

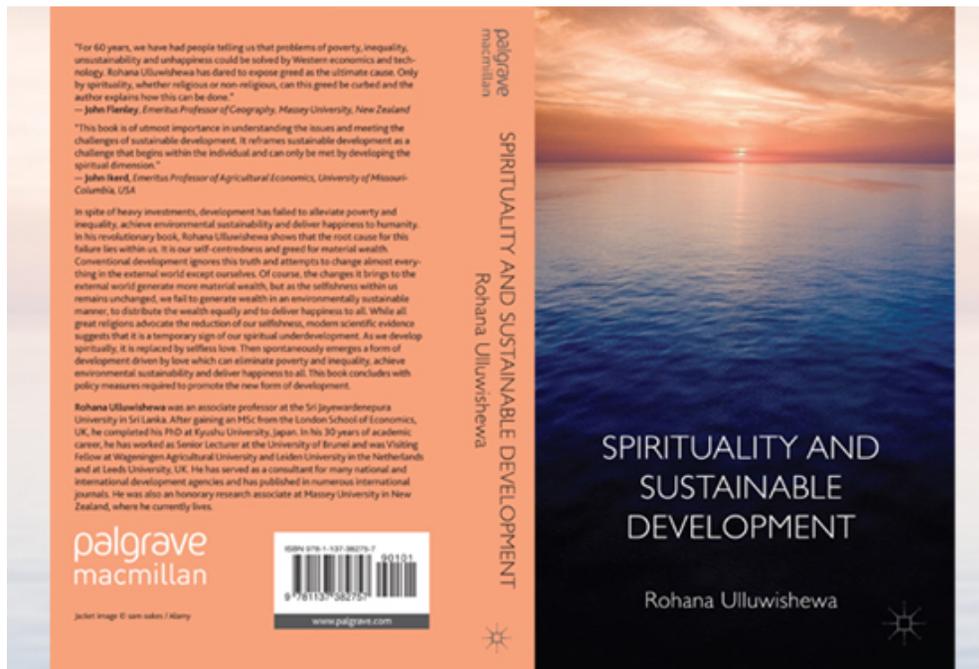
**Spirituality and Sustainable  
Development:  
A Call For a New Paradigm**

By

Rohana Ulluwishewa

Sriyalatha Kumarasinghe

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# Outline

- (1) What is spirituality?
- (2) Spirituality and Conventional Development
- (3) Spirituality-Based Development: A New Paradigm

# What is spirituality?

- Spirituality is not religion.
- Spirituality is the state of being one with the spirit, which is our reality.
- Scientific terms for spirit:
  - the Ultimate Reality,
  - The Higher Self,
  - the Universal Consciousness,
  - The Constant Integrated Awareness.

# What is spirituality

## Continue....

- In **quantum physics**, this is called **the quantum vacuum**. The quantum vacuum is the source of all energies, and therefore the source of everything in the universe, including ourselves.
- It is conscious, it is aware, it 'thinks', and it constitutes all we desperately seek – happiness, peace, wisdom, knowledge and intelligence.
- According to some views, this is what some religions call God.
- At the level of quantum vacuum (Spirit), there is no individuality but oneness. At this level, we are not individuals but integral parts of the Universal Consciousness or the quantum vacuum.
- But, at the level of mind (and body), we perceive we are as individuals. That is why our sense of "I", self, self-centeredness, selfishness and greed for material wealth.

## What is spirituality

Continue....

- Spirituality is an inward journey from our 'I'ness which is an illusion to Oneness which is the truth, or from self-centeredness to selflessness.
- From this perspective, our sense of 'I', self-centeredness and greed for material wealth are not inherent human qualities but temporarily symptoms of our spiritual immaturity. As we grow spiritually, our sense of 'I' or individuality is replaced by oneness and self-centredness and greed are replaced by selfless love and generosity.

## What is spirituality

Continue....

