

Biblical Mandate and Emerging Theology: Integral Spirituality: A Transformative Practice

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RESUMO

A igreja e a sociedade falam frequentemente sobre a necessidade de uma espiritualidade mais profunda. As pessoas se deparam com inúmeras realidades surpreendentes da vida, como a pobreza, a disparidade e o desemprego; dominação e violência; corrupção e exploração do poder; o surgimento de um individualista, consumista e da cultura competitiva, etc., que não permitem que os seres humanos estabeleçam relações profundas e duráveis. Em resposta a isso, a humanidade explora tipos de espiritualidade que oferecem consolo e esperança. Nossa vida é uma busca por “ser” e “tornar-se”, transformando a própria forma de ver e viver quando há a descoberta do verdadeiro Eu, um retorno ao centro do ser. Através da nossa compreensão e integração com Deus nossa busca se torna integral. Este artigo destaca o conceito de Espiritualidade Integral e identifica alguns dos princípios básicos de Pierre Teilhard de Chardin com relação à integração com Deus e o re-despertar da verdade interior para com as manifestações externas. O artigo procura também explorar a posição bíblica e teológica para uma compreensão da espiritualidade Integral, além de explorar a relevância de tal teologia no contexto atual.

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Espiritualidade Integral; Teilhard de Chardin; Reino de Deus.

ABSTRACT

Often the church and the society discusses about the need for a deeper spirituality. People are faced with countless startling life realities such as poverty, disparity and unemployment; domination and violence; corruption and exploitation of power; emergence of an individualist, consumerist and competitive culture; and the like, which does not allow humans to establish profound and durable relationships. In response, the humankind explores kinds of spirituality that offers consolation and hope. Our life is a search for 'being' and 'becoming', transforming one's way of seeing and living when there is the discovery of one's real Self, a return to the center being. It is through our realization and integration with God, our search becomes wholistic. This article highlights the concept of Integral Spirituality and identifies some of the basic tenets of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin on integrating with God and re-awakening of the inner truth towards outer manifestations. Attempt is also made to explore the biblical and theological stance in understanding Integral spirituality. Finally the relevance of such theology in today's context is explored.

KEYWORDS

Integral Spirituality; Teilhard de Chardin; Kingdom of God.

Introduction

In the present time, the church and the society often discusses about the need for a deeper spirituality. On one hand, people are faced with countless startling life realities such as, poverty, disparity and unemployment; domination and violence; corruption and exploitation of power; emergence of an individualist, consumerist and competitive culture; and the like, which does not allow humans to establish profound and durable relationships. People experience uncertainty, which terrorize their lives in fear and despair. In response, the humankind explores kinds of

spirituality that offers consolation and hope. On the other hand, the material world has extended to us abundant opportunities to develop our inner as well as outer formation and living. However, often human endeavor turns in a futile circle as we fail to become mature enough to discover the true self and to live on earth in love, in peace, in harmony with oneself, with fellow human beings and nature and with the totality of our being.

At such juncture, the questions arises, what are those that make humans' lives limited, fragmented, broken and pulled on all sides, despite the advancement of life yet the numerous challenges and life realities? Is it because of the gap that prevents us from discovering and experiencing oneness/integration with the Divine which we always lived without being aware of it? Do all these contemporary issues and human experiences reflect the affliction of the inner spirit because humans deny its upward urge towards the highest fulfillment?

Based on the given theme, Biblical Mandate and Emerging Theology, this paper attempts to point out that the origin of humans' disappointments and problems lies not outside but inside. Our life is a search for 'being' and 'becoming', transforming one's way of seeing and living when there is the discovery of one's real Self, a return to the center being. It is through our realization and integration with God, our search becomes wholistic. Narrowing down to Integral Spirituality: A Participatory/ Transformative Practice, this paper shall highlight the concept of Integral Spirituality and identify some of the basic tenets of Pierre Teilhard De Chardin on integrating with God and re-awakening of the inner truth towards outer manifestations. We shall also explore the biblical and theological stance in understanding Integral spirituality. Finally the relevance of such theology in today's context will be examined.

