

Can We Afford to Ignore Religion in Management Education?

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ABSTRACT

Importance of spiritual content in managerial education is acknowledged by the scholars of management education. In recent years the idea of integrating spiritualism in management education gained impetus given the increasing incidences of corporate malpractices for personal benefits at the cost of society at large and also because of the sustained economic crisis seeking noble solutions. The scholastic community acknowledges the need of integrating spirituality in work places as well as in the academics. However, they have been disassociating spirituality from the concept of religion with attempts to project spirituality as something independent of religion. It is true that 'spirituality' is something which operates on a higher plane and the religion operates on belief systems and names & forms. But, man, as a product of his social environment and religion being an integral part of it, can't ignore the decisive impact religion has on the conscious and subconscious mind frame and its spiritual constituents. While acknowledging the importance of religion, care needs to be taken that religion portrays aspects which are of universal appeal rather than those which are divisive in nature. The paper emphasizes the need of management education ingrained with 'sarva dharma samabhava' (respect for religious traits) instead of 'sarva dharma abhava' (ignoring the values of religion) and searches for religious roots for a meaningful comprehensive education.

Keywords: Management Education, Religion, Spirituality

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INTRODUCTION

The debate on integrating spiritual education as a component of managerial education has a chequered history with both pro and anti-intellectual thoughts since the word 'spiritual' in management education is perceived to be an anathema by the secular people. The apprehensions that the secular credentials of the society get affected if spiritual inputs are brought in to class room, though debatable, have some reasons. In the garb of spirituality, proselytism cannot be permitted at any cost as the class room podium is an altar for healthy growth of positive thoughts with fusion of ideas irrespective of creed, caste and religion. But the empirical studies (Don, 2005) have proved that effective spiritual education has positive impacts on the behaviors of the practitioners of management in working places resulting in emotionally stable and socially sensitive working executives. Management education, with focus on integrating analytical intelligence, emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence and concepts like level five leadership(see Collins, 2001), are moves which are positively inclined to the goal of creating a learning environment different from purely techno-commercial and materialistic education. This school of thought opines that the present education is more one sided, excessively intellect driven and does not do enough to produce well rounded individuals (Narayanswamy, 2008). The unequal distribution of wealth, lopsided development, social unrest resulting in to violent upsurges and terrorist threats have prompted the thinkers to believe that the future managers should be more humane, more apathetic and more sensitive to social and environmental causes. It is also felt that the existing work situations with global consequences require managers with qualities of personal humility and professional will as represented in Jim Collins concept of Level Five Leadership and Sthitha Pragna as described in Bhagavad Gita (Hindu Religious text written by Veda Vyasa). The debates have ultimately crystallized and there is broad agreement among the intellectuals of the management sciences that 'spirituality' as course content in managerial education has an imperative necessity. As early as 2002, nearly 44 Universities have started offering courses in spiritual education and the number is growing (Manz et al., 2010).

What is Spirituality and how it can be brought to the class room? The discussion on this issue is endless. The challenge of teaching about spirituality is to manage the paradox of integrating personal knowledge, beliefs and attitudes with professional lessons. The very discussion of their

spiritual nature makes many students uncomfortable. Moreover, by logical necessity for many people, discussing spirituality involves discussing religion. All of these complications have the potential to lead students away from inquiry and lead into argument or advocacy. Their discomfort can be so intense that, merely raising the subject of spirituality may shut down students' listening abilities (Barnett et al., 2000). Leading academicians of management science stream equate spirituality in education with practices that embrace concerns for humanity and 'enlightened stakeholder model' (Steingard, 2005) and the dominant underpinning being that it is to be disassociated with religion. However, man is a product of his social context, religion being an integral part of it. No matter how much we deny religion has decisive impact on the conscious and subconscious mind frame. Spirituality loses its sheen and influence when cut off from roots of religion and becomes less comprehensive, meaningful and potent. Napoleon Bonaparte once proclaimed, 'there is no exaggeration in the claim that it is necessary to invent religion when there is no religion for social good.' This invention will be something of where religion will portray aspects which are of universal appeal rather than with divisive in nature. Of course, it will be keeping the best of spirituality and adding something extra.

