

ENHANCING SPIRITUALISM IN VIRTUAL WORLD

Assist. Prof. Dr. Kiran Lata DANGWAL
Department of Education,
University of Lucknow, Lucknow, INDIA

Dr. Shireesh Pal SINGH (Co-author)
Assistant Regional Director
Indira Gandhi National Open University,
Bhopal, INDIA

ABSTRACT

Spiritualism is one word which puts man on the highest plinth of life. Spirituality is the way we find meaning, hope, comfort and inner peace in life. Spirituality in the virtual World is generally known as Virtual Spirituality. A goldmine of wisdom from all kinds of religious and spiritual philosophies, traditions and practices can be found in virtual World now. Technology and Spirituality together forms the material to which man can incline on to and work for the development of a globe in which war will be considered a taboo and violence a rejected dogma. Therefore there is an urgent need to make the world a safe place to live in and the spiritual reconstruction can help us in achieving this.

Keywords: Spiritualism, Virtual World, Online Technology.

INTRODUCTION

In the fast running era of technology, human does not get time to be Spiritual. Day by day he is becoming mechanical and in his mechanical life he is going far away from spiritual life. Spiritualism is a junction of science, philosophy and religion. It focuses to endorse an individual's personal experience with God. God is a supreme power, rooted in a religion, nature or some kind of unknown essence. Spirituality is based on the idea that there exists something, outside the experience of our five limited senses. God created everything exist in this world but there is no technology which can even make a single seed of a fruit. Technology is respected because all knowledge of technology matters are emanated from Vedas and are useful to all human beings. In the present era of technology human beings are busy in the study of technology but he is not getting time to involve himself in spiritualism and wonderful acts of God which are beyond computation and mind's eye. In the present era possibility of a spiritualism emerging in the globalization of electronic communications that is virtual World. The detonation of spirituality and technological innovation continues to influence realization in contemporary, high-tech society that is virtual World.

VIRTUAL WORLD

Virtual World is the virtual space created in computer mediated world. It represents the paradoxes because at the same time globalizing and decentralizing, bringing about a collective unity of consciousness while simultaneously allowing the flowering of individual empowerment and self-expression. The virtual world has encircled Planet Earth like a new electronic layer of the planetary brain. Virtual World is a world where we all can communicate with lots of people with using their mind rather than their body, we just use your.

One could imagine a very ascetic sort of life growing out of this, where the body is ignored. Virtual World has become part of our daily life, which is in the form of the Internet. They offer a framework that makes sense to the people and the world around us. Virtual World is just like another lok, in which psychological interaction can be done, without considering real or unreal, important and unimportant.

Now a day's people are well aware of the framework of Virtual World. Playing in Virtual World can become a flow, because of its transparent immediacy where the medium seems to disappear. When spirituality is concerned with a metaphysical framework, technology can be a way of revealing. Techno-savy, are the people who, playfully, give a sacred meaning to technology. They are a marginal group; the majority of the users of technology will see it as a tool instead of a sacred entity. One of the main characteristics of virtual reality in virtual World is the interaction with the computer in an artificial environment. The interaction can be experienced as real and the user can even be immersed in this reality. Immersion can occur when the interaction with the computer is so real that daily structures of time and space seem to disappear especially when the virtual reality is three-dimensional.

SPIRITUALISM: JUNCTION OF SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

Spiritualism is a religion that is not based on a relationship with a particular savior. It is based upon the idea that we are all to form our own relationship with God, and to obtain guidance and accept responsibility for our actions based on our interaction with that personal guidance.

Spiritualism is the Science, Philosophy and Religion of continuous life, based upon the demonstrated fact of communication, by means of mediumship, with those who live in the Spirit World. (1919) Spiritualism is called a Science because it investigates, analyzes and classifies facts and manifestations demonstrated from the spirit side of life and called Philosophy because it studies the Laws of Nature both on the seen and unseen sides of life. Spiritualism is a religion because it strives to understand and to comply with the Physical, Mental and Spiritual Laws of Nature, which are the laws of God.

