

## **Spiritual Intelligence and Indian Philosophy**

**C. Christina Mary**

Assistant Professor in Biology, Stella Matutina College of Education, Kamaraj  
salai, Chennai-600083, & Ph.D Scholar in Lady Willington IASE, Triplican,  
Chennai-600005)

### **Abstract**

Spiritual intelligence is concerned with the inner life of mind and spirit and its relationship to being in the world. Spirituality exists in the hearts and minds of men and woman within religious tradition and independently of tradition. Intelligence is the ability to perceive information and retained it as knowledge and applies that knowledge in different situation. Some characteristics of spiritual intelligence are the capacity to transcend the physical and material, the ability to sanctify everyday experience, the ability to be virtuous, the ability to utilize spiritual resources to solve problems. Philosophy is an attitude towards life and universe where an effort is made to search the truth on the basis of logical inquiry. Indian Philosophy is essentially spiritual. The nine system of Indian philosophical thought have been classified in to two broad divisions of Orthodox (astika) and the heterodox (nastika). The illumination given by education shatters illusions removes difficulties and enables us to realise the true value of life.

key words: Spiritual intelligence, Indian Philosophy, Astika & Nastika.

### **Introduction**

Spiritual perception of the world is a basis of all teachings of great wise men of important philosophical and religious schools and also of Holy texts from East and West. Purpose of individual life is learning of wisdom and nurturing of spiritual values. Final goal is to know oneself and combine the materialistic with the spiritual through enlightenment. The basis of the spiritual perception of the world derives from ancient traditions and is a fruit of the insight of several great thinkers and philosophers. Great teachers encourage individuals to take actions right now to discover things with his/her reason and heart. Philosophy speaks about ultimate reality, means of getting knowledge and in practical life ethics to be followed. All Religious leaders are highly spiritual and guided the people to realize the ultimate 'Truth'

### **Religion and Spirituality**

Spirituality exists in the hearts and minds of men and woman within religious tradition and independently of tradition. Wigglesworth, Cindy (2012), defines "religion as a specific set of beliefs and practices, usually based on sacred texts and represented by community of people." Some people may have high spiritual Quotient (SQ) through following religious beliefs and practices others may be high on SQ being atheists. Contrarily, many people though religious, are low on SQ. Zohar, Danah (2000) professes that conventional religion is an externally imposed set of rules and beliefs. It is inherited from

priests and prophets and holy books or absorbed through family and tradition. SQ is an internal, innate ability of the human brain drawing its deepest resources from the heart of the universe itself. Knowledge and Intelligence are inseparable. Knowledge is primarily a vehicle while intelligence is like the gas that drives it.

### **Intelligence and Knowledge**

There is no standard definition of intelligence. This phenomenon have been defined and measured by different scholars and psychologists in different contexts. Intelligence is an intellectual phenomenon and not emotional or moral and leads to achieving goals. It includes number of cognitive processes such as perception, learning, memory, reasoning and problem solving. Sternberg (2000) asserted that intelligence is the ability to perceive information and retained it as knowledge and apply that in different situation. Knowledge is collection of skills and information a person has acquired through experience, education and environment. Human being is greater than other creatures due to knowledge. Gardener (1998) states that individuals owned at least eight intelligence which can be genetically inherited, developed or improved through education, or social environment. They are linguistic, Spatial, Logical/mathematical, interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Bodily-Kinaesthetic and naturalistic Intelligence. He believed Spiritual Intelligence does not exist.

### **Spiritual Intelligence**

Danah Zohar(1997) coined the term “Spiritual Intelligence “and introduced it in her book *Rewriting the Corporate Brain*. The term spiritual Intelligence is made up of two words Spiritual which means something related to the spirit and intelligence which mean the ability to acquire and apply knowledge. Spiritual intelligence is concerned with the inner life of mind and spirit and its relationship to being in the world. Spiritual intelligence also implies evolution of life from stardust to mineral, plants, animals and human existence implies some form of intelligence rather than being a purely a random process, it might be called spiritual. Spiritual intelligence emerges as consciousness evolves into an awareness of matter, life, body, mind, soul and spirit. In addition to self awareness, it implies awareness of our relationship to the transcendent, to each other, to the earth and all beings.