I. Integral Spirituality: Definition

Integral Spirituality refers to the integral growth of the person – a developmental process that integrates all human dimensions into a fully embodied spiritual life. It is about fostering integration of body, mind, soul, and spirit in self, culture, and nature, not only honoring their nature but also facilitating their creative participation in our spiritual lives. It is

a way of awakening and encountering God's Spirit that is already within each one of us, so that it nourishes our faith and the way we live. For Pierre Teilhard De Chardin spiritual progress of humans is the purpose and will of God where the Divine Spirit is moving towards a universal creative purpose bringing the hope of the future. For Teilhard evolution progression has a plan and an end which is directed by a God-Omega, and ultimately the humanity converges in the Omega Point. He recognized life itself is a movement of consciousness and their mental activity and urges increase. Humankind is the culmination of the whole movement of matter and life towards a peculiarly critical phase of super-humanization, with the appearance of human, the physical realm added a new layer, i.e., a humanized state. Such religious devotion involves a stance of on-going commitment to both spiritual and material well-being of oneself and others. Integration with humanity does not occur automatically but to result changes it needs a great deal of perseverance to raise the consciousness from the gross and base to the subtle and noble consciousness as it is all about the lived experience of Christian belief.

Christian spirituality can be explained as the presence of the Holy Spirit within the hearts of the believers that empowers them to fulfill the will of God, i.e., to restore God's kingdom on earth. It involves a continuous process of becoming until fullness of life is attained. In the scripture, spirituality exhibits a holistic dimension which inter-relates with the sacred and the profane, the spirit and the material world. For instance, in the Old Testament, the Spirit stands for 'invisible energy or power' which does not exist apart from God but as God's own presence or power. As every being participates in the struggles of the humanity, our spirituality must be based upon life and its realities and our rationality elevates from the stage of blind impulses to the realms of light of the Spirit, discovering the foundation of the integration and unity of existence. A perfect society will emerge when the constituents (human beings) undergo a spiritual rebirth enlarging the reason; altering its orientation, its potentialities and all its structure. The spiritual vision offers more power than the intellectual and moral capacity on human unity. Thus, to bring change in the world a conscious effort of the human mind towards spiritual evolution can be the solution as this will enable one to develop faculties that are beyond human conducted. It is the individual

who must play the crucial role in the evolutionary movement in discovering, realizing and perfecting the community or nation or humanity.

The word “Integral spirituality” can evoke a variety of meanings and therefore it is necessary to begin by clarifying the sense in which we will use it. In this paper, Integral Spirituality does not mean that we indicate a spiritual path that integrates two or more spiritual traditions or multi faith spirituality. But, it refers to the integral growth of the person – a developmental process that integrates all human dimensions (the intellectual, moral, emotional and spiritual aspects of personality) into a fully embodied spiritual life. It is about fostering integration of body, mind, soul, and spirit in self, culture, and nature, not only honoring their nature but also facilitating their creative participation in our spiritual lives. It is a way of awakening and encountering God’s Spirit that is already within each one of us, so that it nourishes our faith and the way we live.

The focal point is to develop the individual into full human maturity, integrating the body, mind, emotion, tendencies, actions, values, aspirations, intuition into a whole which matches and resonates the creative and original idea of the divine creation. It is also about acknowledging the yearning for integration and wholeness². Such spirituality enables to see and understand who we really are, way of knowing and feeling of the dominant culture and know themselves as they really are³. The issue is not to escape from the world but it reflects our integrity to God and our outlook to the grieving world with the message of hope.

II. Some Insights from Pierre Teilhard de Chardin on Integralism

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin⁴ was a French Jesuit and philosopher who tried to integrate religious experience with theories of evolution.