THE PURPOSE

The motive behind this article is to take up the threads from where the existing research stopped and try to explore how the lessons from spirituality can be imparted in to managerial education system with the firm religious roots like religious texts/verses/scripts/religious anecdotes/folkways etc. The purpose is also to present a few characters from the religious scripts and explore how best case studies can be developed and inferences drawn for managerial concepts and practices. The aim is to show how religion can be made use of to the best extent in the class room without getting attached to any particular religion. We believe that things when related from the texts of the scriptures in the form of stories and tales get imprinted firmly in the minds of the students when compared to some abstract aspects of spiritualism like connecting the self to 'The Ultimate' or explaining high values of metaphysical things to the novices in spirituality. Further the global manager needs to work with common people in the working environment and he can effectively imbibe spiritual values in them by parables and stories drawn from various religions and thus make whole working environment a spiritual work place in real sense.

METHODOLOGY

For understanding existing knowledge, a thorough review of existing literature on subjects relating to spiritual and religious education as course study in academic institutions was made by referring to relevant articles from data bases like Proquest, Ebsco, Elsevier, Sage publications, Springer Link, IEEE Xplore etc. A thorough search was also made in popular religious sites like Chimaya Foundation, Swami Dayananda Saraswati's Arsha Dharmma, Aurobindo's Vedanta, Rama Krishna Foundation etc. The thoughts of popular leaders like Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, Jiddu Krishna Murthy, Dalai Lama, Sayyed Mohd Rizvi and the like have also been looked upon and some relevant ones incorporated for providing divergent viewpoints on the subject matter and enriching the discussion. The ancient scriptures like Bhagawad Gita, Maha Bharata, Ramayana, Quran and the Bible are also the source for exploring and for drawing inferences. Works of some Indian scholars like Prof. Ramanath Narayana Swamy and Prof Subhash Sharma are also referred for our work.

MATRIX OF SPIRITUALITY, RELIGION AND MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

Teachers with foresight had seen the necessity of spirituality as an integral part of higher order learning way back in human history. For example, Plato initiated one of the first training centers in the world as early as 4th Century BC which he called the "Academy", to train and develop new leaders capable of withstanding high work place pressures. Point of importance was that the training drew a lot from spiritual and religious resources but in ways which didn't hurt sentiments of learners. Compulsions of complex living styles have always challenged educators and trainers on how to produce citizens who are socially responsible, economically productive, culturally sensitive and pragmatic leaders all at the same time. Our challenging times demand such leaders and our existing education system is seemingly falling short of expectations. Our focus as educators or instructors is excessively tilted towards the 'outer' space of the manager's vocation (ends and outcomes), without necessarily or adequately addressing the challenge of the 'inner' space (means and processes). (Narayanswamy, R., 2008).

Spirituality comes from the Latin word 'Spiritus' meaning breath of life. Spirituality has been generally defined as 'subjective feelings,

thoughts and behaviors that arise from a search for the ‘sacred’, where sacred is defined broadly as referring to a ‘divine being, divine object, ultimate reality, or Ultimate Truth as perceived by the individual’ (Hill et al., 2000). Spirituality, historically, has been rooted in religion (Cavanagh, 1999). However, its current use in business and in the workplace is most often not overtly associated with any specific religious tradition. There are several reasons for this separation. One reason for this is that the societies are plural, belief that use of one religion may result in disharmony and distrust, and the supposed western thought where religion is judged to be opposed to rationality and science and the source of superstition and (Cavanagh, 1999). Majority of writers support this school of thought and try to disassociate the religion from the subject matter of spirituality. This is also probably done with a view to develop a global mindset and a rational image of the manager where there is no room for projecting and promoting any particular religion. Since the subject matter of spirituality is sought to be enmeshed in managerial contest, it was felt necessary to clearly distinguish spirituality from religion (Narayanswamy, 2008). Religion being institutionalized structure, the rational thinking might become the causality and lead to structures based on belief and formalities.