A Spiritualist is

- the process of self-discovery.
- to better understand self and others' beliefs.
- it is connected to our self and also rooted with others and with the world around us.

Spirituality benefits our life emotionally and physically and give a sense of purpose and help stature out where we are most passionate in our professional, social, and personal life. Spirituality is a way to find own unique place and path in life. Human is unique in every way and on a spiritual level he has a journey tailored to suit. When a person look within him, he discover authentic spiritual part called Self through which he live his entire life. True fulfillment in life means living life the way we believe we ought to. The ultimate purpose of life is to find out what we are about on that deeper spiritual level and then to live it.

SPIRITUALITY AND TECHNOLOGY

Spiritualism and technology are the two concordant as well as complementary aspects of one Truth. As Einstein said, "Science with out religion is lame; religion with out science is blind".

Science is the systematic knowledge derived from hypothesis, experimentation, observation and explanation of the results to test the hypothesis. Spirituality is the final distilled essence of all religious principles. Science is the religion of the known and religion is the science of the unknown.

At the same time science does not need religion; religion does not need science; but humans need both. "Technology is not in itself opposed to spirituality and to religion. But it presents a great temptation." (Thomas Merton quotes)

In the present era most of the time human is living with technology. Technology is a great blessing to mankind. Technology has come to relieve us of our ignorance and to lighten our toil. Man has begun to enjoy innumerable benefits of technology in his daily life. These Technological developments led to the belief that man is all powerful and God, only a fantasy concept. People began to lose faith in that Supreme power.

Technology provides some physical comforts but at the cost of man's moral and spiritual development. It turned man into a creature without any faith but only supercilious ideas to inspire and guide him. It destroyed man's simple faith, belief, fellow outlook, liking and sympathy. Technology alone cannot give peace and happiness to mankind. It must be related to religion and mere technology makes man materialistic, but spiritualism upholds his faith in the higher spiritual value of life.

Spiritualism is one word which puts man on the highest plinth of life. Spirituality is the way we find meaning, hope, comfort and inner peace in life. Spirituality in the virtual World is generally known as Virtual Spirituality. A goldmine of wisdom from all kinds of religious and spiritual philosophies, traditions and practices can be found in virtual World now. Technology and Spirituality together forms the material to which man can incline on to and work for the development of a globe in which war will be considered a taboo and violence a rejected dogma. Therefore there is an urgent need to make the world a safe place to live in and the spiritual reconstruction can help us in achieving this.

SPIRITUALITY IN VIRTUAL WORLD

Technology is referred to as an instrument of mass production related to profit and loss. Technology as mere instrument is correct but it keeps us from understanding the essence of technology and its relation with truth.

Multimedia technology can serve as a pivotal tool of communications, especially among the younger generation. Now the question arises that how we can enlighten through modern technology in virtual World. It has been a very complicated, strenuous and challenging effort to make any concept or content digitalized for virtual World that is extraordinarily fulfilling in the material, intellectual and spiritual senses.

For over a decade, Austrian film-maker Titus Leber has immersed himself to encode Lord Buddha's teachings into a modern language of computerized pixels, which is a very good example of spiritualism and technology. In the present era if we want to reach enormous audiences, we can adopt this new form of communication world, which encompasses narrative structure, special effects, animation, fancy computer graphics and potentially 3D and all this we can get in virtual World.

Spirituality is often connected to nature, especially in New Age thinking. There seems to be no place for the supernatural in a highly technologically controlled world. Virtual World is a product of highly complex computer technology. Therefore, we need to get a grasp of the essence of spiritualism in this technological world.

VIRTUAL WORLD LEAD TO SPIRITUALISM

In virtual World Internet is one way to communicate with lots of people use their mind without using their physic. It is interesting technology pointing in direction, where one could image a very abstinent sort of life where the body is ignored.

A higher power, whether rooted in a religion, nature, or some kind of unknown essence Spirituality is, in the most basic sense, matters pertaining to the spirit and is based on the idea that there exists something, be it a state of mind, a being, or a place, that is outside the experience of our five limited senses. Spirituality is the personal relationship of the individual to this state of mind, being or place and often emphasizes the notion of a path, that spirituality is a goal in achieving understanding, or an improved relationship with the sacred.

