
Spirituality, a Path to Inner Culture: A Pragmatic Response to Contemporary Waste Land

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Abstract

*The diachronic history of epistemic formation and discourse creation has inextricably and inexorably embedded into the changing economic condition of the contemporary reality. In fact, the entire epoch of late nineteenth century to mid twentieth century has been one of the periods of a great political and economic turmoil and upheaval. The unprecedented history of imperialism, dictatorship, materialism along with unsurmounting capitalism has brought in a great panorama of futility and anarchy which has become the history of the contemporary world that is further espoused by Darwin through the survival of the fittest by muting the words of Kropotkin's principle of mutual aid. The contemporary system of capitalism has been brought in as an antithesis to feudal economy and it has given rise to the phenomena of Utilitarianism. The entire philosophical apodosis of Utilitarianism provides us with different forms of looking at reality and human life- existence. The paper meticulously looks into the uncanny and inscrutable yet a remarkable relationship between capitalistic growth and spiritual waste land and cultural decay as has candidly been avered by one of the remarkable poets, T.S. Eliot. He in his *The Waste Land* (1922) articulates:*

*Here is no water but only rock
Rock and no water and the sandy road
...Sweat is dry and feet are in sand
...Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit. (Lines 330-340)*

Before, the paper embarks upon the nature, form and function of spirituality in the contemporary reality of the present materialist and consumerist world, it is indeed inevitable to look into the reason(s) of growing interest of academician, managers and leaders into the uncanny and exasperating world of spirituality. The paper in context tries to explore the historical predicament of knowledge formation, the growth and development of the self through Structuralism to postmodernism.

A close examination of the historical realities of the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty first century of the world reflects upon certain remarkable events which have shaped not only the social, economic, cultural, political, intellectual, and spiritual world of the people, or in other words, they affected the entire rubric of the private and public life of the people. The

colonial and the imperialist expansion of the west brought a great emphasis upon the Greeco-Roman philosophy of Epicureanism and espoused for the development of materialism and capitalism. The history of the world from the very inception of the French Revolution to the world war II, that ended in 1945, has been the history of murder and chaos which have resulted into a great panorama of futility and anarchy, holds James Frazer in his *The Golden Bough* (1922). Although wars triggered destruction yet they have also advocated for a new and different kind of order or reality and as a result Jeremy Bentham propounded the philosophy of Utilitarianism which was further championed by J. S. Mill and his followers. The philosophy of Utilitarianism avered for the capitalistic enterprise and brought a crude kind of pragmatism. Utilitarianism focuses on the end and on the other hand Kantian philosophy focuses on the means in the effort to bring forth the reality of the Real.

The pursuit of attaining and defining the Real has always been one sided and hence has ignored another side of the reality which constitutes a significant half of it. Spirituality is that second half. The implicit content of ethics, moral, value and virtue should also be expounded to delve deeper into the world of spirituality. It helps at exploring the meaning of life through understanding the inevitability of merging the external with internal, body with soul. Further, it helps in avoiding the designing and cultivating those things which aims at meeting the mundane and prosaic requirement of the subjects in society. Absence of spirituality force people for external movement in the physical world for attaining all material and physical comfort focusing at the external reality of the universe by ignoring another part of the reality.

The *aletheia* or Lacanian Real and Platonic or Neo-Platonic idea of Truth has always been addressed by the propounders of different philosophical thoughts and construes. The philosophical tradition of Structuralism holds that the reality is always viewed in its binary opposition; substance/form, physical/spiritual, external/internal, and body/soul etc. It beholds that the reality is viewed through the aforementioned dichotomies and one is significantly different from other, however, F.D. Saussure and Levis Strauss hold that there is a finite reality and all accept that particular form of reality and it has been the way to find meaning in life. Further, the underlying principle of post structuralism believes in the philosophy of 'difference' and 'continuum'. It disseminates the fact that all phenomenological, epistemological and ontological realities exhibit a particular form of progress and return and continuum between them. In addition the Modernist thinkers and philosophers believe that truth is relative, rooted in the economic conditions and social hierarchy and it further holds that meaning in life can be attained if one integrates the multiplicity, fragmentation and broken blocks. It demands for the situation of integration between the binaries to find the whole as Plato mentions in his *Symposium*, the half always yearn to be integrated with the other half to find its wholeness. The history of the world bears

the testimony of the fact that that it has always reckoned for the half or incomplete truth, that means industrialism, capitalism and utilitarianism have only focused at the principle of materialism and physical prosperity by ignoring the light of spirituality.