Of late, there is an increasing recognition that spirituality is an important variable in organizational life, and in the study and practice of management (Manz et al., 2006). Integrating spiritual education as a component of management education has been well accepted by the intellectuals and more and more number of Universities are offering spiritual education in their class rooms. The methods and tools of education differ as the teachers have few guidelines to follow- some drawing personal experiences and some leaning on philosophical religious basis. There is a growing intellectual thought to disassociate religion from spiritual education as the religion signifies dogmas and traditions. This school of thought based their course structures on non religious yet Dharmic traditions of ancient lore.. For example, P .G. Diploma in Value Education and Spirituality offered by Annamalai University, Chennai; MA in Spirituality Studies offered by University of Hull, UK etc.

As in due course of time these non-religious traditions were perceived to have got associated with certain religious sects, like Sanatana Dharma with Hinduism and Confucian Way of Life with Chinese religion, it has increasingly becoming difficult to project them as non-religious traditions. Chinese religions are family-oriented and do not demand exclusive adherence, allowing the practice or belief of several at the same time. Some scholars prefer not to use the term “religion” in reference

to belief systems in China, and suggest “cultural practices”, “thought systems” or “philosophies” as more appropriate terms (Taylor, Rodney L, 1982) But these non religious traditions (even when seen as part of some religions) have deep connect with common masses, sometimes so much that conveying spiritual messages to them has to take course through religious means. As the management practitioners are called upon to function and apply their knowledge with common people, it is thought relevant to rely more on sources which common man can understand fast. For example, a management trainer when giving lecture to illiterate/semi-literate shop floor workers may refer to (often he/she does that) religion, religious anecdotes and lessons from scriptures for deeper impact. The entire ‘Pancha Tantra’ consists of animal stories which were used very effectively by Vishnu Sarma for teaching the foolish children of his king in 3rd century BC. These could be effectively used in classrooms by integrating them within the conceptual frameworks (for example while discussing business ethics topics). This not only makes the message clear and easy to absorb for the students but also has lasting impression. We may deny religion in our managerial interfaces but we do take recourse to them when time demands. Accepting these religious components in our management practices will only make the overall exercise much easier to plan, effective to use and comprehensive in meaning. As a common man understands religion and finds solace in religion, it may not be impracticable to teach them the religious characters that throw light on religious aspects.

JOURNEY TOWARDS RELIGIOUS ROOTS

The existing school of thought predominantly relies on spiritual education bereft of religious leanings. The course contents are broadly metaphysical and the programmes are trying to help the learner in understanding the ‘Self’ and help in developing analytical intelligence, emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence. The tools for spiritual education are therefore sought to be rooted in metaphysical thought structure trying to find the wisdom traditions of the world. The Sanatana Dharma, being practiced in India, the Hawaiian spiritual practice called ‘HO’ oponopono, Confucian philosophy of Japan and China, Seishin kyooiku of Japan and the like essentially talk of self-awakening rather than emphasis on belief structures and they are sought to be used by various thinkers for imparting spiritual education. For example, Prof Ramanath

Narayana Swamy, started teaching spiritual aspects by making use of Sanatana Dharma in a big way at IIM, Bangalore (Narayana, Ramanath Swamy, 2008). His area of research includes Spirituality in the workplace and spirituality as revelation; investigating the interface of the performing arts with management education etc. Similarly, it has been reported that the professor who teaches Classical Chinese Ethical and Political Theory at Harvard, claims that course will change the lives of the students (Gross, 2013). . The basic aim seems to be fusion of cognitive aspects and non cognitive aspects for preparing a student of management to Level Five Leadership where personal humility and professional will combine to achieve maximum success. While analytical intelligence is driven by the intellect, the emotional and spiritual intelligence are driven by the heart and soul. A manager with global perspective should possess humility of character with fair understanding and recognition of human dignity, gender equality, social justice, empathy, morality and vision for inclusive growth for the betterment of human society. It is all about learning to live in integrity with the planet earth and all who share her. It is a very personal journey and it is about sharing your inherent gifts with the world, whatever they may be, and finding inner peace, love and harmony through ego negation and understanding the self. Though religion and spiritual education have same end results, viz, awakening the 'Self', efforts are on non-acceptance of the religious roots since religion, along with all the good qualities is also supposed to signify more of dogmas and traditions. So rather than separating the grain from the chaff the practice has been to throw away the whole grains. Rather than trying to take the best of religion and avoiding the unimportant and non-useful, attempts have been to ignore everything in order to be projected as unbiased, rational and scientific. But this shows lack of prudence and craft and our restricted vision for role of religion in different aspects of our life. Embracing the best of religion is only going to enlighten us and enrich our lives as much as running away from it may engulf humanity in ignorance and doom.

