

SCIENCE OF SPIRITUAL QUEST WORTH STUDYING

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In the sunset years of his life, Albert Einstein, the towering figure of twentieth century science was heard wishing that had he been a plumber, he would have been much more satisfied. Albert Einstein was fatefully mistaken. He focused on 'knowing' the thoughts of God only through equations and theories but did not compliment his search by looking deep within himself. He, like most of us, was interested in seeking all the answers from the external world only and an essential balance between material and spiritual quest was missing.

Aldous Huxley complained about this approach to understanding the mysteries of life in his *Doors in the Wall*, "even in this age of technology... the non-verbal humanities, the arts of being directly aware of the given fact of our existence are completely ignored. A catalogue, a bibliography... a definitive edition of a third rate versifier's *ipsissima verba*... is sure of approval and financial support. But when it comes to finding out how you and I, our children and grandchildren, may become more perceptive... about their inward and outward reality... no really respectable person in any respectable university or church will do anything about it".

What Aldous Huxley was pointing toward is, a basic tragedy of human aspirations, a kind of social schizophrenia. Throughout the history of humankind, our species has faced the existential dilemma of 'what to do with life or what is the meaning of the life' and with the exception of very few (whom we had the audacity to call insane at first and then had the shamelessness of deifying them once they were crucified or banished from our civilization) most of the people are too chicken to resort to any path-breaking venture of seeking the true meaning of their existence.

Most of us are driven to stand tall in the competitive world only to masquerade our inner fears and deep sense of personal worthlessness. Oprah Winfrey was quoted in *Intelligent Fear* that, "Deep down, I have never felt good about myself and this is what has driven me. My fears and insecurities never let me rest."

Encouraged by the greater social respectability of status, money and career, it is easier to drown sorrows and spiritual anguish in endless bouts of work and other intoxicants of power and money rather than having the courage to engage in deeper soul-searching to know what afflicts us at core.

On a sad note however, any progress borne out of fear and feeling of deep worthlessness does not snuff out entirely the spiritual anguish we so often encounter in life. It only acts as a temporary anesthetic. It is only when we dispassionately analyze our hidden fears and insecurities that we know why a person of the stature of Albert Einstein would have wished being a plumber near the end of his life. It means that all the external accolades he received could not fill the inner purpose or void in his life.

It is indeed very disquieting to encounter such existential futility at the sun set years of one's life, especially after a laudable career, when we know that not much time is left for embarking upon a more deeper and satisfying journey. Unfortunately, however, this is not something we are tutored about in our usual education.

Our educational system, universities and colleges are all geared up to sculpt us for better marketability. But not much attention is paid upon how to also become successful in the inner world of emotions, feelings and deeper spirit, the one, which makes the life worth living. This discrepant emphasis on material progress has led to creation of emotional and spiritual barrenness in our society. It is high time that we teach our children and students the art and science of inner contentment in addition to the technology of accomplishments in external world.

This balancing act will create complete human beings, the one who are adept in managing both the outer as well as inner elements of life. It will also result in a healthier and happier society. Equipped with that kind of knowledge and education, our future generations will be far less troubled by spiritual and existential crossroads as most of the people experience in old age.

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