Lexemes like spirit, spiritual and spirituality are some of those entries of the lexicon which are the most confounding and quizzical in the firmament of the phenomena of human existence, management and leadership. Spirit is identified as a constituent element of an individual which is deeply connected with life force or *pneuma* and which is immaterial in nature, amorphous in shape and size and unconquerable and imperishable holds Immanuel Kant (1766). Further, it also connotes of self says Descartes, Hegel, Heidegger and Husserl. Spirit is the state of being, inextricably intertwined into the world of epistemology, ontology and phenomenology; hence a being is epistemological, ontological and phenomenological. It establishes the fact that the 'spirit' is implicitly associated with the formation of consciousness, as Edmund Husserl (1965) holds that the being is the intrinsic nature of the self and it is always conscious of itself. Similarly, Martin Heidegger (1927) explains that what characterizes human being is its 'thrownness' into the world or facticity and is thereby prescinded and experienced as a series of desultory phenomena. Now, Spiritual represents the ontological state of being or self where everything is in the form of 'whatness' holds James Joyce (1916). Spirituality is the ability to advance the congruence between the ideal and the real or in other words it is function of the relational dynamics among the transcendent, self, and others in maintaining a harmonious ideology itself. It is indeed ideopraxical in nature as it tries to discover the fulfilment of self, self-determination, self-control, discovery of self and enrichment of self and finally it encourages subjects to act appropriately in order to attain meaning in life.

Spirituality is defined by the propounders of different ideological sects in different words. The theological research defines spirituality in terms of a person's life outcome in relation to God holds Hunter, Maloney, Mills, and Patton (1990), in psychology the focus is more on the 'self' than on the relationship with the spiritual being, says Paramount (1997), in Sociology, it is defined in the context of the social morality as well as the rituals and practices of social groups, explains MacQuarrie (1992), in Aesthetics, it entails the movement of the subject from the world of material reality to the world of inner culture, adumbrates Heidegger (1927), Finally, Spirituality refers to *Seva* 'unconditional service', Perseverance, Inner reality, Integration, Temperance, Universality, Attitude, Largeness of soul, Innocence, and Tranquillity.

Spirituality is the state of being in which one is covertly connected with the universal order of the existence and get oneself attached to the consciousness of the cosmos. The odyssey of attaining the spiritual state of being is possible by cultivating *Seva* or the unconditional service or Love for the humanity. Plato in his *Symposium* makes it evident that the heavenly

or conditional form of love allows one to be attached with the living universe. Similarly, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* good, virtuous and moral life which encourage one to perform unconditional service and the unconditional service performed in accordance with reason, and consequently the good life for human beings is the life of reason lived with excellence. Similarly, an act of unconditional service may allow one to be free from the chains of expectation and an endless fission of desire which may further allow the rays of spirituality to come inside.

However, there is a dire need of perseverance in doing it .At this juncture it is important to note that the individual must be mentally conscious of what he does and must be able to see the act that he performs. This allows one to understand the situation in totality. In the process of one's bildungsroman it is indeed possible that one may experience the sublime state of sudden manifestation or revelation or what Joyce calls it the state of epiphany. James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a young Man* (1916) typifies the growth of the self into a subject and it is accomplished through a complex and a confounding process of subjectivization. The psychological self of an individual goes under a perpetual process of 'interpellation' and gets conditioned by all dominant ideology existing in a society. Society exercises the rubrics, snarls and conditioning nets through different state apparatuses, namely ideological and repressive. It is in the process of the cultivation of the self, the character experiences epiphanies at several situations which gradually moulds his character and divulges him the meaning and existence of life. Stephen Dedalus, the protagonist of the novel, experiences such moments in the dialectical process of resolving the contradiction between two conflicting forces where a synthesis is achieved, when certain phases or sensation or complex experiences suddenly cohere in a large whole and a meaning shines forth the whole, what Joyce calls 'epiphanies'. Further, Joyce in his unfinished autobiographical novel *Stephen Hero* (1904-5), the central character, Stephen Daedalus, claims that one function of writing is 'to record...epiphanies with extreme care', since 'they.. are the most delicate and evanescent of moments' (p. 211). In the same passage he defines and epiphany as 'a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself' (p. 211). In philosophical and religious terms, epiphany represents an idealistic, even platonic belief in the superiority of the spirit, its ability to transcend materiality and it brings a rare balance between spirit and matter, imagination and observation. Joyce also uses epiphany to signify a psychological revelation of repressed or subconscious truth through slips and errors. Thus, epiphanies evoke the desire and fear of discovery, but their exposures are all designed to prove the power and authority of the self over the external world. Finally, the phenomenal moment of epiphany brings the subject to the world of inner culture or inner reality where the subject may find meaning/truth or reality.

