

# Spirituality as a Healing Process

(With Special Reference to Islam, Christian and Buddhist Teachings)

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## **Abstract**

The Concept of Spirituality is a Common factor discussed in every religion with their own religious terminologies. For the First time in the Philosophical atmosphere, it was Aristotle who pointed out the theory of *horme by Virtue* of which every organism tends to become a whole and complete. This concept was further enhanced by Spinoza, mentioning it as a central drive or conatus in each organism which preserves it in its own being. Moreover, the theory of organismic has been discussed by Samuel Alexander, Field Marshall J.C smuts, A.N Whitehead and Paul Tillich in their Philosophies.

The therapeutic value of the Concept of Spirituality has been concerted by Sigmund Freud and Junng in their fundamentals. Sigmund Freud Points out the doctrine of holism as a tool of studying the total Personality and as a therapeutic measure. it was Frankle (1969) who directly used the term spirituality (noölogical dimension) as a way of going beyond clients biological and Psychological selves to develop values and achieve meaning in their lives In order to reach to such *noölogical* dimension, every religions has shown their spiritual path way which has not been highly concerned by the Psychologist, Counselors or Psychotherapist. Therefor the objective of this research paper is to prove the relevance of Spirituality Claimed by Islam, Christianity and Buddhism as a healing process of some mental disorders and abnormal behaviors.

Key Words: 1. Holistic drive 2. Noölogical dimention 3. Spirituality 4 Islam 5 Christianity

6. Buddhism

## Introduction

Inseparable bond with a every kind of religions is spirituality. According to theistic religions, spirituality is the path way toward the supreme reality which is essentially unknowable. Historical recorders show how shamans came into being as spiritual healers with the adjustment of relationship between individual and cosmos. ( sulmasy-2002 ) In the philosophical context the theory of home by virtue has been coined to discuss various aspects and potentialities of spirituality towards becoming a whole and complete. Spirituality is recognized in the context of philosophy as a intrinsic potentiality in every organism which tends to become a whole and complete. Thisintrinsically tendency has been described by Aristotle as the theory of home by virtue. Furthermore it was Spinoza who declared this potentiality as a central driver or conatus which is existed in each organism. Sigmund Freud has also indirectly stated the spiritual tendency in each organism of certain potentials (Masih, 1989, 337) C. G. Jung mentions the four stages of shadow, namely anima - animus, mana personalities and mandala experience. Y masih mentions that the whole process of individuationdescribed by Jung, in general outline is an echo of the adavaitic and Buddhistic teaching of reaching the ultimate goal of Brahman and Nirvāna, respectively. It is obvious that the echo explained by C . G Jung is nothing else than inner Psyche which is based on Spirituality. Kurt Goldstein, Andras, Angyal, Abraham , Presott Lecky, carl Rogers and others Understand Spirituality in their teachings as Organisms theory which has been advanced in the building of human personality Moreover, the task of Self- actualization ascribed in the Sociopsychological context is Known as autonomy. The quality which enriches the Personality taking values from the environment is explained as homonymy by virtue. According to Andras Angyal these autonomy and homonymy could be recognized as the homonymy could be recognized as the elements of Symbolic self. One's teity and one' s highest self either as Brahman or Nirvāna could be recognized as the ultimate levels that could be reached by developing one's spirituality to the ultimost level. Scientific researched have already proved that the energy of spirituality as the process constructing the relationship with body parts, organism, within a mind body context ( sulmasy, 2001 ) As it is futher elaborated by sulmasy,

spiritual development of a individual can be applied to enhance the extra personal level which includes not only the physical environment, family and social network, but also the patient's relationship with the transcendent ( sulmasy, 2002 : 29 )

