Through advances in science and technology, we are now able to provide for the basic needs of much of humanity. Our using these advances for the benefit of all will require a development of our science and technology of the heart and soul.

Spiritual Intelligence

The psychological view on spirituality studies it in the framework of multiple intelligences (Gardner 1983). The most recently suggested intelligence types include emotional and spiritual intelligence. Daniel Goleman (1995) has suggested that emotional intelligence (EQ) gives us awareness of our own and other people's feelings. It provides us with empathy, compassion, motivation and the ability to respond appropriately to pain or pleasures. Goleman has pointed out that EQ is a basic requirement for the effective use of IQ. If the areas of the brains with which we feel are damaged, we think less effectively (Goleman 1995).

D. Zohar and I. Marshall (2000) have applied the concept of spiritual intelligence (SQ) to the discussion concerning IQ and EQ. According to them, SQ helps us to assess the most meaningful course of action. With SQ, we address and solve problems of meaning and value. The authors claim that SQ is the necessary foundation for the effective functioning of both IQ and EQ. SQ is our ultimate intelligence (Zohar & Marshall 2000). The difference between EQ and SQ concerns the concrete situation in which they are used. Emotional intelligence allows us to judge what kind of situation we are in and then to behave appropriately within it. This is working within the boundaries of the situation, allowing the situation to guide us. Spiritual intelligence allows us to ask if we want to be in this particular situation in the first place. Would we rather change the situation and create a better one? This is working with the boundaries of our situation and allowing us to guide the situation. Similarly, the idea of spiritual intelligence has also been studied by Robert A. Emmons (1999: 176) as he describes spiritual intelligence as 'the adaptive use of spiritual information to facilitate everyday problem solving and goal attainment'.

Spiritual Sensitivity

David Hay (1998) has identified three categories of spiritual sensitivity. *Awareness sensing* refers to an experience of a deeper level of consciousness when we choose to be aware by 'paying attention' to what is happening. This category coincides with Gardner's notion of the 'spiritual as achievement of a state of being'. According to Hay (1998: 60) this kind of awareness refers to a reflexive process of being attentive towards one's attention or 'being aware of one's awareness'.

The second category of spiritual sensitivity is *mystery sensing* which is con-nected to our capacity to transcend everyday experience and to use our im-agination. For instance, the beauty and wonder of sunrise and sunset includes the sense of mystery even after the scientific explanations are presented. The imagination is essential to religious activity through the metaphors, symbols, stories and liturgies which respond to the otherwise unrepresentable experi-ence of the sacred. This category relates to both Gardner's understanding of spiritual intelligence as the 'achievement of a state of being' and the 'concern with cosmic or existential issues', while it emphasizes the mysterious nature of such experiences.

The third category of spiritual sensitivity is *value sensing*. This category emphasizes the importance of feelings as a measure of what we value. Among such things are the issues that touch our existential questions and meaning seeking (Hay 1998: 70–4). This category resembles Gardner's definition of spiritual intelligence as the 'concern with cosmic or existential issues'.

Concepts of Spirituality to Education

When people apply concepts of spirituality to education, academics often see a problem in the term's lack of a common definition. Some feel that spirituality is too subjective to be of value in the objective, empirical world of academia. Others are afraid that it is associated with an attempt to influence curriculum to match religious views. But if connectedness is a primary aspect of spirituality, then what spirituality threatens most is the inherent fragmentation in our educational structures. Parker Palmer, in his most recent book, *The Courage to Teach*, advises that "if we want to develop and deepen the capacity for connectedness at the heart of good teaching, we must understand -- and resist -- the perverse but powerful draw of the

'disconnected' life" (p.35). How, and why, does academic culture discourage us from living connected lives? How, and why, does it encourage us to distance ourselves from our students and our subjects, to teach and learn at some remove from our own hearts?

For Palmer the answer seems obvious: "we are distanced by a grading system that separates teachers from students, by departments that fragment fields of knowledge, by competition that makes students and teachers alike wary of their peers and by a bureaucracy that puts faculty and administration at odds" (pp. 35-36).

Recently, in *Educational Leadership*, Palmer expanded on the question of spirituality in education:

I reject the imposition of any form of religion in public education, including so-called "school prayer." But I advocate any way we can find to explore the spiritual dimension of teaching, learning, and living. By "spiritual" I do not mean the creedal formulations of any faith tradition, as much as I respect those traditions and as helpful as their insights can be. I mean the ancient and abiding human quest for connectedness with something larger and more trustworthy than our egos – with our own souls, with one another, with the worlds of history and nature, with the invisible winds of the spirit, with the mystery of being alive. (p. 6)

Spiritual and Moral Intelligence in Education

Spirituality and spiritual practices can be viewed as aspects of spiritual and moral intelligences and they can all be considered as components of moral education. As emotional and social intelligence have expanded our view of human intelligence, spiritual and moral intelligence add important and needed components to our holistic view of human intelligence. They have great potential to improve our understanding of learning and behavior (Coles, 1997; Hass, 1998; Emmons, 2000; Borba, 2001). Educators have a responsibility to offer students a balanced opportunity to develop their full capacities (Clarken 2007a; 2007b).