Spirituality can be either a part of a particular religion or independent of religion, in a self directed and personal inner path. As part of a larger religious journey, spirituality is usually descript and predictable, relating to one's personal relationship to god or the divine goal. As the explosion of spirituality and technological innovation continues to affect consciousness in contemporary, high-tech society, it is just as likely that the non-dual realization may find new forms and relevance to the emerging culture on the new frontier of virtual World.

The convergence of global telecommunications, the Internet, World Wide Web, networked computers and information technology, commercial online services, electronic bulletin boards, satellite and broadcast radio and television, cable networks, virtual reality multimedia entertainment, is forming an expanding and internally propagate interdependent web of connectivity that is integrating our physically separate individual and corporate intelligence into a shared collective mind which is creating possibility of spiritualism, emerging in the globalisation of electronic communications. This rapidly unifying communication is bringing us together into an emerging planetary field for spiritualism.

The increasingly sophisticated high-tech telecommunications infrastructure is actually, beginning provides subtle channels through which the omnipresent Self can circulate and reveal itself. The evolving hardware, computer technology, networking capabilities, fiber-optics, increased bandwidth, blazing modems, all facilitate the flow of digital on-off impulses of light traveling almost instantaneously through a timeless, space less continuum of immediate communications in virtual World. It is beginning to replicate how mind creates the sensory experience of the physical manifestation itself. In virtual World, the extension of mind is rapidly providing the instruments by which we can see through the maya of form to the underlying light of consciousness itself.

Virtual World is an extraordinarily vivid and dramatic technological-electronic expression of the play of realization. Our great opportunity now in virtual World is to see through the electronic extensions of mind to recognize our identity with this deeper reality, already present within every breath, within every bit and byte, which is the light and screen on which information, multi-media and virtual reality are being projected.

Within this field of rapidly growing electronic clusters of people in virtual World who are beginning to relate and communicate with one another as new high-tech versions of spiritualism. Virtual World community is an emerging spiritualism within which the impersonal global guru may function to awaken a segment of the planet's population to their identity as being consciousness.

This is also true that for a certain segment of the population, virtual World is a spiritual experience. The spirituality is in both the medium and the message. Beneath the surface objectives people seek on the Internet and World Wide Web communications, information, education, entertainment, relationship, community is the deeper pull to ultimate fulfillment.

There are strong, vibrant discussions of spiritual content in virtual World, discussions of ultimate things and the most extraordinary collection of old and new religious forms, rituals and sentiments. Virtual World is a pitch in which ultimate questions are being discussed fervently.

As Sherry Turkle pointed out, the computer is not only a business tool; it is a "metaphysical machine" which can trigger meditative awareness, the flow experience, and deep speculation on ultimate questions.

The unique capabilities of global telecommunications create a special quality for the virtual World.

- **Sitting silently in front of the computer with such focused concentration could have the power of a meditation retreat.**
- **The computer late at night is the sacred ritual of many souls who may welcome to recognize their own light reflected on the screen of consciousness.**
- **Paradoxically, the anonymous and the personalizing aspects of electronic communication create conditions for the intimate communion of spiritualism.**
- **People often feel much freer in virtual World to cut through superfluities quickly and seem more willing to reveal, confession-like, their inner-most essence, which they otherwise usually keep locked up within. The electronic transmission of disembodied intelligence provides greater freedom from the personal characteristics that often distract attention from the Self.**
- **The practice of repeating a mantra in virtual World, of embracing the vibrational quality of a given esoteric expression over a period of time, builds up a cognitive structure in the mind. Mantras are good for mental structure, to replace it with something more resonant with this modern era.**
- **The sublime force generated by its mantra japa can vibrate in the subtle as well as the external world. Its immediate benefit of purification and enlightenment of the intellect is the key to spiritual refinement and evolution of personality.**
- **Using virtual prayer to connect to the highest source of all qualities allows the spirit to grow.**
- **Virtual World make possibilities to create the setting in minute detail to suit the spiritual theme, even in ways not possible in real life, make it easier to create a spiritual ambience**
- **Virtual World enhances the ability to communicate irrespective of time and space in virtual World should serve as a reminder to humanity to recover our innate, intuitive and telepathic abilities, which the modern civilisation has mostly lost.**
- **Mantra is as an integral part of life-style. The vibrations of this universal mantra can spread this invisible Atmic light to the other people near or far and spiritual upliftment of humanity. In virtual World we can attain invaluable divine blessings.**

