

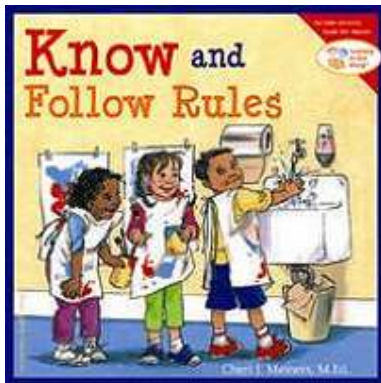
THE SPIRITUAL SCIENTIST

An Ezine for Those Who Think

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From morality To Spirituality

“Another scandal? Massive losses again - financially, emotionally, socially, nationally and globally?” The daily news - corruption, nepotism, favoritism and infidelity – has many of us fed up. Despite the periodic official noises, nothing seems to change. “Education in ethics and values is the solution,” say some. But do people not know the ethics already? They know, but feel that they will fare better in life without following them. Ethical education is just a show, a lip service.



FOLLOW RULES FOR WHAT?

Living by moral principles is like following the traffic rules while traveling on a road. The traffic rules help in smooth and safe travel. However the purpose of travel is not to follow the rules, but to reach the destination. If a traveler doesn't know his destination, how long will he follow the rules? Maybe for some time out of deference. But most likely he will soon give them up due to boredom or expediency. Worse still, if he feels that the traffic rules are delaying or obstructing his reaching the destination and that he can get away even after breaking the rules, why will he want to stick to the rules?

Similarly moral principles help in orderly social interactions. But our modern education gives us no knowledge about the goal of social transactions and of life itself. Consequently the few people, who stay moral out of deference to culture or tradition, give up when circumstances threaten or tempt them. Worse still, the incessantly glorified goals of modern consumer society - pleasure, wealth, luxuries, power, prestige and fame - encourage and even necessitate immoral behavior. The Bhagavad-gita (16.8-15) explains how a materialistic

worldview leads to insatiable lust and greed, which impel corrupt actions. Most people feel that, by being moral, they stand to lose a lot (“Pleasure? That’s what life is all about!”) and gain nothing tangible. (“Principles? What are they going to give me?”) Moreover, our godless scientific education gives us no knowledge about any higher order natural laws of cosmic accountability. And the fallibility of our human penal system is all too well known. Result? Morality appears entirely dispensable, especially for those who feel they are sufficiently shrewd or powerful. In such a socio-cultural environment, how can we expect mere platitudes to inspire people to be moral?

LOVE - THE BASIS OF MORALITY

The saying “Morality means lack of opportunity” catches the tottering utilitarian modern approach to morality; many moralists are so simply because they do not have the opportunity to be immoral. The Vedic texts of ancient India assert that morality without spirituality is baseless and therefore short-lived. If we seriously want morality in society, we need to introduce systematic spiritual education centered on a positive goal of life. The Vedic texts inform us of a non-sectarian universal spiritual goal of life – to develop pure love for God. We are all spiritual beings and are meant to rejoice in an eternal loving relationship with the supreme all-attractive spiritual being, God. Being intrinsically spiritual, our real happiness lies, not in material acquisition, but in spiritual realization of our innate love for God. Therefore the more we love God, the happier we become.



Love for God results in love for all living beings as our brothers and sisters in the one universal family of God. When we love all living beings, we will no longer desire to exploit or manipulate others for our selfish interests. Instead our love for God will inspire us to love and serve each other. This will create a culture of warmth and trust, which engenders moral behavior, unlike the modern culture of alienation and suspicion, which fosters immoral behavior.

