

**From Intra to Transpersonal Communication – the evolving area of  
Spiritual Communication – its need, importance and the way**

(With special reference to Vedic spiritual tradition)

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**ABSTRACT**

Communication is the basic function of human being, the basis for the exchange of ideas, information, emotions and life experiences. As such it is also the basis of human progress. There are different types of communication – interpersonal, group and mass communication. Interpersonal communication being the most common one, the basis of our day to day life. Then come group and mass communication, later one mostly used in media.

But the basis of all these communication is intrapersonal communication, mostly discussed as negative or positive self talk or self motivation. But it is more than that. It is rather the foundation of all communication. At its peak with deep self-introspection, meditation, prayers and spiritual practices it culminates into spiritual communication; which is also being called as transpersonal communication. This aspect of communication is mostly used in religious and spiritual tradition, but now looking at its multipronged benefits, it is being used and applied in different areas of life. It is yet an evolving area of communication studies in academic field but there is much confusion and lack of clarity.

This research paper is a humble effort of the researcher to explore this area of spiritual communication from Intra to transpersonal communication with special reference to Vedic spiritual tradition; but applicable to all rational spiritual traditions and the seekers of full human potential and a meaningful life.

**Key words** – Communication, intrapersonal communication, transpersonal communication, spiritual communication

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## Introduction

Communication basically means exchange of information, ideas, or feelings from one person to another. The word ‘communicate’ comes from the Latin word, ‘*communicare*’, which means ‘to share’ or ‘to make common.’<sup>1</sup> In the words of Keval J. Kumar, “Interaction, interchange, transaction, dialogue, sharing, communion and commonness are ideas that crop up in any attempt to define the term ‘communication.’”<sup>2</sup>

According to Denis McQuail, communication is a process which increases commonality - but also requires element of commonality for it to occur at all.<sup>3</sup> A common language, for instance, does bring people together but language alone does not suffice for communication to take place. There are other factors too at play such as a shared culture and a common interest which bring about a sense of commonality and more significantly, a sense of community.<sup>4</sup>

To Denis McQuail, human communication is a linear term, as the sending of meaningful messages from one person to another. These messages could be oral or written, visual or olfactory.<sup>5</sup> Ashley Montagu and Floyd Matson, goes further saying that, Human communication is more than media and message, information and persuasion; it also meets a deeper need and serves a higher purpose...It is in short the essential human connection.<sup>6</sup>

As per Wimal Dissanayake (1983) in Indian tradition, ‘communication is an inward search for meaning – a process leading to self-awareness, then to freedom, and finally to truth.’ Thus it transcends language and meaning and is interpretation or reception-oriented, not expression oriented like the Western models. The intrapersonal dimension is of greater importance than the interpersonal in Indian approach.<sup>7</sup>

It would not be exaggeration to say that intrapersonal communication is the foundation of all types of communication. In Indian spiritual tradition along with intrapersonal communication, transpersonal communication plays vital role.

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<sup>1</sup> Manorama, (2007), Tell me Why, Communication?, Kottayam: MM Publication, p.3

<sup>2</sup> Kumar, KJ (2010), Mass Communication in India, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing house

<sup>3</sup> Denis, MQ, (1975), Towards a sociology of communication, London: Collier-Macmillan

<sup>4</sup> Kumar, KJ (2010), Mass Communication in India, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing house, p.8

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Montagu, A. & Floyd, F.(1979), The Human Connection, New York: McGraw-Hill.

<sup>7</sup> Dissanayake, W. (1983), Asian theory of Communication in Media Development Cited in Kumar KJ 2010, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing house

## **Need of the study –**

In Journalism and Mass Communication studies this intrapersonal dimension of communication is least discussed topic, despite being the foundation of all communication. At the higher end transpersonal communication, which comes in the spiritual domain of human existence is not at all there in academic discourse. Spirituality now being well established term confirmed as a need of human being<sup>8</sup> and full-fledged branch of transpersonal psychology dealing with it, with SQ (spiritual intelligence) parameter, it would be proper to throw some light on spiritual communication.

Communication being a culture context issue, this topic can be discussed from all cultural contexts, but researcher here is presenting it with special reference to Indian or its Vedic spiritual tradition as being involved with it for a long period, working at its scientific, progressive and behavioural aspect with its global significance.