The non religious practices and dogma-free traditions of ancient lore have already got submerged into religions, perhaps because this abstract knowledge could not penetrate the minds of common folk unless ordained by religious sanctions. Common people may not follow Ahimsa (non violence) and benevolence unless it is stated by religion that the Himsa (violence) leads to sin and take the dead soul to the hell. Sanatana Dharma, though pronounces the Universal truths, is being equated with Hinduism since a sect of Hindus practiced, perfected and sustained it.

It merged with Hinduism. Though the word, 'Hindu' never finds a place in the entire Bhagawad Gita, it is regarded as the prime and prominent scripture of Hindus. To confine within secular boundaries, management educators prefer to stay away from using the lessons of Bhagawad Gita or other religious texts lest they be branded as religious ambassadors. In the process something of immense value never reaches the classrooms and management texts.

Unfolding the Unity Underlying the Dualism of Spirituality and Religion

Dr R. Sundararaman and K. Venkataraman made an empirical study by collecting 200 responses from various managers all over the world and their findings revealed that out of 159 Hindus, 135 of them referred Bhagawad Gita; out of 17 Christians, 14 refer to Bible; out of 9 Muslims, 5 refer to Quran and over all, 87% of the respondents took solace from scriptures for managerial issues.

Jeanette Justice Fleming and Bradley C. Courtenay of University of Georgia made a phenomenological inquiry to examine the role of spirituality in the practice of leadership and the findings are as follows- 'Are the words 'spirituality' and 'religion' synonymous? For participants in this study, the answer was a qualified 'no.' Although 12 of the 15 participants deliberately made this distinction between the spiritual (personal) and the religious (organizational), other statements they made belied the total separation of the concepts. Participants perceived the concepts as differing, yet very much related. For Ellen, a Jewish Continuing Education instructor, spirituality was 'rooted in religion.' Henrietta, a Presbyterian Cooperative Extension agent, believed that her religion was 'the implementation of my spirituality.' Fico, a Catholic leader in Adult Basic Education stated, 'Spirituality can happen without religion, but religion will help you nourish the spirituality within you.' Brahma, a Hindu/Buddhist professor of Higher Education, summarized this interrelatedness of the two concepts when he said, 'Both of these [spirituality and religion] have common aspirations to understand self, origin of self, and purpose of self.' (Fico, 1981, pp 15-33).

A global manager will not work in a vacuum. He has to integrate with the living environment and get things done with his team members. The team is a conglomeration of all sorts of people who may understand hard core religious characters than the metaphysical dictums. In order to create an enterprise on spiritual values, the people of the organisation should be

imbibed with spiritual values and the role of the manager is to explain the Universal Truths in a way that is understood by the subjects. Unless the global manager has the ready case studies of characters drawn from religion, it is difficult to relate the Truths in understandable manner. It is true that religion is the outer shell of the coconut and the spirituality is the sweet nectar contained inside (Mata Amritanandamayi, 2000). But can sweet nectar be formed in the absence of the shell?

In one of his articles published in Hindu, 1st April, 1997, Engineer writes, “It is like imagining ‘self’ as different from body in the relative plane.” Pretending to be rational we often try to shed many things we consider secondary. We say (that) the corn is important but the chaff is secondary. If the chaff is discarded then the seed will not live. All that has come by tradition is not useless. But there should not be obstinacy regarding insignificant details. Let us not confound people by making them think that such details are essential part of religion (eternal words of Ramakrishna Paramahansa). Thus the dualism is to be understood in the relative plain for better understanding the concepts. Again we opine that spiritualism, like secularism is not negation of religions; but accepting that all religions proclaim, ‘Universal Truths’ and taking the good from all religions and fusing of all religious thoughts. Great secular leaders of freedom struggle in India like Mahatma Gandhi used to draw inspiration from scriptures and make use of that inspiration to attract the literate and semi literate masses of India for a great non violent and peaceful agitation. If anything can describe Nehru’s attitude towards religion, it is the phrase used by him - religious scepticism. He was greatly drawn towards Buddhism, rather than indulging in debates on metaphysical questions, concerned himself more with the question of removing dukkha, i.e., suffering in a spiritual and material sense” (Engineer, 1997). Just as secularism is based on an uncompromising critique of religion in the first sense and a deep appreciation and respect for religion in the second sense (Joshi, 2007); the spiritual education can be a critique of any religious dogma but can respect and appreciate the religious roots of all religions. Arnold Toynbee, after reflecting on the panorama of progress of man, concludes that the only way man could survive on this planet was “if there is unification of mankind” and such unification can be brought out only if man becomes spiritual by the “worldwide spread of common religion” (Toynbee and Ikeda, 2008).