### **Spirituality in Various Disciplinarians**

The best way in order to understand the entire meaning of Spirituality is to consider various definitions given by various Scholars from their own understanding of their own fields. In the Context of Nursing care, Spirituality has been understood as individual Search for meaning (Brown and Williams, 1993, 41). With reference to same disciplinary, but considering its Potentiality towards the health Promotion, Spirituality is elaborated in a broad sense as a quality that goes beyond religious affiliation that Strives for inspiration, reverence, meaning and Purpose, even in those who do not believe in God. The Spirituality dimension tries to be in harmony with the Universe, Strives for answers about the infinite, and Comes essentially into focus in terms of emotional stress, physical (and Mental) illness, loss, bereavement and death (Murray and Zentner 1989:259) According to American Journal of Medicine Spirituality Means "the Search for transcendent meaning" \_ can be expressed in religious practice or.... expressed exclusively in the relationship to nature, music, the arts, a set of Philosophical beliefs, or relationship with friends and family (Astros et al 2001, 283). Kaiser explaining the meaning of Spirituality as referring to a broad set of Principles that transcend all religions. Spirituality is about the relationship between ourselves and something larger. That Something can be the good of the community or the people who and Server by your agency or School or with energies greater than ourselves. Spirituality means being in the right relationship with all that is. It is a stance of harmlessness toward all living beings and an understating of their mutual interdependence (Kaiser 2000:26) As it is derived from above mentioned definitions, it is seen that, the Content Spirituality has been elaborated by various Philosophers, Sociologists, Psychologist and theologian. According to understanding of above mentioned disciplinarians, common elements of Spirituality include a belief in a power operating in the universe

that has a potentiality of healing both Physical and Psychological predicaments of the individual, power operating in the universe that is greater than oneself, way of meaningful hope, comfort and inner peace in life, a sense of interconnectedness with all living creatures, an awareness of the purpose and meaning of life and the development of personal, absolute values. The most important fact which is understood by the above mentioned scholars is the interaction with the body and spirit. As a result of the advancement in the scientific researches and their revolution, the Considerations of the body and Spirit were removed from the field of medical systems. But as it is revealed by the above mentioned field such as Philosophy, Sociology, psychology and religions, spirituality has a vital potentiality in order to heal various kinds of physical and mental problems than the medical community previously thought. Therefore the main objective of this research paper is to show the healing capacity of the spirituality thought in Islam, Christianity and Buddhism without going to a detailed explanation of spirituality what these threerelions discussed. Their fundamental and common understanding of spirituality and ability of healing process will be dealt here.

### **Spirituality in Islam, Christianity and Buddhism**

As it is elaborated in the Christianity, spirituality is the spiritual practice of living out a personal act of faith (fides qua creditur ) following the acceptance of faith ( fides quae creditur ). But it is seen various types of spiritualities developed by orders of the catholic church and individualities. The common tendency of each and every groups towards the spirituality is the prayful contemplation on the God. The way for developing the spirituality according to Islamic religion is the strong faith on the Allah. In order to awake this spirituality the Quranpresents the five pillars ( arkan al - Islam ; also arkan ad - din, “ pillars of religion ) They are ( 1 ) the shahadah ( creed ), ( 2 ) daily prayers ( salat ), ( 3 ) alms giving ( zakah ) , ( 4 ) fasting during Ramadan and ( 5 ) the pilgrimage to mecca ( hajj ) The shia and sunni both sects in Islam religion are agree upon these five pillars as the way for awakening the spirituality in each individuals. As it is revealed by sufi tradition they are practicing ishan ( perfection of worship ) as