² KING, T. “What is Spirituality”. In: *The Spiral Path: Explorations in Women Spirituality*. Edited by T. King. Minnesota: St. Paul Yes International Publishers, 1992, p. 6.

³ FACIO, Alda. “Confronting Globalization: Feminist Political Spirituality as a Strategy of Action”. In: *The Future of Women’s Right: Global Visions and Strategies*. Edited by J. Keer. New York: Zed Books, 2004, p. 135-151.

⁴ Teilhard was born on 1st May 1881 at Orcines Auvergne, France. He was influenced by St. Paul, St. John the Evangelist, Origen, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Ignatius of

In this endeavor he became totally fascinated with the possibilities for humankind, an ‘Omega point’ where the coalescence of consciousness will lead us to a new state of peace and unity⁵.

His method seemingly springs from a method that has its root in the well known formula, Faith seeking understanding of St Anselm who is known as the father of Scholastic Philosophy. In Anselm, wisdom and faith stand as the indispensable starting point. It is from God that humans ought to endeavor to discover the truth, which subsequently must be understood⁶. In *The Divine Milieu*, a spiritual essay on the activities and passivities of the human being he argues that a personal God is the divine center of evolving creation. He wrote, “...we may, perhaps, imagine that creation was finished long ago. Nevertheless, that would be quite wrong. It continues still more magnificently, and at the highest levels of the world”⁷. In other words, spiritual progress of humans is the purpose and will of God where the Divine Spirit is moving towards a universal creative purpose bringing the hope of the future. Here, God/ Spirit of God is understood as a dynamic movement, energy and process as well as stable movement which is the absolute Ground of all existence.

Teilhard’s Concept of Evolution asserts that the movement of the entire cosmos in the direction of consciousness is manifested in biological evolution; a constituent is nevertheless the most important and most revealing part of the whole⁸. His assertion is that evolution progression has a plan and an end which is directed by a God-Omega, and ultimately

Loyola, Henri Bergson, Georg Wilhelm, Friedrich Hegel, Friedrich Schleiermacher. At the age of 30 on August 24, 1911, he was ordained a priest. He died on 10 April 1955 in New York City, where he was in residence at the Jesuit Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Avenue and buried at the Jesuit novitiate, St. Andrew’s-on-the-Hudson in Poughkeepsie, upstate New York. Smulders, Pieter Frans. *The Design of Teilhard de Chardin: An Essay in Theological Reflection*. 18th Edition. Westminster: Newman Press, 1967, p. 46.

⁵ CHARDIN, Pierre Teilhard de. *The Phenomenon of Man*. Reprint. New York: Harper Collins, 2008, p. 257.

⁶ PHELAN, Gerald B. *The Wisdom of St. Anselm*. Latrobe, Pa: Archabbey Press, 1960, p. 40.

⁷ CHARDIN, Pierre Teilhard de. *The Divine Milieu*. Trans. Sion Cowell. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2004, p. 62.

⁸ CHARDIN, Pierre Teilhard de. *The Future of Man*. London: Collins, 1964, p. 67.

the humanity converges in the Omega Point⁹. It is from this point of view that evolution assumes its true figure for our mind and our heart¹⁰. Teilhard's view on integration is because of the force of attraction "...not only as the prime physical or biological mover but as the prime physical mover, appalling, in us men, to what is most human in us, our intelligence, our heart, and our power of choice"¹¹. It is when one moves out of compulsive, addictive, obsessive patterns of behavior toward more healthy relationships with oneself, other persons, and God then one experience Self-transcendence¹². It could also mean that Spirituality is "the experience of consciously striving to integrate one's life in terms not of isolation and self-absorption but of self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives"¹³. From the above discussion it is understood that the existence of the world is not an illusion but real. Humans are microcosm of the Universe containing explicitly the manifestation of mind, life and matter. Humans are composed of many parts, each of which contributes to the total movement of our consciousness, our thought, feeling, action but they are aware only of their confused or inadequate knowledge of human. In other words, progress to integrality is the sign of the inner turn towards Knowledge, or integral consciousness identifying with the whole truth of self and existence.

