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Spirituality in Leadership – Learning through stories: Murli Menon

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Spirituality in Leadership – Learning through stories

How do we shape the youth for a future we cannot predict? With an outdated education system that has not kept pace with innovation and creativity, the modern education system was developed in the age of assembly line human machines, to support the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century, as a way to take people off of farms and educate them to work in factories. Mirroring a similar movement, a new curriculum of Storytelling and innovation led education and creative skill development will need to be developed as 40 to 50% of the jobs are going to be replaced by robots and automation with the advent of Industry 4.0 – the Robot Economy.

ZeNLP- learning through stories is a book which addresses this issue. Tribal societies which do not have a written script and are considered illiterate and cavemen by so called modern scientists, spent millions of dollars researching a solution to the problem of birds eating grain from the large factory farms, owned and managed by giant multinationals.

A few years ago, one Indian anthropologist happened to be sitting next to a group of German agricultural scientists who were flying to

Bhubaneswar for a research project. One of the scientists informed me that they were trying to find a solution to reduce wastage of foodgrain in their fields in Germany from birds.

They had tried all modern techniques including round-the-clock security guards shooting rubber bullets, ultrasonic vibrations, frequency jammers and radars in an effort to repulse the birds but had failed and they ended up with weary-eyed security guards in addition to reduced harvests.

They had even visited Australia and trained their guards on the use of boomerangs, but to no avail. Finally, a non-resident Indian had suggested him to try Odisha.

I accompanied this anthropologist to the interior tribal villages in Odisha and learnt a lot about their methods of agriculture and medicine. Once, while spending the night on a machan

(tree-house), we could hear the continuous clanging of a bell throughout the night. Spending a sleepless night we decided to pay a visit to the tribals who were the source of our

disturbance. As we neared the source of the sound, we found no tribals around. Instead of finding a tribal ringing the bell, we found ourselves at the edge of a perennial mountain

stream. The tribals had built a contraption out of bamboo, which was placed in the path of the waterfall. As the water hit this contraption, a see-saw mechanism saw the free end

of the bamboo swinging wildly. Attached to it was a large metal bell. As long as the water kept falling on the bamboo contraption, the bell continued to clang. As this was a

perennial waterfall, the bell clanged throughout the day and night, thus scaring away the birds, which preyed on their crops. And soon, the Germans had their solution to their own

crisis. They employed a windmill to create an artificial perennial stream near their fields and used the tribal bamboo contraption and bell to scare away the winged

predators throughout the harvest season, thus saving them lots of grain. The admirable quality among the Germans was their ability and willingness to learn from illiterate tribals.

I would like to quote Eric Hoffer, who said, 'It is the malady of our information technology age that the young are so busy teaching us that they have no time left to learn.'

The so called illiterate tribal societies have evolved a form of experiential learning which will put Ivy league universities to shame. Tribal children are taught the names of each and every edible fruit and vegetable in the forest through tribal songs, which are passed down generations without distortion as outsiders cannot and have not deciphered their oral language. Written history can be changed by vested interests using historians as pawns. Traditional songs in the oral tradition maintains a purity, where the real truth lies hidden.

All tribal childrens' lullabies talk about how the earth and all its beings were created by God, his two sons and their divine mother. Modern scientists have conveniently twisted the accurate depiction of truth in tribal songs, dances, folk tales of creation into a word intended to mislead truthseekers by calling these ancient truths into "creation myths", as this disproved their fairytale of Charles Darwin.

However, Vedic spiritual practices including astral visits to the Akashik records, confirm what spiritual traditions of the Yakui, the Hopi, the Bantu, the Bonda and most primitive tribes without a written script have always maintained. Our spirit travels to unknown spiritual realms when we dream and one can consciously reach these realms through meditation, prayer, energy healing and shamanism. Yoga, especially tantric yoga, tribal meditation, tai chi, ZeNLP, Falun Gong and other spiritual traditions throughout South East Asia, especially among the long-necked kayan on the Burmese-Thai border, the Orang Asli in Malaysia, the Muruts in Kalimantan and the Mankadia tribals inside the Simlipal Tiger Reserve in Odisha, show amazing similarities, especially in their group dancing, primordial energy worship and spiritual practices, which point to a shared oral tradition of learning connected to music, dance, masks and sculptures. Learning through the written script, is not the ideal way to learn. When the vedas were remembered through the oral tradition, it retained the power of the chants, which was gradually lost when these chants were penned into palm leaves.

Tribal societies whose oral traditions have remained a mystery, but can be studied through their dances, masks, songs and shamanic rituals point to a shared knowledge among the ancients.

Unless modern day leaders stop teaching and start learning, they will continue to be out of touch with their spiritual origins and will stay afloat like rudderless Darwinian boats, floating aimlessly around Easter Island. Scientific thinking has been imprisoned by the theory of relativity, which says that matter cannot move faster than the speed of light. However, the theory of cosmic consciousness predates the theory of relativity by 5000 years as explained in this Rig Vedic mantra.

Om Poornamidam Poornat Poornamudachyate

Poornasya Poornamadaya Poornamevavashisyate

This mantra means that the macrocosm is contained in the microcosm. We split the atom and see electrons and protons revolving around a nucleus, which is but a reflection of the planets revolving around the sun. Thus, the macrocosm (universe) is contained in the microcosm (atom). All events in the macrocosm can be predicted with certainty if one understands the cosmic mind after the awakening of the cosmic consciousness. The best part of cosmic consciousness is that all human beings are equally capable of realising their consciousness by a simple spiritual regimen irrespective of religious beliefs.

What can modern day leaders learn from ancient spiritual wisdom of India.

One day a child goes to his mother and asks her, 'Ma, who is that old man sitting on the mountain?' Mother answers, 'Don't call him an old man, for he is Lord Shiva, who knows the answer to every question in this universe.' 'Really, he knows answers to all questions?' asks the child. 'Yes, my dear,' replies the mother. The child goes to the mountain where Lord Shiva is meditating, catches a butterfly from the garden, and cupping the butterfly gently in his hands, he approaches Lord Shiva.

Keeping his hand behind his back, he asks Lord Shiva? 'Is the thing in my hand alive or dead?' The child thinks that if Lord Shiva answers that the thing is alive, he will crush the

butterfly in his hand and show the dead butterfly proving Buddha wrong. And if answers that the thing is dead, he will open his gently cupped hand, allowing the butterfly

to fly away showing that the butterfly was alive, again proving Buddha wrong. Thus, Lord Shiva did not know the answer to all questions. 'Is the thing in my hand alive or dead?' repeats

the eager child. Lord Shiva opens his eyes, nods his head and replies, 'My dear son, the answer lies in your hands!

I leave the answer in your hands.

i would like to end by quoting a traditional Bantu pygmy song which says, " For those who believe in the power of Storytelling, no explanation is required, but for those who disbelieve in the power of Storytelling, no explanation is sufficient.

About the author.

Murli Menon is the author of ZeNLP- learning through stories, ZeNLP- the power to succeed and ZeNLP- learning through stories. He conducts Travel Storytelling workshops for corporates and is based in India. He can be contacted on email at fenomenon123@rediffmail.com Ten more of Murli's

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