revealed by Gabriel to Muhammad ( worship and serve Allah as you are seeing Him and while you see Him not yet truly He see you ). Mental culture ( bhāvana ) is prescribed by Buddhism as the way to awaken the spirituality in each and every individuals. As a result of practicing Meditation the three aspect are pointed out as it's achievements, namely, ( 1 ) behavioral transformation ( sila ), ( 2 ) mental development, ( Samadhi ) and ( 3 ) cognitive transformation ( pañña ). Furthermore Seven Enlightenment factors are pointed out in early Buddhism as the most spiritual element those are to be developed for spiritual development. They are known as ( 1 ) Mindfulness ( sati - sambojjanga ), ( 2 ) Investigation of the law ( dhamma vicaya ) ( 3 ) Rapture ( piti ), ( 4 ) Tranquility ( Passaddhi ), ( 5 ) Concentration ( Samadhi ), ( 6 ) Equanimity ( Upekkhā ), ( 7 ) Energy ( viriya ). The four sublime abodes are also prescribed in Buddhist teaching as the practice for achieving spirituality. They are Loving - kindness ( mettā ) compassion ( karunā ), Altruistic joy ( muditā ) and Equanimity ( upekkhā ). The entire above mentioned religious principles of spirituality, show the common element of theirin. Such common elements could be pointed out as the following.

- 1) Super normal power
- 2) Hope
- 3) Forgiveness
- 4) Love and social support
- 5) Prayer or Meditation
- 6) Strong belief ( Faith )
- 7) Religious acts ( rites and rituals )

### **Illnesses and Spirituality**

In the field of counseling and psychotherapy spiritual has been recognized as a successful treatment process. It was Frankel (1969) who explained the concept of self - Transcendence as a

way of getting rid of some psychological issues. Furthermore Frankel explains the noölogical (spiritual) dimension that human beings can obtain comes through self-transcendence. As a process of counseling and psychotherapy, spiritual therapy has been elaborated by Frankel as Logotherapy, (Shraf - 2004 : 161) According to Frankel, Depression, borderline disorders, Obsessive. Compulsive disorders, anxiety disorder, alcoholism could be treated by means of logotherapy. According to most scientific researches, It is totally proved that the potentiality of Meditation in healing both physical and mental problems. In the final analysis, Mettābhavānā is selected here as one spiritual therapy that could be used to heal the hatred and its related psychological issues.

### **Psychotherapeutic Value of Mettābhāvnā (Meditation of Loving Kindness)**

Under the concentration meditation (samathā), loving kindness meditation is mentioned as the approach to deal with hatred and its related defilements (Ñānamoli, 1975, 321-53.) Peter Harvey, explains the entire meaning of loving kindness meditation in seven aspects; namely “The health of a living being, whether oneself or any other: for all wish to be happy, A genuine liking of self and others, A feeling akin to the love of a mother for her young child but without its tendency to over-attachment, and radiated to a range of people, Rejoicing at the goodness of people, A warm, accepting patience free from all hatred, ill-will, bitterness, festering self-pity, resentment or stoic indifference, A willingness to patiently work with what life and other people, present us with, without anger, A warm glow of zestful energy in the “heart” which melts some of the icy-encrustations from our ego. ( Dhammajoti - 1977: 349 ) When a person cultivates the Loving kindness meditation, he/she will be able to counteract hatred and its related defilements. As a result of overcoming those defilements, the meditator, with the cultivation of loving kindness will possess another wholesome energy known as karunā (compassion). This wholesome energy is understood in the Buddhist psychology, as the energy which leads human being to counteract

tendencies of cruelty. As to overcoming cruelty, the meditator is liable to work with society without hatred and ill-will and also wishes to dedicate his/her strength (physical or mental) to alleviate others problems and predicaments. When people enjoy their life without problems, the meditator also will be happy like a Bodhisatta. This happiness is explicated in early Buddhism as sympathetic joy (muditā). Therefore sympathetic joy is understood here as the wholesome mental energy which overcomes envy and jealousy. When an individual is free from the bondages of ill-will aversion, cruelty, jealousy and, envy and is also able to possess a balance mind. As a result of cultivating abodes, the meditator will finally acquire equanimity (upekkhā) which leads to counteract attachment and partiality. In the final analysis, it would better to be mentioned here that as the approach to alleviate all kinds of mental disorders and problematic behaviors is loving kindness meditation along with other three sublime abodes namely Compassion ( karunā. ) Ultraistic joy ( Muditā ), and equanimity ( upekkhā )

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