In Teilhardian Evolutionary Humanism, human evolution moves on towards the future of which human is responsible. Life is a movement

⁹ Teilhard argued that the Omega Point resembles the Christian Logos, namely Christ, who draws all things into himself, who in the words of the Nicene Creed, is "God from God", "Light from Light", "True God from true God" and "through him all things were made." In the Book of Revelation, Christ describes himself thrice as 'the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. J.A. Lyons, *The Cosmic Christ in Origen and Teilhard de Chardin: A Comparative Study*. USA: Oxford University Press, 1982, p. 190.

¹⁰ DEMOULIN, Jean-Pierre. *Let Me Explain Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 2004, p. 85.

¹¹ Writings by Teilhard in English translation. The Official edition of the complete works is being published in eleven volumes by Editions du Seuil in Paris as *Oeuvres de Pierre Teilhard de Chardin VII*, p. 152 – 153.

¹² THOMPSON, William. "Spirituality, Spiritual Development and Holiness". In: *Review for Religious*, vol. 51, nº. 5, 1992, p. 648.

¹³ SCHNEIDERS, Sandra. "Spirituality in the Academy". In: *Theological Studies*, vol.50, 1989, p. 684.

of consciousness¹⁴ and their mental activity and urges increase. Within the framework of the fundamental laws of nature, human is the architect of tomorrow's world. In human, the significance of the cosmos is vested and expressed. Humankind is the culmination of the whole movement of matter and life towards a peculiarly critical phase of super-humanization, with the appearance of human, the physical realm added a new layer, i.e., a humanized state¹⁵ This aspect of Christian spirituality can also be referred to the integration of one's life in terms of participation in the saving mission of Jesus, sent by God for the life of the world. This demands that Christians participate consciously and explicitly in the mission of Jesus, sent by God to bring the human race to God's intended fulfillment and liberation¹⁶. Moreover, genuine spiritual encounter prompts one to participate in communion with others as stated that "If one can establish a contact with Perfection it will necessarily manifest perfection in life; the degree of perfection that one achieves will depend on the intensity and constancy of the inner contact with the element of the perfection within"¹⁷.

As humans seek to add strength and meaning to life not of a 'beyond' but in this life and of this world. The meaning we receive can be put to the proof in action only by each person in the uniqueness of his/her being and in the uniqueness of his/her life¹⁸. It is only through the discovery of its divine sense that can bring a possible transformation and enable one not only to see but to live out these greater possibilities. In other words, humans do not merely become conscious of this cosmic existence, but live in awareness and unified more with other minds,

¹⁴ CHARDIN, 1964, p. 168.

¹⁵ CHARDIN, 1964, p. 112.

¹⁶ At Nazareth, Jesus had proclaimed his mission: "He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives . . . to let the oppressed go free" (Luke 4:18). M. Milligan, "Apostolic Spirituality". In: *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*. Edited by Michael Downey. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1993, p. 51.

¹⁷ KING, T. "What is Spirituality". In: *The Spiral Path: Explorations in Women Spirituality*. Edited by T. King. Minnesota: St. Paul Yes International Publishers, 1992, p. 6.

¹⁸ MELINA, Lios. "Interior Wholeness Through Dialogue with Oneself". In: *First International Conference on Integral Spirituality and Organizational Leadership*. New Delhi: MacMillan Advance Research Series, 2007, p. 433.

other lives, other bodies producing effects not only on our own moral and mental being but even on the physical world and its events.