Spiritual intelligence addresses meaning, motivation, vision and value. Zohar and Marshall (2001) identify twelve qualities or principles of spiritual intelligence: self-awareness, spontaneity, being vision and value led, holism, compassion, celebration of diversity, field independence, humility, tendency to ask why, ability to reframe, positive use of adversity and sense of vocation. Emmons (2000) identifies the capacity for transcendence, heightened consciousness, sanctification, spiritual problem-solving and virtuous behavior as aspects of spiritual intelligence.

Spiritual intelligence shares several characteristics with moral intelligence. Moral intelligence refers to the ability to apply ethical principles to goals, values and actions. It is the ability to know right from wrong and behave ethically, the capacity to know and apply ethical values, goals, and actions (Lennick & Kiel, 2005). Lennick and Kiel identify four competencies of moral intelligence: integrity, responsibility, forgiveness and compassion. These include the capacities of acting consistently with principles, values and beliefs; telling the truth; standing up for what is right; keeping promises; taking personal responsibility; admitting mistakes and failures; embracing responsibility for serving others; letting go of one's mistakes; letting go of others' mistakes and actively caring about others.

Education is a moral endeavor (Goodlad, 1990; Goodlad, Soder, & Sirotnik, 1990) and the classroom is saturated with moral meaning (Hansen, 1995). Teachers can create a just and caring environment (Tom, 1984), and, along with parents, be models of morality and spirituality, exemplifying the virtues they seek to inspire in their students (Lickona,1983). Educational leaders and administrators can also practice these same behaviors with the faculty, staff, students, parents and others. Such moral behavior is highly associated with leadership effectiveness (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Lennick & Kiel, 2005).

The Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) Panel on Moral Education defines a moral person as one who respects human dignity, cares about the welfare of others, integrates individual interests and social responsibilities, demonstrates integrity, reflects on moral choices and seeks peaceful resolution of conflict. They stated schools should define and teach the universal moral values and their sources, including religion and that moral education should be a powerful unifying and energizing force in the curriculum. They encourage educators to create social and cultural contexts to support the development of morally mature persons. Moral education needs to include socialization of appropriate conduct, critical thinking and decision -making and educators should ensure that school climate and policies contribute to moral growth. As schools establish and convey clear expectations about their roles as moral educators, educators can give more attention to moral education (1988).

Borba's definition of moral intelligence as the capacity to understand right from wrong, to have strong ethical convictions and to act on them to behave in the right and honorable way (2001) is associated with spirituality. She identifies seven virtues children need to develop related to moral intelligence—empathy, conscience, self-control, respect, kindness, tolerance and fairness. Her plan for teaching children moral intelligence can easily be adapted to the schools and classrooms.

To teach children empathy--the ability to identify with and feel other 's concerns--she suggests fostering awareness and an emotional vocabulary, enhancing sensitivity to the feelings of others and developing empathy for another 's point of view. To help students develop conscience--to know the right and decent way to act and to act in that way-- teachers can create the context for moral growth, teach virtues to strengthen conscience and guide behavior and foster moral discipline to learn right from wrong. Self - control is the ability to regulate your thoughts and actions to stop pressures from within or without and act the way you know and feel is right. Teachers can model and prioritize self-control and encourage students to self-motivate, deal with temptations and think before acting.

Educators and educational leaders show respect by modeling how they value others by treating them in a courteous and considerate way. They can teach respect, enhance respect for authority and emphasize good manners and courtesy in the classroom. Kindness is taught by demonstrating concern about the welfare and feelings of others through teaching its meaning and value, establishing a zero tolerance for meanness and encouraging and pointing out its positive effect. By teaching students to respect the dignity and rights of all persons, even those whose beliefs and behaviors we may disagree with, we teach tolerance. We engender it by instilling an appreciation for diversity, countering stereotypes and not tolerating prejudice. We can teach fairness by treating others fairly, helping them learn to behave fairly and to stand up against unfairness and injustice.

Conclusion

Spiritual well-being is one of the important dimensions which has wonderful effects on people's lives and is involved in many personal and social performances of people. To improve this important health dimension, various approaches have been suggested. One of the important ways to promote spiritual well-being is educating people on spirituality.

As a conclusion, spiritual education has a positive role in promoting people's spiritual well-being. In this study, the results showed that spirituality education is on effective intervention in promoting people's spiritual well-being and finally in their mental well-being; moreover, education through social media channel, as an attractive channel, can cause continuous participation of people in the intervention and finally promotion of the participant's' spiritual well-being.

Spirituality and spiritual practices have fallen out of favor with modern-day conceptions of progress and rationality, and a materialistic perspective dominates education. Though spirituality has had negative connotations in the modern scientific and scholarly communities, it is gradually gaining credence, partly influenced by shifts in the scientific community, resulting from new technologies and discoveries such as improved computing capabilities and quantum mechanics. Though spiritual principles and practices have historically been instrumental for effectively working with individuals, communities and institutions, they are currently discounted (Beauregard & O'Leary, 2007). The essential and fundamental crisis and challenge of the age is to develop the spiritual qualities needed to move humanity out of its morass.

Developing a spiritual practice should enable a person to better transcend selfishness and self-centeredness. By focusing on higher purposes and capabilities, the ability to take initiative in a creative and a disciplined way, sustain effort in the face of obstacles and behave responsibly should be enhanced.

Prayer, meditation, reading spiritual literature, service and living a life of integrity are key practices to developing a healthy and happy life. These practices have been endorsed in all of the great holy books and been validated by experience over many centuries.

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