According to Vaugan (2002) spiritual intelligence is the consequence of highest level of individual growth in the fields of cognition, meaning attainment, transcendental and moral communication. Emmons (1992) suggested some characteristics of spiritual intelligence which are: The capacity to transcend the physical and material, the ability to sanctify everyday experience, the ability to be virtuous, the ability to utilize spiritual resources to solve problems. Deidrick (2008) offers three major aspects of spiritual intelligence as follows. i) Identifying with one’s higher self or spirit rather than with ego: A person identifies that he is not his body, problems, past, finance, job, gender, or ethnicity. These are the role played by him. An individual is a spiritual being having a human experience. ii) Understanding universal law: the individual recognizes that he is the creator of his life. So he takes total responsibility for his life, situation, and him/herself. iii) Non attachment: As a

spiritual being an individual is not attached to outcomes, forms or experiences. His well-being comes from within by way of his spiritual identity.

King (2008) proposes four abilities or capacities of spiritual intelligence. i) Critical existential thinking; the capacity to critically contemplate the nature of existence, reality the universe, space, time, and other existential metaphysical issues. ii) Personal meaning production is the ability to derive personal meaning and purpose from all physical and mental experience. iii) Transcendental Awareness is the capacity to identify transcendent dimensions of the self and of the physical world during normal state of consciousness. iv) Conscious state expansion is the ability to enter and exit higher state of consciousness through meditation and contemplation. Philosophy is mother of all subjects like science, arts, psychology and Religion.

### **Philosophy**

The term philosophy has been derived from the two Greek words. 'philos'(love)and 'Sophia' (wisdom). Thus etymologically the term philosophy means 'love of wisdom' Philosophy is an attempt to answer the ultimate questions of life. It is a search for knowledge and wisdom. It is a way of looking at things at nature and at man, his origin and goal. It is search for knowledge and wisdom. Metaphysics is an important area of study under the scope of philosophy. It deals with the fundamental questions which refer to nature of reality, of being and becoming. Epistemology is a branch of philosophy which deals with the fundamental questions of knowledge. Axiology refers to values are value system. Axiology works out two important frames of reference, ethics and aesthetics.

### **Indian Philosophy**

Indian Rishies and saints used the term 'Darshan' for philosophy that is perception of truth. Philosophy is an attitude towards life and universe where an effort is made to search the truth on the basis of logical inquiry. Indian Philosophy is essentially spiritual. Philosophy and religion are intimately connected with each other in India. Religion is not a system of dogmas but a living experience. It is a practical realization of spiritual truth. Philosophy is the theory of the Reality. It is an insight into the nature of the reality which leads to liberation. Indian philosophy is not idle theorizing, but the spiritual quest. The nine system of Indian philosophical thought have been classified in to two broad divisions of Orthodox (astika) and the heterodox (nastika). The schools that reject the authority of the Vedas are Materialism, Buddhism and Jainism. The schools that accept the authority of Vedas are Nyaya, Vaisesika, Samkya, Yoga, purvamimamsa and Uttara Mimamsa.

### **Nyaya and vaisesika**

Gautama Aksapada was the first to systematize the Nyaya sutras. It is a system of logical realism. Existence of objects and things of the world are independent of the knowledge and mind, where as the images, ideas, feelings of pleasure and pain are dependent on some mind. Liberation is possible only through true knowledge of reality. Epistemology or theory of knowledge is perception, inference, comparison and testimony. Perception is

defined as cognition, which is produced by sense –object contact and is true. Inference or Anumana literally means a cognition or knowledge, which follows some other knowledge. Upamana or comparison is acquiring knowledge about something by comparing it with the similarities of other familiar things. Sabda (Testimony) is the statements come from a trustworthy person or authoritative texts. There is no explicit mention of God but they feel that the grace of God is the eternal, infinite self, who is the basis for creation, sustenance and destruction. He governs all the individuals and self morally. The philosophy of Vaisesika is like Nyaya philosophy such as liberation of the self, relieve from the ignorance of pain and suffering, providing knowledge through perception and inference.

### **Sankya and yoga**

Sankya is a dualistic system of metaphysics because it explains the reality of the world on the basics of two basic substances Purusha and Prakriti. These two substances are called spirit and nature, are independent and permanent. Purusha is conscious substance but Prakriti is unconscious substance. The perceptible world and other elements are evolved out of union of these two substances. There are three ways of getting knowledge is, perception, inference and scriptural testimony. The knowledge produced through sense contact is perception true knowledge pertains to the knowledge of body and soul, matter and spirit. True knowledge is knowledge of twenty-five elements of sankya and knowledge of these elements leads to salvation. There are two sources of acquiring knowledge are external and internal. In the external sources senses and motor organs are included and the internal sources are mind, self-consciousness or ego, intellect and soul. Sankya upholds the value of education in life and regard it as social institution which is the essential condition for spiritual evolution.