These spiritual moments create wholeness in one's life and gradually make the subject free

from the world of *Gloria mundi* and from the deadly sins of the historical and synchronic realities what Konrad Lorenz enlists as Overpopulation, Devastation of environments, Man's race against himself, Entropy feeling, Genetic decay, Break down with tradition, indoctrinability and Nuclear weapons proliferations. Further, it may create universality and largeness of soul and innocence which encourages the individual to become all detached and may allow acting like a mirror, which looks at everything but can never get affected by any images that it looks at, similarly, the individual may get involved into activities but is never affected by any of them. Thus, spirituality allows the individual to follow everything like a stoicist who is always like a *stoa* what Buddhism and Jainism call it the *anasharaya purusa*, means the person who is not at all affected by the earthly or prosaic activities of the common world and Krishna calls it the state of *sthethipragya*, the state of mind of the individual in which he can take a rightful action. Finally, the aforementioned states of spirituality bring tranquillity and happiness in the life of the individual who becomes an individual from the state of interpellated or conditioned subject. This refers to the bewildering array of thoughts about the process of subjectivization or the process of subject formation and the spiritual journey of the individual. The spiritual journey of the subject is all about the process of unbecoming or unlearning and it is precisely triggered by the spiritual urge of the subject because the character does not find meaning in the external activities in life.

The process of unbecoming encourages the individual to attain happiness as it is an inner state of mind and spirit and the spiritual state of mind and spirit can be attained through the correlates like Yoga, Meditation, Prayers and Gestalt. These correlates may motivate the individual to shun greed and other physical sufferings but may allow him to attain his need. The fulfilment of need is possible precisely through the materialistic artefacts. This refers to the fact that the golden mean of is required in order to integrate what appears to be entirely different and dichotomous. The integration of all binaries may allow the individual to attain the meaning of life. D.H. Lawrence (1922, 1923) espouses for the integration between the physical and spiritual, Rousseau (1755), Popper (1945) and many others advocate for the need of integration of all visible or invisible binaries.

In brief, the paper has made an attempt to explore the relationship between the diachronic history of epistemic formation and discourse creation which have inseparable been embedded into the changing economic condition of the contemporary world. The unprecedented history of imperialism, dictatorship, materialism along with insurmountable capitalism has brought in a great panorama of futility and anarchy which has become the history of the contemporary world that is further espoused by Darwin through the survival of the fittest by muting the words of Kropotkin's principle of mutual aid. The contemporary system of capitalism has been brought in as an antithesis to feudal economy and it has given rise to the phenomena of Utilitarianism. The entire philosophical apodosis of Utilitarianism provides us with different forms of looking at reality and human life- existence. The paper

has focused on different aspects of spirit and spirituality and how meaning can be infused in life has also been elaborately discussed. Finally the paper articulates for the fact that the meaning of life can better be realized by the commingling of all seeming binaries which is even adumbrated by William Blake in his the 'The Marriage of Heaven and Hell' where he holds that 'there is no progression without deviation. T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922):

Here is no water but only rock
Rock and no water and the sandy road
.....Sweat is dry and feet are in sand
.....Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit. (Lines 330-340)

Now, can be transformed into heaven by spiritual fervour of Datta, Dayadhvam and Damyata/Shantih Shantih Shantih.

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