So 1<sup>st</sup> of all a brief introduction to Indian spiritual tradition -

## **Indian cultural context and its Spiritual tradition –**

India is one of the oldest cultures in the world, with Rig Veda as its oldest scripture. Also declares Veda - *Sa prathama sanskriti vishwavara*<sup>9</sup>. Down the ages it off shoots into different sects and spiritual traditions. Vedic spiritual tradition being one of the most prevalent one followed by vast majority in India and globe. It is based on the foundation laid by Vedic sages and seers, who were symbol of peak spiritual realisation and expert of human consciousness. Vedas, Upanishads, Epics like Ramayana-Mahabharata, Geeta, Six systems of Indian philosophy (*Shad-darshan*), Smriti, Puranas, etc. are their philosophical and spiritual contributions.

## **Prime Goal of life in Vedic culture -**

In Indian spiritual tradition prime goal of human life is Self-knowledge resulting from Self-realization, *Atma-Bodha*, God realization, Samadhi etc. In Modern psychology the nearest terms used is Self-actualization. In Indian tradition there is endless galaxy of spiritual stars which embodies this truth in

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<sup>8</sup> Abraham Maslow, Hierarchy of needs, Spirituality as Meta need.

<sup>9</sup> *Yajurveda* – 7/14

every era, with the watch word – *Aatmvat sarvbhuteshu, Vasudheiv Kutumbkam*<sup>10</sup>.

In this way Spiritual life is the true genius of India. Those who make the greatest appeal to the Indian mind are not the military conquerors, not the rich merchants or the great diplomats, but the holy sages, the *rsis* who embody spirituality at its finest and purest.<sup>11</sup> In the words of Dr S. Radhakrishnan – The ideal man of India is not the magnanimous man of Greece or the valiant knight of medieval Europe, but the free man of spirit, who attained insight into the universal source, who has freed himself from the prejudices of his time and place.<sup>12</sup> It is India's pride that she has clung fast to this ideal and produced in every generation and in every part of the country, from the time of the *rsis* of the Upanisads and Budha to Ramakrishna Parmahansa and Sri Aurobindo-Maharshi Raman etc.; the men who strove successfully to realize this ideal.

As such Self-knowledge emanating from Self-realization has been the prime or the highest goal of Indian spiritual tradition.

### **Spiritual Goal and the Royal path in Vedic Spiritual tradition –**

In search of the ultimate principle operating behind the complex web of life, Vedic sages in the state of deep contemplation found it as – *RIT & SATYA*. *RIT* – the eternal law operating within the outer nature and *SATYA* – the eternal law operating within the spiritual/inner life<sup>13</sup>, calling it as *Dharma* - the way of life. The complete scheme of life, they confined within four ideal, called as *Purushartha* - *Dharma, artha, kama, moksha*.<sup>14</sup> *Moksha* as the ultimate Goal and *Dharma* as the means and the way; *Artha* and *Kama* as the basis of the worldly life. It was the royal path leading its followers on the path of self-realization and a meaningful life.

### **Spiritual Intrapersonal communication**

It was clear conviction of Vedic sages that, of all knowledge Self-knowledge is the highest. This is the only royal road to true happiness and peace.<sup>15</sup> All other

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<sup>10</sup> *Mahaopnishad* – 6/71

<sup>11</sup> RKMIC (1982) *The Cultural heritage of India*, (Vol.1), Calcutta, The Ramakrishan Mission Institution, p. xxiii

<sup>12</sup> Dhar, PL (2014), *Indian Cultural-salient features, Challenges & Possibilities*, Retrieved from <http://www.slideshare.net/PLDhar/ondian-spiitual-tradition> on 02/10/2015

<sup>13</sup> Vidyavachaspati, D.(2009) *Vedik Kartavyashastra*, Haridwar, Gurukul Kangari, p.15

<sup>14</sup> Nikhilananda,S.(1947) *Self-Knowledge*, Madras: Sri Ramakrishna math, p.22

<sup>15</sup> Acharya S.S.(2001) *Meri Vasiyat aur Virasat*, Mathura, Jan Jagran Press, p.4

forms of knowledge are of secondary importance; for a man's action, feeling, reasoning and thinking are dependent upon his idea of Self.<sup>16</sup>

The way to Self-realization was through listening (*Shravan*), contemplation (*Manan*) and deep meditation. (*Nididhyasan*)<sup>17</sup> Communication between lower Self and higher Self<sup>18</sup> was the way. We can here see the role of Intrapersonal and transpersonal communication or Spiritual communication in self-realization.