- This view is supported by recent scientific discoveries in neuroscience, neuropsychology, brain science, transpersonal psychology, consciousness studies, research in near-death experience, and most importantly in quantum physics.
- This view of spirituality lies in the core of all great religions. The Golden Rule which is the reflection of oneness plays a prominent role in all great religions.

What is spirituality  
Continue....  
The Golden Rule

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Buddhism     | That which do not desire for oneself, do not do to others (Dhammapada, 2C AD)                      |
| Christianity | Do unto others what you would have them do unto you (Mathew, 7.12, 7C AD)                          |
| Confucianism | Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire (Analects X11.2 3C BC)                     |
| Hinduism     | Do nothing to your neighbour which you would not have your neighbour do to you (Mahabharata 5C BC) |
| Islam        | Do to all men as you would they should do to you (Mishkr-el-Masabih 14C AD)                        |
| Judaism      | What is harmful to you do not to your fellow man (Talmud)  |

## What is spirituality

Continue....

- From this perspective, all great religions represent different pathways towards this inner transformation.
- For the purpose of the present study, spirituality is defined as a process of inner transformation which reduces our self-centeredness and greed for material wealth.
- There are religious as well as non-religious pathways for spiritual growth.

## What is spirituality

Continue....

### Some Religious and Non-Religious Pathways

#### Religious

- Prayer
- Devotional Singing
- Recitation of divine name
- Meditation
- Charity
- Reading scriptures
- Study groups
- Listening to discourses

#### Non-religious

- Self-Transformational courses, workshops and conferences
- Story telling
- Psychospiritual therapy
- Meditation
- Spiritually inspired service activities
- New-age scientific literature
- Spiritually oriented music and sports
- Pastlife regression therapy

What is spirituality  
continue....

## Spiritual Transformation and Happiness

| <b>Worldly Happiness (Pleasure)</b>  | <b>Spiritual Happiness (Bliss)</b>  |
|--|---|
| We experience pleasure when our sense organs come into contact with things we like.  | We experience bliss when we are in harmony with our inner reality which is universal consciousness. |
| Our pleasure experience ends when the contact with the pleasure-object is broken. Hence, it is transient.  | Bliss remains as long as we remain in harmony with our inner reality, Hence, it is long lasting.    |
| To acquire pleasure-objects, we need material wealth. Hence, our capacity to experience pleasure depends on our wealth. We tend to believe wealthier is happier. | Bliss is independent of material wealth.  |

What is spirituality  
continue....

## Spiritual Transformation and Happiness

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Pleasure is person-specific, time-specific, and place-specific. The same object may give pleasure to one and pain to another, pleasure at a time and pain at another time, pleasure at one place and pain at another place.</p> | <p>Bliss is universal. It can be experienced by being one with the inner reality, regardless of person, time and place.</p> |
| <p>Pleasure can be gained at the expense of somebody else's pleasure.</p>  | <p>Bliss cannot be gained at the expense of another's bliss, but by sacrificing for the well-being of others.</p>           |
| <p>Pleasure seeking makes us self-centered and greedy for material wealth.</p>   | <p>If we seek bliss instead of pleasure, it makes us less self-centered, less greedy and more loving.</p>                   |

# Spirituality and Conventional Development

- Spirituality is not a popular theme in development studies.
- The subject of spirituality is “conspicuously under-represented in development literature and in the policies and programmes in development organization” Ver Beek (2002).
- In development literature,
  - spirituality is seen **NOT** as a process of inner transformation **BUT** as an umbrella word which covers a wide range of faith-related traditions, rituals, beliefs, forms of worships, customs, ceremonies, and institutions.
  - spirituality refers to other people’s spirituality, e.g. ‘local people’s spirituality’, ‘indigenous people’s spirituality’, and ‘spirituality of rural communities’
  - spirituality is studied from materialistic perspective: for instance, how local people’s beliefs negatively or positively affect economic growth.