On philosophical plane, we have references from *Gita* and *Upanishads* that one out of thousand only can realize or understand the concepts of ‘*atma*’ or ‘*brahman*’ (the supreme consciousness) and others look upon it with

wonder only (“aashcharyavatpashyati kashchidenamaashcharyavadvadati tathaiva chaanyaha |aashcharyavachchainamanyaha shrunooti shrutvaapyenam veda na chaiva kashchit) (Gita- 2-29). Pravritti dharma and nivritti dharma, the former representing the method for people in family life and the later for people in renunciation are ordained in all ancient texts of India. The Upanishads which look upon with disdain all religious tenets, still prescribe them for the seeker because they emphatically believe that religion and its practices without any attachment provide ‘citta suddhi’ (purity of mind) and it leads to liberation in later stages. The importance of religion is thus recognized for preparing the people towards the path of spirituality.

A global manager leading a mammoth firm with multinational expanse and confounded by diversity of employees to be managed under one organization culture is beset with an intricate problems. The problem relates to getting the best out of conditions and circumstances with different types of people holding different beliefs and styles of functioning.. To facilitate development of a common thread uniting them under some common vision, mission and goals of organizations become much easier if they are trained beforehand in cross-cultural issues of how to work in harmony with people of diverse religious backgrounds. Management education can easily resolve these dilemmas by exposing learners to the universal truths espoused by most religions and also some religious characters which may provide role models and source of meaning for employees. “A common man looks to religion for answers to his questions about the purpose, meaning and destiny about human life. Human mind do not automatically possess the knowledge and understanding for giving verifiable and convincing answers to these fundamental questions. Our answers to them can be more than tentative and provisional. The traditional religions have offered dogmatic answers and this appearance of certainty was one of the original attractions. But modern man has perceived that this appearance is fallacious, and his disillusionments with religious dogma has discredited religion itself in his eyes” (Arnold Toynbee, 2008). An education for global manager has to take the ground realities of his working environment. The education that perfects the spiritual cravings and religious aspirations by discarding dogmas, ceremonies and the like is the necessity of the hour. This atmosphere ushers in the concept of what Satya Saiba described, ‘unity of man, global economy and earth citizenship’(Chiber, 1996). The religious roots to spiritual learning make the tree of spirituality growing strong and tall. The fruits and flowers of the tree spread fragrance of peace, humility, ethics and value systems.

The eternal quest of man to look for meaning and solace in distress can have some solution if management gurus become proficient in taking out best of religion and merging it with already understood spiritual conceptions. To give one example of how this can be a fruitful exercise, modern management is talking a lot about corporate social responsibility and human responsibility to our environment. Such teachings find place in our religious scriptures also, and if used properly may lead to more profound and lasting impact on students. When the earth is imagined as a mother nature and revered and respected, can we afford to vandalise the nature or resort to the famous ‘Death of nature’ of Carolyn Merchant? We are taught by our scriptures with the famous sloka- ‘Samudra Vasane DeviPadasprsa Kshamaswame’ meaning “Oh mother whose raiment are the seas, breasts are the mountains, you feed and sustain me and when I turn a handful of ash or dust it is your lap that I return to. On you mother, today once again, I set my foot, for I know not to move about otherwise” (Gopal and Sankarajit, 2011) A manager with this *sloka* in his heart cannot afford to vandalise and destroy the mother earth in the name of commercial expansions. And if such readings can become part of course curriculum it will give greater depth and meaning to management teaching, and hopefully greater acceptance and reverence.