- **Virtual World can lead to acting without regret or accountability, in a spiritual sense; it can be a beautiful thing, allowing for free flowing of ideas and theories without judgment.**
- **In virtual World the patients can get relief from pain or overcome their phobias by immersing themselves in computer-generated worlds.**
- **Researchers are finding that, working in virtual World can ease pain, both physical and psychological. The researchers found that severely burned patients, who often face unbearable pain, can relieve their discomfort by engaging in a virtual-reality program during wound treatment. Virtual-reality applications are capable to help phobic patients overcome their different kind of irrational fears.**

Research that is more recent has shown the benefits of virtual-reality therapy are not limited to burn patients. The team conducted a study involving 22 healthy volunteers, each of whom had a blood pressure cuff tightly wrapped around one arm for 10 minutes. Improving the quality of the virtual-reality system increases the amount of pain reduction. A significant positive correlation between the potency of the illusion - how strongly the subjects felt they were immersed in the virtual world - and the alleviation of their pain.

Technology has always been seen as progress to a better future. David Nobel argues in his book, The Religion of Technology, those Christian scientists tried, with the use of technology, to regain paradise and to restore perfection. Computer-mediated virtual environments attract neo-pagans who consider technology as spiritual.

There are many spheres of existence that are invisible to us because they function in a different manner from earth. Millions of vibrations of sound are lost to us because they are outside the range of our hearing and millions of vibrations of sight fail to be registered because they are beyond the scope of our eyes. Many technological devices like Microphones and radio receivers enable us to hear what is normally beyond the range of our ears.

The microscope, telescope and television bring into focus what is beyond our vision. The inhabitants of the spirit world are very real even though we cannot see or hear them. In virtual World everything exists virtually. In virtual World cities, empires, trade, and communication can be seen in a very traditional mythical world and also find a place for ones' own culture. It created introspection on what it meant to be human; ritual and tradition couldn't provide every answer needed in the new era. The modern era started this process of confronting the need to address these questions a new, experiencing new technology and globalization which causes people to have to interact and live interdependent lives. We need to develop a way of thinking an intellectual and spiritual means to comprehend and contemplate human existence in virtual World. There are various ways to enhance spiritualism in virtual World;

- **Virtual Preaching**
- **Virtual healing**
- **Virtual ethical stories**
- **Virtual Satsang**

Above are the tools which we can get in virtual World to enhance our spiritual essence within us. One's spiritual behaviour is called into action the moment one turns towards atmic action. Spiritual actions convert our physical and intellectual pursuits into self-awareness pursuit.

The ever-expanding Virtual World has changed the way we mediate, preach and worship. Virtual World helps improve the communication between human and almighty in many ways. We do not require any outside stimulus to open and expand our state of spirituality to inspire our being.

We have been given the tools of strength and balance in our body, mind and spirit connection. All this we can achieve in virtual World where material world does not exist. As we program our computer to its language, in the same way we can program our universe to the language of love. Using visualization, sound, music, etc. we can concentrate and retrain our mind upon a single purpose. We can unlock hidden, spiritual potential within our own being. Virtual meditation is used for many purposes and in many ways to produce energies and feelings of calm and peace and to get spiritualism.