The theoretical principles of sankya are applied to yoga. Yoga accepts Sankya's Epistemology the three pramanas i.e perception, inference and sabda. And also accepts the metaphysics with twenty five principles of evolution process. The main difference is in yoga is belief in God. He is the supreme, eternal, perfect, all pervading and omnipotent. He is free from all defects. Yoga of action practised with zeal and energy, promotes contemplation and attunes the afflictions. The eight limbs of yoga are i) yamas (abstinence) are non injury, truthfulness, non stealing, non possessions and continence. ii) Niyam (observances) are cleanliness, contentment, austerities, sacred study and surrender of works to God. iii) Asana (postures of the body ) like elephant, camel, snake fish peacock etc. iv) Pranayam (regulation of breath). v) pratyahara (withdrawal of senses). vi) Dharan (fixed attention). vii) dhyana (meditation). viii) Samadhi- contemplation. Practicing yoga ensure character and personality development.

### **Mimamsa and vedanta**

Jamani is said to be founder of this school of philosophy. The primary concern of this school is to enquire the nature of dharma. Mimamsa and vedanta both attempt to interpret Vedas. They are regarded as allied system of Indian philosophy. The mimamsa deal with the earlier portion of the Vedas is given the name Purva Mimamsa or karma Mimamsa. The purpose of Mimamsa school is to enquire the real nature of right action (dharma). The

ritualistic side of vedic culture is called as Uttara mimams. Mimamsa believes in perceptual reality and also other sources of knowledge about souls, heaven, hell and deities. The souls are eternal and permanent. Consciousness is a quality of soul but not the essence. Souls are subjected to bondage and capable for liberation. Mimamsa believes broad sources of knowledge such as comparison, Authority (testimony), postulation, and non perception. It does not believe in the creator of the world. Those who abide by vedic commands would lead a good life. It makes an individual to become more dutiful and perform his duty for the sake of duty, without thinking about the result. They do not believe in the creator as God may be determined as atheists. At the same time offering sacrificial rituals to many Gods may be understood as polytheism.

### **Caruvaka Philosophy**

It is also called as Lokayatika. Brushespati is considered as a founder of caruvaka. The basic understanding of reality is the world is made up of air, fire, water and earth elements. They do not believe in akasa, which cannot be perceived. They agree with the existence of consciousness which can be proved by perception. Consciousness is a by product of matter and it is not independent of body. There is no necessity of God in the creation of the world. Each material has got fixed nature of its own (sabhava). The world is created by nature's laws inherent in them where they combine together to form this world.

The entire philosophy of caruvaka is based on the epistemology. The valid knowledge is only through perception i.e. cognition called Prama and the source of knowledge as pramana. According to them inference is not certain and testimony is not safe source of knowledge. For them worldly life is more important than the unknown otherworldly realization. They believe pain and pleasure. So the goal of human life is to attain the maximum amount of pleasure in this life and avoid pain as far as possible. Thus Caruvaka ethics is hedonistic or the pleasure is the highest goal of life.

### **Buddhism**

The philosophy of Buddhism is philosophy of Humanism. The Buddhist theory of reality regards this world as an illusion. He understood the emptiness and worthlessness of life and tried to seek enlightenment to find way out for human miseries. Buddhist theory of knowledge regards perception and inference as the valid source of knowledge. Buddha wanted his disciples to believe his teachings only after they have understood the truth on the basis of their own experience. Buddhist epistemology recognises the four noble truths, which are there is suffering in the world, and there is cause for suffering, there is cessation for suffering and there is way to cessation of suffering. Ethical values are love, friendship, brotherhood non violence and compassion. Eight fold paths to liberation are right views, right resolve, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood and right concentration. In Buddha era great international centres of education were opened. The prominent centres were Nalanda, Taksasila, Vikramasila. So India became the international seat of learning.