Social Humanism and the Ultimate Convergence: Teilhard argues that the human condition necessarily leads to the psychic unity of humankind, though he stressed that this unity can only be voluntary. Teilhard's conviction is that nothing can arrest the progress of social man towards ever greater interdependence and cohesion. For Teilhard de Chardin, this type of progress is the ideal and it underscores his goal towards the humanization of the world. Collectivization as a process propels people towards an intense super organization. This intensity of organization continues the trend towards complexity which life needs in order to achieve breakthrough into new phases of development. This will bring about a heightened awareness or consciousness that will trigger a novel phase in evolution. This process of complexification is passing through a new critical phase, the phase of the socialization of humankind, which is geared towards a novel type of social humanism. Teilhard set out to propose a novel form of humanism that stems from evolution through humanization, which culminates in a synthetic convergence in the Omega¹⁹. Such religious devotion involves a stance of on-going commitment to both spiritual and material well-being of oneself and others. This entails concern for building social relations of respect, equality, and mutuality, thus emphasizing the virtues of solidarity and justice²⁰. Thus, Integration with humanity does not occur automatically but to result changes it needs a great deal of perseverance to raise the consciousness from the gross and base to the subtle and noble consciousness as it is all about the lived experience of Christian belief.

Integral spirituality moves beyond high intellectuality, idealism, ethical or moral purity and asceticism, religiosity or an exalted emotional fervor. Because it is connected to transformation – “transforming our narrowness into full awareness, our social struggles into community, our fears and self-loathing into vitality and power. Spiritual awareness of one's true self is the only means of actualization, meaning and purpose in

¹⁹ CHARDIN, 2008, p. 243.

²⁰ PATRICK, Anne. “Ethics and Spirituality: The Social Justice Connection”. In: *The Way Supplement* 63, 1988, p. 110.

life”²¹. The spiritual development of an individual is not the end in itself but the beginning because through the progressive and formative individual the society is offered the chance to discover a new self-creation to the mind of the race. Individuals become a catalyst for change in the society. It is the unpreparedness of the society or of the common mind which curbs the freedom of the spirit, blocking to bring a complete transformation of the society.

III. Biblical & Theological Stance on Integral Spirituality

Christian spirituality can be explained as the presence of the Holy Spirit within the hearts of the believers that empowers them to fulfill the will of God, i.e., to restore God’s kingdom on earth²². It involves a continuous process of becoming until fullness of life is attained²³. In the scripture, spirituality exhibits a holistic dimension which inter-relates with the sacred and the profane, the spirit and the material world²⁴. For instance, in the Old Testament, the Spirit stands for ‘invisible energy or power’²⁵ which does not exist apart from God but as God’s own presence or power. It reflects the power in the creation of the cosmos (Gen 1:2; Ps.33:6), the sustaining power of God immanent in all life (Gen.6:17; 7:15; Jb.33:4 Ps.104:29, 30), the invisible activity of God in power through and amongst his covenant people, and the presence of God in many types of revelation, charismatic wisdom and invasive speech²⁶.

²¹ NICOL, D. “Organizational Enhancement through Recognition of Individual Spirituality: Reflections on Jacques and Jung”. In: *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, vol.12, 1999, p. 234-244.

²² ALEAZ, K.P. *The Quest for a Contextual Spirituality*. Tiruvalla: Christava Sahitya Samithi, 2004, p. 27-28.

²³ LIANHNUNI, R. “Spirituality from a Feminist Perspective”. In: *Spirituality and Theological Education*. H. S. Wilson (ed.). Bangalore: BTESSC, 1986, p. 48; ALEAZ, K. P. “Christian Spirituality: Some Preliminary Observations”. In: *Indian Journal of Theology* 43/1/2, 2001, p. 51.

²⁴ CHAN, Simon. *Spiritual Theology*. USA: Intervarsity Press, 1998, p. 183.

²⁵ CONNER, Walter Thomas. *The Work of the Holy Spirit*. Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1940, p. 78.

²⁶ TUMER, M. “Holy Spirit”, *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Edited by T. Desmond Alexander & Brian S. Rosner. Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2000, p. 387.