## False Assumptions in Conventional development and its Consequences

| <b>Assumptions</b>   | <b>Policy Responses</b>  | <b>Truth</b>  |
|--|--|---|
| Human beings are intrinsically selfish and greedy                                  | Concept of Economic Man;   | Human beings are intrinsically selfless and generous;   |
| Selfishness and greed in human beings are genetically fixed and cannot be changed; | All development strategies aim at external changes, non aim at inner changes;      | Selfishness and greed are temporary signs of psycho-spiritual immaturity, and can be reduced. |
| Selfishness and greed are necessary to motivate economic growth;                   | Strategies being adopted for development further strengthen selfishness and greed; | Selfless love can motivate economic growth;   |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <p>There is only one kind of happiness. It is pleasure;</p>  | <p>Pleasure depends of consumption. Therefore, development is centered on consumerism;</p>                        | <p>Spiritual happiness does not depend on the level of consumption;</p>  |
| <p>There is no cause-effect relationship between under-consumption of the poor and over-consumption of the rich.</p> | <p>Poverty alleviation strategies, no attempts are made to reduce the greed and over consumption of the rich.</p> | <p>World's resources are sufficient to meet our needs but not meet our greed. Poverty cannot be alleviated unless the rich reduce their greed.</p> |

# Self-centeredness in Conventional Development

In the paradigm of conventional development, the term 'development' implies an action undertaken by a group of powerful human beings to to develop powerless others. If the powerful is not spiritually matured, the question likely to arise in their self-centered mind are:

- In what way are we to develop others if we are benefit from that development?
- What development models are we to adopt to develop others if we are benefit from that development?
- What sort of technology are we to introduce to others in the development process if we are to benefit from that development?

## Self-centered mind proposes development strategies which

- generates demand for their (Western) capital, their technologies, their knowledge and their experience;
- provide them with easy access to other's resources;
- popularize their (Western) culture among others which generate demand for their consumer goods and services;
- links others to the global economic system that they control in such a way that the increased income of others will end up in their hands;
- make others dependent on them so that they can dominate others;
- traps others in permanent dependence which provides them with power over them; and
- destroys others' local cultures and values which act as a source of resistance to their dominance upon them.

Thus, development without a spiritual basis fails to alleviate poverty and inequality.

# Spirituality Based-Development: A New Paradigm

| <b>Conventional Development</b>   | <b>Spirituality-Based Development</b>                              |
|---|--|
| Development is a worldly activity;  | Development is a spiritual activity;                               |
| It promotes our selfishness and greed;  | It promotes our spiritual values such as love and generosity;      |
| It promotes exploitation and accumulation of wealth. Hence, it leads to inequality; | It promotes sharing of material wealth. Hence leads to equity;     |
| It gives higher priority to material wealth than to relationships;                  | It gives higher priority to relationships than to material wealth; |
| Therefore, life is devoid of love and hence unfulfilling;                           | Therefore, life is full of love and fulfilling;                    |

| <b>Conventional Development</b>  | <b>Spirituality-based Development</b>   |
|--|---|
| Therefore, people are discontented, and want to seek happiness in sensual pleasures;                                       | Therefore, people are content and are not interested in seeking happiness in sensual pleasures; |
| Therefore, people consume more than they actually need. They suffer from poor health conditions caused by overconsumption; | Therefore, people consume only to meet their basic survival needs. They are healthy;            |
| It causes a heavy stress on the natural environment. Hence development is unsustainable.                                   | Development does not cause too much stress on natural environment. Hence, it is sustainable.    |

# Spirituality in other disciplines

- Now spirituality is already integrated into physics, biology, ecology, psychology, and neuroscience.
- Spirituality is now becoming a common theme in management studies, business studies and economics.
- Is not development studies lagging behind?
- Now it is high time for you to seriously consider to integrate spirituality into development studies.

**THANK YOU!**