We also witness growing religiosity and God worship across the globe in the last two decades among general public and intelligentsia. There is an increasing acceptance of prayer groups, faith traditions and meditation groups in work places (Conlin, 1999). Another instance comes from the growing attention to writers in business ethics talking the role of faith and religious traditions in ethical business behavior (Herman & Schaefer, 1997). Business firms operating on religious values are getting registered and acclaimed. There are indicators showing remarkable growth in incomes of religious places of worship. Also, religious tourism is emerging as an important industry in number of countries. Increasing tendency of public figures performing poojas for sustaining the governments with publicity is also quite visible in our society. Another historical practice in this context is the tradition of taking oaths in Parliaments by the peoples’ representatives in the name of God. In the age of science and technology the launch of Space Shuttles, Submarines on auspicious times and laying foundation ceremonies by performing *pooja* and invoking Gods are pointers towards the growing religiosity of people.

The historian Wilfred M. McClay, in his article, “Two Concepts of Secularism” argues that ‘the world at the dawn of 21st century remains energetically, even manically, religious, in ways large and small’ (McClay,

2000). Though this argument sounds ambitious, its depth cannot be under estimated. All these profoundly indicate the importance being given to religion by the society. Students of Managerial science are product of the society and are going to work in the same society. For thriving in such type of market it is befitting if aspiring managers are trained in a fashion which exposes them to proper amalgamation of relevant religious lessons alongside their usual business lessons.

Inferences from Scriptures- A Tool for Management Lessons

Case studies have been great success in management education system by enlightening students with real life business problems and providing simulated experience of solving problems hence preparing them for forthcoming on-job challenges. Events, dilemmas and characters discussed in classroom case discussions stick in mind of students and help them when faced with challenges later. Can we not have characters and events, fables and dilemmas discussed in religious texts also in some formal way to serve similar purpose? Most management curriculum place a lot of emphasis on topics such as CSR (corporate social responsibility), social entrepreneurship, business ethics, human resource development, leadership and personality training, organizational behaviour etc which at the core expect human qualities of highest order, transcending managerial dictates. No need to say that most religions expect the same from all - whether in managerial practice or otherwise. Can't we draw something from religious lessons to support management lessons? Can we draw inferences and learn lessons from our scriptures for more vibrant and productive classroom discussions? We have abundant literature in religious sources which are in disguise dealing with management problems. The creativity of adapting them to contextualized use might be challenging but worth the effort.

These are sometimes essential for a manager to explain his actions to his employees and stake holders and the education in this direction may immensely help him to shape his arguments, decisions and negotiation - his overall art of communication. The importance is more felt in crises situations when search for meaning, and purpose become ever so crucial. The Corporate World of today is a battle field over market shares. Companies vie each other for wooing customers and introducing innovative products. Can the Chief Executive Officer afford to ignore all stake holders including the customers and the employees in his pursuit for

making profits? Conversely can he deviate from the ethical path sometimes for larger public good? Which deviation will be easier to justify, if at all? Such ethical dilemmas, very commonly facing managers, can be better solved if during their training they are exposed to some historical dilemmas of similar nature though in different context. Krishna, in Maha Bharatha, advises the Pandavas that no action can be perfect and absolute in an ever-changing dynamic world. He nonchalantly advocates them to keep the overall ethical standards and then act according to the contingency of the situation which may necessitate temporary deviation from strict ethical standards.. For example, Krishna prevails upon Yudhisthira, who never lied, to lie to psychologically harass and depress Dronacharya. From the absolute moralistic standpoint, such a lie may be considered immoral and unethical. But as long as such lies contributed to a desirable final outcome and public good - it was acceptable. So the greatest challenge for the modern corporate leader is the fine-tuning of these responses keeping in mind the ethical and legal issues but without compromising corporate interests, like Krishna in Mahabharata (Chidambaram, 2008). One more example for similar situation is the dilemma of train driver whether to drive the train along the chartered track where many children are playing or divert the train to the unchartered track where only one boy is playing. In the first case he is legally right but morally wrong. In the second eventuality he is morally right but legally wrong. This situation demands saving of many lives at the cost of a single life. He can draw the lesson given by Krishna as above and find solace for his wrong (illegal) action since he has saved many lives.

