

Influence of Spirituality on Teaching

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INTRODUCTION: Etymologically, the term spirituality is derived from the word 'Spirit' which comes from the Latin spiritus, meaning breath. This suggests something elusive and yet vital. Spirituality is the wholeness of being connected to something greater than you. This is a very abstract definition of spirituality. It is very difficult to try and engage the meaning of spirituality without being abstract. Some may think that spirituality is a synonym for faith and thus, it is a religious term. This is not necessarily true. Spirituality can be and should be a large part of religious experience. Spirituality can also refer to one's self exploration in the form of meditation, prayer and contemplation. These practices allow a person to be in tune with the essence of their being. Spirituality could also be a way of looking out into nature and feeling a connection.

While trying to peg a definition of spirituality, it comes to the meaning of spirituality as "connection" and "oneness". Whether this connection is with God, religious sentiment, understanding of self, humanity, nature or the universe, the connection is the key part of the definition. Spirituality has to do with feeling this connection and maintaining it with an open and insightful way of life. In this light, the meaning of spirituality can be equated with an abstract form of consciousness.

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF SPIRITUALITY

The principles of spirituality are divided in two categories:

Universally and legally accepted principles.

General principles.

Universally and legally accepted principles:

Fatherhood of God.

Brotherhood of Man.

Communion of spirits and the ministry of angels.

Continuous existence of human soul.

Personal responsibility.

Compensation and retribution hereafter for all good and evil deeds done on earth.

Eternal progress opens to every human soul.

General principles of spirituality:

There are as many paths to God as there are people.

Going from many to one.

Progressing from tangibles to intangible.

Undertaking spiritual practice as per the spiritual level.

Doing spiritual practice relevant to the times.

Offering to God as per your talent or capacity.

STEPS TO ACHIEVE GREATER SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE

- Zohar and Marshall have given seven steps to achieve greater spiritual intelligence.
- Become aware of where I am now.
- Feel strongly that I want to change.
- Reflect on what my own centre is and on what are my deepest motivations.
- Discover and dissolve obstacles.
- Explore many possibilities to go forward.
- Commit my self to a path.
- Remain aware that there are many paths.

HOW TEACHER CAN PROMOTE SPIRITUALITY IN HIS STUDENTS

Teachers should try to promote spiritual well being of students. Principle characteristics of spirituality incorporate transcendence, positive relationships and a search for truth.

Teacher should address these by inspiring and stimulating students through following ways:

Through the curriculum.

By promoting the positive school ethos which is one of mutual care, respect and recognition of the intrinsic value of the individual as well as the community.

By motivating students to indulge in activities like yoga, meditation, etc.

By allowing and encouraging pupils to ask questions and explore complex issues of values.

By becoming an ideal for his students.

QUALITIES OF A SPIRITUAL TEACHER

Spirituality grows in classrooms when teachers see themselves as agents of joy and conduits of transcendence. Thus a teacher should have following qualities.

Proper ethical behavior - A Guru should not harm others but try to help.

Single pointed concentration.

No egoistic thoughts.

Having love and compassion as main motivation to teach.

Persistence in teaching.

Wealth of scriptural knowledge.

More learned and realized than student.

Skilled speaker.

Given up disappointment in the performance of students.

It has been observed that the spiritual aspect of the personality of majority of teachers is weak. So, along with the students, we should also be concerned with the spiritual development of the teachers.

REASONS TO BE CONCERNED WITH THE SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEACHERS

Spirituality will influence teaching in range of ways. For example, through their sense of awe and wonderment in the learning process, their relational compassion, care and connectedness with students and in seeking of knowledge through intuitive means. Thus we should be concerned with the spiritual development of the teachers for the following reasons.

The actions of teachers both within and outside the classroom influence the learning and development of the students.

Teachers have the ability to induce student's experiences and outcome both positively and negatively.

Beyond influencing student's intellectual and career development, teacher also enhances student's personal identity, awareness and moral development.

Researches have shown that informal interactions between teachers and students increase teacher's influence on student's

values, belief and behavior. It positively affects intellectual curiosity, interpersonal skills and maturational development.

Faculty mentoring has also been positively associated with student's inclination towards humanitarian behaviors.

CONCLUSION:

A useful and effective spiritual teaching naturally leads directly to practically experiencing your nature, desires, intentions and acute awareness of your blockages, resistances and uncomfortable zones. It moves you ahead in a way which will seem revolutionary and super fast. A valid spiritual teaching puts you in the driving seat and makes you aware that you have all the resources to move through the temporal life with grace, ease and certainty.