**Philosophy of Jainism**

Twenty four teachers (Tirthankaras) are the founders of philosophy. The first twelve teachers lived in prehistoric period and the last teacher is Mahavira. The Jaina metaphysics conceives reality as a many sided entity. It is known as Anekantavada. The Jaina theory of Reality regards matter and soul as separate and independent. There are numberless atoms of matter as well as numberless individual soul. They possess positive as well as negative characters. The basic concepts of reality are conception of substance, classification of substances, soul or Jiva, and inanimate substances or Ajivas. According to them there are three kinds of knowledge that is perception, inference, testimony. They consider knowledge is immediate and mediate like other thinkers. The consciousness is essence of every soul and it has the inherent potential of omniscience. Jain epistemology also divides knowledge into two categories namely pramana and Naya. Pramana is the knowledge of a thing as it is. It is a realistic approach to knowledge. Naya is relational knowledge, so only partial in status. Partial knowledge of one of the many aspects of a thing is called Naya

The most important dimensions of Jaina philosophy is the conduct which leads to salvation. The basic concepts in ethics are bondage of the soul and liberation. The soul needs a body to reside and liberate. The soul is bonded by the passion like anger, pride, infatuation greed which develops attachment to the body. Thirthankaras who already attained liberation can help in liberating others. Right faith, Right knowledge and right conduct is needed for liberation. The five vows are nonviolence, non stealing, non attachment, abstinence from falsehood and Bramacharya which are essentially followed by all Jains. They believe every soul has to work for their own salvation. Education without philosophy is blind and philosophy without education is invalid.

**Ancient Indian Education**

The philosophy and education are closely interrelated. Education is the application of philosophy or philosophy of education is applied philosophy. Philosophy deals with the ends and education with the means. Philosophy is the background of education. Education is a lifelong process it starts with conception and ends with death. Its aim is all round development of human personality. Indian education in its wider perspective is more. The four Vedas are 'Rigveda', 'yajurveda', 'Samaveda' and 'Artharvana veda'. They were preserved orally and it was compiled by 'Veda-Vyasa' in Mahabharata age. In the words of Radhakumud Mukerji, "for thousands of years, even up to the time of Kumarila (eighth century AD) it was considered a sacrilege to reduce the Veda to writing, for learning was not writing but Realisation".

**Ideals of Education**

According to Vedas the aim of education is liberation which is obtained by knowledge. According to Altekhar "the knowledge is a third eye of man which gives him insight into all affairs and teaches him how to act. In the spiritual sphere it leads to salvation, in the mundane sphere it leads to all round progress and prosperity. The illumination given by education shatters illusions removes difficulties and enables to realise the true value of

life. The cause of liberation and bondage is the mind or chitta. So liberation is possible only through the control of mind. Equanimity of the mind leads to self-realisation. The Vedic Axiology does not distinguish between social and individual values since both are part of fundamental universal values.

## Conclusion

India is spiritual country and its philosophy is rich. Many sages' philosophers experienced the ultimate reality the 'Truth' and gave practical solution to attain liberation and live happy life in this world. Now many people forgotten this tradition and was not taught in schools or in families. Indian philosophy and life is not separate phenomenon both are same. Ancient India is an Era of spirituality. Different ways are shown both theistic and Atheistic to experience the ultimate Reality the 'Truth'. Based on Indian philosophy spiritual classes and practical method should be introduced in education system. All leaders should have practical experience about self realization and develop cosmic consciousness so that one can feel he whole humanity is one family in the universe.

Lead us from the unreal to the Real.

Lead us from darkness unto light.

Lead us from death to Immortality.

## Bibliography

- Bhatia, K. (2010). *Philosophical, Sociological and Economic Bases of Education*. Ludhana: Tandon Publications. pg.165-191
- Dr.T.Mrunalini. (2008). *Philosophical Foundations of Education*. New Delhi: Neelkamal Publications pvt.Ltd. pg.136-240.
- Golden, S. A. R. (2017). *Recent Research in Social Sciences & Humanities*. EduPedia Publications (P) Ltd..
- Zohar,D. (2004). *Spiritual Capital Wealth We Can Live By*. San Francisco: Berrett Koehler Publishers.
- Pandey, D. S. (2004). *An Introduction to Major Philosophies of Education*. Agra: Vinod Pustak Mandir.pg.179-187.
- Srivastava, P. S. (2016, March). *Spiritual Intelligence: An overview*. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and development*. , pp. 224-227.
- Vaughan,F. (2002). *Spiritual Intelligence: Aspects, Components and Guidelines to promote it*.*Jounal of Humanistic psychology* 42(2) 16-33