In many instances, the Spirit is an extension of God's personality, identified as one with God and does not exist independently²⁷. The Spirit guides the intellect (Is. 11:2; 30:1; 40:13); empowered individual (Zech.4:6), restrains sin (Gen.6:3; Is.59:19); involved in creation (Gen 1:2). Ps.104:30 note that the spirit continues to preserve and sustain the overall creation of God²⁸.

In the New Testament, it refers to the indwelling of the spirit (Romans 8:9), living by the power of the Spirit (Romans 8:11), and transformation by the Spirit (Rom. 8:14)²⁹. In biblical and Christian tradition, Spirituality is not assumed as a weak, pallid thing but it is the life-force which acts in us and in the whole creation as we accept to live it each day³⁰. This also shows that the created world is a spiritual reality and we are spiritual beings.

Christian spirituality concentrates on the triangular relationship of God, human and the world. In Raymond Panikkar's words it is the interconnectedness and interdependence of the three realities in a non-hierarchical relationship³¹. Such understanding stands in line with the Integral spirituality which emphasizes on the dimension of personal integrity, social and cosmic harmony, an experience of unity, communion and harmony that result out of awareness of the self. If Christian spirituality embodies a faith relation where humans develop an awareness of a subjective selfhood, of the objective world of nature and of God as M. M Thomas says: "In all faiths, religious or secular, self and its fulfillment, the realization of the purpose or destiny of the self, is the central issue ... becoming aware of the transcendence of their selfhood over the

²⁷ BLOCK, Daniel I. "The Prophet of the Spirit: The use of *ruach* in the book of Ezekiel," *JEST* 32/1 (March, 1989), p. 49.

²⁸ HINSON, David F. *Theology of the Old Testament*. Delhi: ISPCK, 1990, p. 39.

²⁹ AMIRTHAM, Samuel. "A New Spirituality for Our Ecumenical Age". In: *Spirituality and Theological Education*. H. S. Wilson (ed.). Bangalore: BTESSC, 1986, p. 62-63.

³⁰ RAYAN, Samuel. "Let the Rivers and the Trees Clap their Hands: Spirituality and Ecological Concern – A Christian View". In: *Spiritual Traditions: Essential Visions for Living*. Edited by David Emmanuel Singh. Bangalore/Delhi: UTC/ISPCK, 1998, p. 256.

³¹ RAIMUNDO, Panikkar. *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, Revised and Enlarged Edition. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1981, p. 172.

world, seek to fulfill the self's meaning, purpose or destiny"³², then Integral Spirituality too signifies a means of handling the human condition, an approach of being accountable to God and humanity.

In Eastern Christian worship an authentic expression of Spirituality is to follow the example of the self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ to enter into the presence of God. The doctrinal basis of human person's deification is to be found in the person of Christ. An opportunity given to participate and to share in its deification is the meaning of sacramental life and the basis of Christian spirituality³³. Similarly Integral spirituality gives space for social humanism which indeed recognizes the separated human spirit within us responsible for the divergence that result injury to the existing society. It is possible when humans experience God at the deeper level integrating the divine nature and life into the whole being then a wholistic transformation is effectuated in every human, thus a new world, free from human ignorance and desires, is created.

Christian spirituality identifies the mystery of the Incarnation in history by experiencing the present with the power to renew the world and an abiding hope for its future. Human wholeness can be achieved through the self-understanding of modern men and women that enhances their search for a better quality of life and for social justice within a limited natural environment and an inter-dependent world³⁴. In other words, struggle for justice and authentic humanhood with the people need to become a part of our spirituality helping one another to combat the inequalities and attain integrity. At such juncture Integral spirituality upholds that our openness to God and to the future with the hopes and concerns of the world is the result of the spiritual experience which leads to spiritual realization or consciousness bringing effectual transformation.

³² THOMAS, M. M. "A Plurality of Spiritualities for Common Liberating Social Action in India". In: *Bread and Breath. Essays in Honour of Samuel Rayan S.J.*, ed. by T.K. John. Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1991, p. 222-223. Also K. P Aleaz explains that Spirituality is our realization of the involvement of the God's creative power, divine śakti, full of love and rich in inventive capability. ALEAZ, 2004, p. 11.