### **Evolving concept of Spiritual communication –**

Spiritual communication is a well established term in spiritual and religious traditions of world; but academically its use from intra to transpersonal communication is a new and evolving concept with much confusion. When we explore the world of internet and social media Spiritual communication is seen mostly used as talking with spirit, departed Souls, holy angels etc. On the subtler end it is linked to ESP field like clairvoyance, clairaudience, telepathy etc.

This paper is not related to these two extremes discussed about spiritual communication. This paper is limited to the use of spiritual communication with its domain from intra to transpersonal leading to self-realization and a meaningful life.

**Intrapersonal communication** can be defined as communication with one's self, and that may include self-talk, acts of imagination and visualization, and even recall and memory.<sup>19</sup> Examples of intrapersonal communication are - talking to yourself, reading aloud, writing, thinking, meditating, singing, and analyzing for instance.<sup>20</sup> Intrapersonal communication is basically an inward-looking exercise.<sup>21</sup> It involves self concept, self talk, Self-motivation, Self-management and self-reflection.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Nikhilananda, S. (1947) *Self-Knowledge*, Madras: Sri Ramakrishna math, p.22

<sup>17</sup> *Brihadaranyak Upanisads*, 4-5

<sup>18</sup> *Mundaka Upanisads*, 3.1.1,2

<sup>19</sup> McLean, S. (2005). *The basics of interpersonal communication*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.rampfesthudson.com/what-are-examples-of-intrapersonal-skills/> retrieved on 18/04/2022

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.newsgram.com/why-is-intrapersonal-communication-important-heres-how-talking-to-self-is-fruitful/> retrieved on 18/04/2022

<sup>22</sup> <https://kpu.pressbooks.pub/businesswriting/chapter/intrapersonal-communication/> retrieved on 22/04/2022

**Benefits of Intrapersonal Communication**<sup>23</sup> can be understood as follow -

1. Improve Self Awareness, better understand ourselves, clarity of life goal
2. Improve understanding of human nature and better relationships
3. Self-Motivation
4. Increase productivity
5. Better stress management.
  
6. Increase resilience by connecting with your inner strengths and wisdom and Overcome challenges
  
7. Enhanced creativity, leadership skills, and problem-solving abilities.
8. Increased personal satisfaction
  
9. Achieve greater happiness and fulfilment

In this way Intrapersonal Communication plays vital role in our day to day life. In worldly affairs we use it to get rid of negative self talk, replacing it with positive self talk or self-motivation. With the goal of spiritual realisation, we use spiritual motivation, asserting our spiritual convictions.

We can use meditation or recitation of some *Mantra* given by spiritual tradition or Master (Guru). In the beginning it is a sort of intrapersonal communication process when we are reciting or reflecting over the meaning of Mantra while meditating. When the practioner or *sadhaka* gets deeper, involved in it, it transcends physical consciousness or ego personality, it gets transpersonal. We can say we are now under the process of transpersonal communication.

**Transpersonal communication** we can say is the interaction that occurs within a person's spiritual domain.<sup>24</sup> It can also be understood in the light of transpersonal psychology, which is related to the study of spirituality, consciousness, and human transformation.

Transpersonal Psychology might loosely be called the psychology of spirituality and of those areas of the human mind which search for higher meanings in life, and which move beyond the limited boundaries of the ego to access an

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<sup>23</sup> <https://mgtblog.com/intrapersonal-communication/> retrieved on 18/04/2022

<sup>24</sup> <https://economicforall.com/library/lecture/read/444875-what-is-transpersonal-communication>, retrieved on 4/4/2022

enhanced capacity for wisdom, creativity, unconditional love and compassion leading to the fulfilment of the highest potential of human life.<sup>25</sup>

Spiritual communication is a communication between self and its beliefs, something in which we believe in, which is higher than us, beyond the body and the mind.<sup>26</sup> In Vedic spiritual tradition it is called as *Ishta*, *Aradhaya*, *Devta* (Deity) of a particular Mantra or enlightened Guru or a particular form of God one have faith in.