The Sastras and Puranas of Sanatana Dhama, now being interpreted as a religion have abundant examples of leading a life of compassion with apathy. There is a reference in Santhi Parva of a king stating, “I do not want kingdom, I do not want heaven and not even salvation. I only want to relieve the people, suffering from miseries and of their pain”.

“Na thvham kaamaye raajyam, na swargam, naapunarbhavam, kaamaye duhkathapthaanam praaninaam sokanaasanam”.

‘That which one feels, should not occur to himself, one should not cause to others’- this is the essence of Dharma’ says Maha Bharatha (Rama Chandrudu, 1998). Perhaps such lessons when discussed in conjunction with Weberian concept of Verstehen or empathetic understanding will make things more holistic.

Ramayana describes how great personalities meet their down fall by falling prey to sensual pleasures. Lamenting the death of Ravana,

Mandodari (wife of Ravana) says, “Indriyaani puraa jitvaa jitham thribhuvanam thvayaa! Smaradbhiriva thadvairamindriyaireva nirjithaha! (You had conquered the senses long ago and hence conquered the whole world. As though remembering their suppression the same senses have conquered you) (Rama Chandrudu, 1998). This story reminds one to be careful while dealing with opposite sex at higher seats of authority. This story is also a good lesson in not letting sensual pleasures and lavish living style destroy the success achieved in through hard work. Control over senses, of course doesn't mean suppression – general misconception about the term, which makes youngsters very repulsive to the whole idea of controlling one's senses. But simplicity is not just a virtue for spiritual success it is also a way to achieve business or materialistic success. Simple lives lived by Infosys Chief Narayan Murthy and Warren Buffett vindicates the point.

Islam says, ‘Allah has blessed the angels with the power of reasoning but has deprived them of any desires; and He has blessed the animals with natural desires but has deprived them of the power of reasoning; and He has blessed the human beings with both the power of reasoning and also the desires. Therefore, one who restrains his desires by the power of reasoning, he is superior to the angels (who do not have to deal with any desires and emotions). But one who lets his desires control his reason, he is inferior to the animals (who have not been blessed with the power of reasoning).’ In conclusion, we can say that the purpose of creation is to live in such a way that our soul, reason and conscience control and restrain our emotions and desires. If we can live such a life, then we have succeeded in the trials and tribulations of this world, and hope for the salvation in the hereafter’(Rizvi, 2004) (excerpts from public speeches of famous scholar and philosopher Sayyad Mohammad Rizvi). Such texts may easily be branded as another usual religious prophecy on the face of it but if looked in depth it beautifully explains and with great simplicity elucidates the value of emotional intelligence and reasoning while marching for progress.

The characters and their sayings in religious scriptures have much content for spreading the gospel of spirituality to the common folk. An education capable of building case studies on these characters would help the students relate these things in their working environment. An example or a parable from a scripture is more catchy for learning element. ‘Every religion is passing through self analysis and self criticism and is developing into a form which is sympathetic to other religions. No religion can retreat

from modernity and science. With the spread of scientific knowledge, religions are becoming liberal, though a few cling to dogma as their only defence in this predicament. We should not look upon our religious heritage as an individual whole. We should make a distinction between spirit of religion and the forms, ceremonial ritual, marriage customs, food rules and social organization which are its forms. Sarvepalli Radha Krishnan once proclaimed, 'accidental accretions are not as valid as spiritual truths' (Radhakrishnan, 1983). If this great principal of discarding accidental accretions are followed in the class room, the spiritual truths enshrined beneath the dogmas shine with all fervour for the benefit of students and their future employees.

CONCLUSION

Spirituality is tangibly or intangibly intertwined with religion just as the river Saraswati is intertwined in Triveni Sangam(confluence of three rivers-the Ganges, the Yamuna and the Saraswathi at Allahabad)- not to be seen with physical eyes but powerfully carved a niche in each devotee's heart nonetheless. Maturity of human civilization beacons that spirituality be shown greater acceptance in management education system along with its religious linkages rather than continuing with immature attempts to hide and shy away from the embryonic connections just to project a secular and rational face. We should move with trust that our present intellectual breed is capable enough to prune out the dogmatic, divisive and dead parts of religion and keep the best for making future students of manager more competent and complete in many ways.

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