BIODATA and CONTACT ADDRESSES of the AUTHORS



Dr. Kiran Lata DANGWAL born and brought up in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India. She is rendering her expertise in Department of Education, University of Lucknow. Having done doctorate in Education from University of Lucknow, She is continuously engaged in educational assignments and have written numerous articles on education for leading magazines countrywide. To her credit Dr. Kiran owes a dozen of research papers, few of her papers were nominated for young scientist award at ISCA and have also authored four well valued books. She has scrupulously organized different seminars, workshops at the national and international level and has been highly praised for that. She is a possessor of NCC 'C' certificate. She has been awarded the honorary rank of Lieutenant as well. All India Radio has broadcasted her several talks and she has also produced a number of features and documentaries feature for AIR. She has fine swayed of computers and developed many multimedia presentations for school students and pupil teachers. She is chief editor of *Techno-Learn*, an international journal of Educational technology ISSN NO-2231-4105. Many journals have associated her as editorial and advisory board member. She also owes UGC projects to her credit by which she is bringing laurels to the department.

Dr. Kiran Lata DANGWAL (Corresponding Author)
Assistant Professor, Department of Education,
University of Lucknow, Lucknow, INDIA
Phone: +9450093586, Email: kldangwal@yahoo.co.in



Dr. Shireesh Pal SINGH was born in 1982 and did his master degree in Botany and Education from Chaudhary Charan Singh University, Meerut. Followed by NET in Education. He has got gold medal in M.Ed. He was awarded Ph.D degree in Education from HNB Garhwal university. He is working as a teacher educator for the last 6 years. He has to his credit five books and about thirty six research paper and articles published in journals of national and international repute. He has presented and contributed more than twenty five papers in various national and international level seminars and workshops. He has worked as a member of organizing committee in three national and international seminars. He is associated with various organization related to teacher education and research. He has developed an academic organization *The Learning Community (Association for Learners)*. He is founder and chief editor of two international journals *Learning Community*, and *Educational Quest*, He has written seven units in reading material of various distance universities course.

Dr. Shireesh Pal SINGH (Co-author) Assistant Regional Director,
Indira Gandhi National Open University, Bhopal, INDIA
Phone: +9410320265
Email: shireeshsingh1982@gmail.com

REFERENCES

Barlow, J. P. (8/2/1996). A Declaration of the Independence of Virtual World.

Benedikt, M. (1991). *Virtual World, First Step*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press

Benedikt, M. (1993). *Cityspace, Virtual World, and the Spatiology of Information*, Bloomsbury Press, New York.

Bill Gates, *Time Magazine*, March 22, 1999 Vol. 153 No. 11 Book Excerpt, Business @ *The Speed of Thought: Using a Digital Nervous System* by Bill Gates (C) 1999 by William H. Gates, III

Collette, L. (n.d.). Virtualsociology, Issue Seven, *Virtual World*, the new frontier for religion.

Conye, R. (1999). *Technoromanticism*. Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, p 19 Council of Europe, (23/11/01). 'Convention on Virtualcrime' (ETS No: 185)
<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/185.htm>

Fischer, Nicholas (1994): My Thoughts on Virtualutopia
<http://www.uwm.edu/~fischern/Newthoughts.html>. 24 Josefsson, Dan, 23/12/1994

Great Quotes.com (<http://www.great-quotes.com/quote/846821>)

Kelemen, Mihaela, 1999. Virtual Dreams, Imagined Communities
<http://www.eff.org/~barlow/Declaration-Final.html>

Official website of R.C Johnson: Quotes (<http://www.rcjohnson.net/quotes>)

Smith, W, Keleman, M (1999). *Virtual Dreams, Imagined Communities*, University of Leicester: Discussion Papers in Management and Organization Studies, issue 99/12.

Smith, Marc A. et KOLLOCK, Peter. (2000). *Communities in cyberspace*. London, New York: Routledge.

Titus Leber: From Wikipedia, (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titus_Leber)

Toffler, A. (1991). *The Third Wave*, William Morrow, NY.

Serge Kahili King Ph.D. (1990): *Urban Shaman: A Handbook for Personal and Planetary Transformation Based on the Hawaiian Way of the Adventurer*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Virtual Spirituality: The Emerging Frontier, E-magazine, August 2008

WERTHEIM, M. (1999). *The Pearly Gates of Cyberspace. A history of Space from Dante to the Internet*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company,

Zohar, D. & Ian M. (2000). *Spiritual intelligence: The ultimate intelligence*. New York: Bloomsbury.