Transpersonal communication is a deeper intra-personal communication when the “Life” talks to the “Existence”. The Existence is beyond Life, with no beginning and no end.<sup>27</sup> The key or the origin is the intra-personal communication, which has inter-personal communication on one side and the transpersonal communication on the other side.<sup>28</sup>

When the Life or individual (जीव) communicates to its core (आत्मा), it is transpersonal communication and when the Life or individual (जीव) communicates to the world (जगत), it is the interpersonal communication. When one part of Life or individual (जीव) communicates with another part of Life or individual (जीव), it is intrapersonal communication.<sup>29</sup>

Self-talk is the beginning of transpersonal communication. Feelings (faith or spiritual conviction) connect to the Soul and the intellect connects to the world. Transpersonal communication is spending time to connect to the Source.<sup>30</sup> And there are two basic ways to do so, either by Prayer, which is talking to the source, or by Meditation, which is listening to the source.<sup>31</sup> And Intrapersonal communication leads to Self-awareness, while transpersonal communication results in inner (Self) transformation.

Thus **spiritual communication** is a dynamic intermix of intrapersonal communication, transpersonal communication and regulated interpersonal communication. Rather it is a way of life, enfolding gradually the higher dimensions of life, leading to a life of increased self awareness, self mastery and a more meaningful life.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/transpersonal-communication-dr-prabodh>, retrieved on 04/04/2022

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/transpersonal-communication-dr-prabodh>, retrieved on 4/4/2022

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

<sup>31</sup> Ibid

**The stages of spiritual communication & the helping aids** can be seen as below–

1. Spiritual aspiration, the 1<sup>st</sup> step. One becomes a seeker or a disciple. In Vedic tradition such person is called *Jigyasu*, *Mumukshu* or *Shishya*. It is the foundation of spiritual communication.
2. Listening to the spiritual truth given from Guru (spiritual Master); thinking over it, contemplating. *Swadhyaya-satsang* plays great role in it. It is the process of spiritual intrapersonal communication.
3. This gives spiritual insight, the holistic and indepth vision of life, which is in itself a great achievement. Now the seeker looks at the root of the problem and mostly trace its cause inside and try to resolve it and in true sense become the part of the solution.
4. Spiritual insight is supplemented by spiritual life style, which is a life of self-discipline. It includes a well regulated routine and disciplined thoughts, emotions, imaginations and behaviour. It is a well regulated conduct with righteous interpersonal communication.
5. Self introspection and diary writing or maintaining a spiritual journal are integral part of it. Thus the seeker tracks his/her spiritual progress on regular basis. It is using intrapersonal communication for self improvement and conscious self-evolution.
6. Meditation, prayer and spiritual practices play key role. Initially they are introspective practices of intrapersonal communication but as the seeker gets deeper, they goes from intra to transpersonal communication mode, leading to deeper self-realization and greater self-awareness and self-knowledge.
7. With it Selfless service is also integral part of spiritual communication. Service is here not as an act of some selfish or egoistic motive but a humble offering or contribution for the welfare of the society or the needy one or the other beings as a part of spiritual act.

**Helping aids -**

1. Importance of *Swa\_dharma* – a life of inner peace and harmony with creative adventure; the result of life goal as per one’s inner nature, taste and inner drive. It includes honesty, hard work and dutiful life.
2. For nature lover, wondering in the lap of nature can be a rejuvenating experience with elements of spiritual communication from Intra to



transpersonal communication. Its healing touch is the instant result one can feel along with its creative inspirations.

3. Importance of the places of spiritual significance. As per one's spiritual tradition a seeker gets the outer trigger for intra to transpersonal communication at such places of spiritual significance.
4. Listening to the Inner voice, the voice of God within. Neglecting this voice has been called in Ayurveda as *pragyapradh*, the cause of so many psychological disorders.
5. The transforming power of Holy Company or *satsang*. It is a great aid as an act of spiritual communication. In the era of social media and internet full of so many distractions and mind polluting content, this aspect is vital for a seeker.
6. Role of Guru. It plays key role in Self-realization through spiritual communication at all stages. In Vedic spiritual tradition, Guru gives different levels of initiations looking at the preparedness of the disciple or the seeker. Indian spiritual tradition has come down the ages through this *Guru-Shishya* tradition.

In this way with different levels of spiritual communication the self awareness, self knowledge, self mastery and inner satisfaction gets deeper and in proportion the person becomes a carrier of light, positivity, peace and joy. And thus lives a meaningful life as a blessing to the society and the world at large.

## **Conclusion**

This is the process of spiritual communication with the elements of intra and transpersonal communication from Vedic spiritual tradition perspective, which can be applied to all rational spiritual traditions of the world for self realization and a meaningful life.