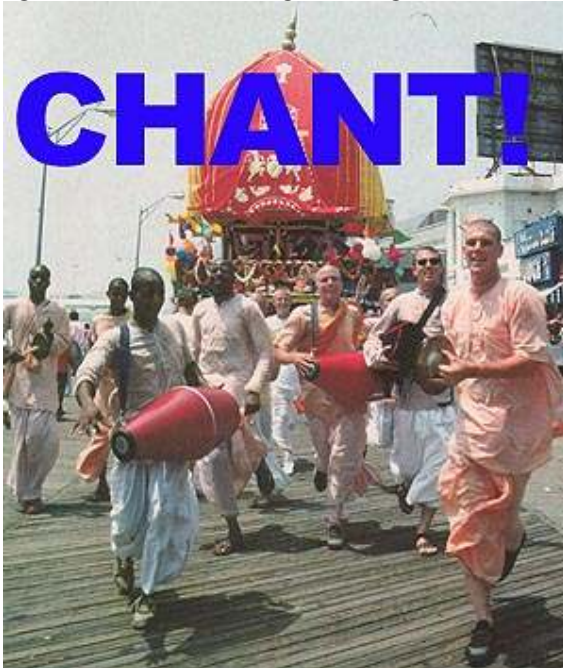
Genuine spiritual practices, even in their preliminary stages, trigger our innate value system. We intuitively realize that God is our greatest well wisher. Subsequently we voluntarily and lovingly chose to lead a morally and spiritually principled life, knowing it to be in our ultimate interest. And as we experience inner happiness by loving God, we no longer feel that

we are missing anything due to our morality. Being freed from selfish, lusty, greedy and egoistic drives, morality ceases to be the “difficult but right” choice, but becomes the easy and natural course of action for our spiritual growth.

NOT POSSIBILITY, BUT REALITY

Some may feel, “All this is nice-sounding, but its unscientific, non-secular and utopian.” However we need to remind ourselves that modern science has never proven the non-existence of God or the soul. Rather the reductionistic approach chosen by most modern scientists for studying the universe just presumes the non-existence of any spiritual reality. Strikingly enough, even within this reductionistic framework, science has come up with findings strongly suggestive of a super-intelligent designer of the cosmos (God) and a non-material source of consciousness within the body (soul). The Vedic texts do not require rejection of science per se; rather they recommend adoption of a different approach to science. Vedic spiritual science is a higher-dimensional science, in which we can experimentally verify metaphysical hypotheses by inner experience (Bhagavad-Gita Gita 9.2).

Also secularism should not be mistaken or misinterpreted as atheism; it basically means that the state should not promote or prohibit any religion. The spiritual tenets discussed above agree with most of the great religions of the world. Moreover, many eminent thinkers



worldwide have recognized that gross materialism (an inevitable result of a secular worldview) has led to existential emptiness and social rupture for millions. Many intellectual circles are forecasting the advent of a post-secular age. “Post-secular” does not mean that we accept blind faith and religious fanaticism. Rather it means that we live a more balanced life, recognizing that our life has both a material and a spiritual dimension. The Vedic texts explain that if we do not nourish our spiritual side and devote ourselves to material ambitions and achievements only, we will be living disharmoniously. We will court distress and disaster individually and collectively. Isn’t this what we are witnessing in our materialistic modern times? Therefore in the search for a post-secular worldview, the Vedic tenet of love of God as the goal and

essence of life may well be the missing link.

Lastly, love of God will appear a utopia only as long as we do not know the coherent philosophy and the clear-cut pathway for its attainment. Through genuine spiritual practices

like prayer, meditation and chanting the names of God like Jehovah, Allah, Christ or Krishna (especially the maha mantra Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare), anyone and everyone can experience non-material enrichment. Once we have tasted immortal love, we will realize that divine love is not just a sentimental longing. Rather it is the defining and unifying goal of life.

So if we want lasting morality, we need, not empty exhortation and ineffectual legislation, but genuine spirituality leading to love for God and internal fulfillment. Recognizing the spiritual basis of morality is highly empowering. It opens for us a course of action far superior to helpless lamentation, apathy, tacit approval or indignant self-righteousness. In a cancerous tissue, one healthy cell can activate the healing process. Similarly when the cancer of immorality is afflicting modern society, each one of us can, by leading a life of spiritual and moral integrity, activate the process of social recovery. Are we ready to become spiritually healthy?