³³ ALEAZ, 2004, p. 12.

³⁴ JOSEPH, M. J. "A New Spirituality for Today". In: *Seeking Christ in India Today*, p. 79.

IV. A Transformative Practice: Insights from Integral Spirituality

The truth of life reveals the realities of struggle, affliction, domination, discrimination, conflict, self-indulgence, exclusion, selfishness etc existing in our society. The truth of faith also assures us that we are called to be co-creators in building the Kingdom of God: a world of love, freedom, justice, peace, solidarity, service etc. At this juncture, Integral spirituality identifies three dynamics to rediscover and communicate the mystical experience of the spirit which can bring profound and authentic wholeness for individuals and the society.

Relational Spirituality

Integral Spirituality engages in the reflection of faith and human life at depth, i.e., “a person’s total experience which is supplied by the subject who believes and by the Mystery encountered”³⁵. Integral spirituality does not mean the mystical union with the Ultimate alone but this spiritual integration is manifested in the context of life realities, an involvement in the struggles for liberation from various limitations that characterize life in the world. Our movement must be understood in terms of the transformation of all reality, our own lives and the lives of the people we are living and working with. Deep reflection and action, love and knowledge of God could bring together upon the creative tension that works out in human a new creation in Jesus Christ. A living synthesis of contemplation and action and the growth of one’s love of God that would serve to build upon an undistorted image of God progressively in and through the individuals on earth is the emphasis of Integral spirituality.

Envisioned Spirituality

Integral spirituality emphasizes a heightened consciousness and vision which is more than a mental or conceptual representation. It is about

³⁵ BARRY, William. *Spiritual Direction and the Encounter with God: A Theological Enquiry*. New York: Paulist Press, 2004, p. 23.

establishment of fundamental truths of God in our whole being. Such envisioned spirituality is not a thing formulated in a rigid mental rule but it is about transformation of life, which is characterized by clarity of knowledge, inner self-vision, subjugation of the ego and scrupulous love in selfless and dedicated works. Such thought implies that humans are not only knowing beings but also becoming beings with interior renewal with active service to others manifested in day-to-day relationships and responsibilities.

A Spirituality of Action

Integral spirituality envisages the task of action for the common growth of the new creation through the image of God they possess which should be the objective of every individual. A spirituality of action is a call towards participation of love – towards God and towards the neighbor. Such act reveals community fellowship in freedom and in relationship of faith, hope and love. The dynamic vision of human and the world is to live, move and act as the true human taking an integral approach in analyzing and devising ways towards fullness. In other words, such dynamic emphasis gives a new vision of human and the world that the imperfections can be perfected by integrating with Christ and His life-giving Spirit. Another aspect is, such emphasis helps us to re-examine the narrow outlook, personal interests and biases we have towards other community or race and transform our religious ethos by venturing together in co-operative relationships among different faith traditions in order to achieve the real purpose of life.

Conclusion

From the above discussion on Integral spirituality, spirituality can be understood as a tangible reality of being and becoming at macro societal level discovering the Divine concealed in every human society. As every being participates in the struggles of the humanity, our spirituality must be based upon life and its realities and our rationality elevates from the stage of blind impulses to the realms of light of the Spirit, discovering

the foundation of the integration and unity of existence. A perfect society will emerge when the constituents (human beings) undergo a spiritual rebirth enlarging the reason; altering its orientation, its potentialities and all its structure. The spiritual vision offers more power than the intellectual and moral capacity on human unity. Thus, to bring change in the world a conscious effort of the human mind towards spiritual evolution can be the solution as this will enable one to develop faculties that are beyond human conducted. It is the individual who must play the crucial role in the evolutionary movement in discovering, realizing and perfecting the community or nation or humanity.

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