

The Importance of Teaching Yogic Philosophy in Schools

By
Tristan Barnett

Abstract

By teaching yogic philosophy in high school education, this article provides evidence that would help to significantly reduce alcohol, smoking, illicit drugs, school yard bullying and underage sex which is prevalent in just about every school globally. Evidence is also provided that by teaching yogic philosophy in high school education would also significantly reduce bullying related suicide and help to reduce depression and anxiety that affects many high school students. A list of polices are also given that could be implemented as public policies globally to help significantly reduce such illegal (and criminal) acts occurring at high school and to protect students for later in life when they enter the workforce. Finally, the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank is discussed, in order to provide a revised system that would enable high school students to enrol in a degree that they are best suited for.

Keywords: Yogic philosophy; Bhagavad Gita; Suicide; Bullying; Depression

1. INTRODUCTION

Alcohol, smoking, illicit drugs, bullying and underage sex is prevalent in just about every school globally and yet the Head of School (teachers, school committee and parent's association) have no solution.

According to the Black Dog Institute "Depression and anxiety affects the lives of many young Australians; annually one in six experiences an anxiety disorder and one in 16 experiences depression. These illnesses lower the quality of life of young people and their families, increase the risk of suicide and worsen the outcomes of other physical or mental health problems. Adolescence can be a difficult time for many young people. Amongst the many pressures experienced by teens, final exams are considered to be among the most stressful. We know that stress can trigger underlying vulnerabilities that can result in mental illness such as depression. Indeed, more than 40% of Year 12 students report symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress that fall outside what is considered the normal range for this age group".

According to Bullying Statistics "There is a strong link between bullying and suicide, as suggested by recent bullying-related suicides in the US and other countries. Parents, teachers, and students learn the dangers of bullying and help students who may be at risk of committing suicide. Bully-related suicide can be connected to any type of bullying, including physical bullying, emotional bullying, cyberbullying, and sexting, or circulating suggestive or nude photos or messages about a person". The statistics on bullying and suicide are alarming:

- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people, resulting in about 4,400 deaths per year, according to the CDC. For every suicide among young people, there are at

least 100 suicide attempts. Over 14 percent of high school students have considered suicide, and almost 7 percent have attempted it.

- Bully victims are between 2 to 9 times more likely to consider suicide than non-victims, according to studies by Yale University
- A study in Britain found that at least half of suicides among young people are related to bullying
- 10 to 14 year old girls may be at even higher risk for suicide, according to the study above
- According to statistics reported by ABC News, nearly 30 percent of students are either bullies or victims of bullying, and 160,000 kids stay home from school every day because of fear of bullying

The reason for high school students engaging in such illegal (and criminal) acts, bullying, and students becoming depressed resulting in high suicide rates; is because the information taught at schools is on a material level rather than a spiritual level. By understanding our purpose in life, which is to obtain a spiritual body in the afterlife and live in eternal bliss with God, would help to significantly reduce such illegal (and criminal) acts from occurring. A detailed explanation behind this philosophy will be outlined in this article. Also, a list of policies are obtained that could be implemented as public policies globally to significantly reduce such illegal (and criminal) acts occurring at high school and to protect students for later in life when they enter the workforce. Finally, the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) is discussed, in order to provide a revised system that would enable high school students to enrol in a degree that they are best suited for.

2. BHAGAVAD GITA

The Bhagavad Gita is a conversation between Arjuna, a supernaturally gifted warrior about to go into battle, and Krishna – the Supreme Personality of Godhead, his charioteer. In the course of giving Arjuna all manner of spiritual and material advice, Krishna explains karma, the self, the Supreme Self, the purpose of yoga, the difference between our self and our material body, how our environment affects our consciousness, and how to attain the perfection of life. The Gita appears as a central chapter in the Mahabharata, the history of greater India. It is the essence of Vedic knowledge and one of the most important books of Vedic literature. Lord Krishna spoke the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna about 5000 years ago and through disciplic succession the Bhagavad Gita As It Is gives commentary on the verses by Lord Krishna by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Pradhupada. Essentially the Bhagavad Gita As It Is is the highest authoritative text to explain the universe and the commentary is “almost” 100% accurate.

3. WHAT DEFINES A HUMAN

From the Bhagavad Gita As It Is our bodies are composed of both material and spiritual. The material body contains the gross body (earth, water, fire, air and space) and the subtle body (mind, intelligence and false ego). But above all these elements there is the spiritual soul. There’s no life in the material elements, life is the spiritual soul which is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss. The soul contains two parts the individual soul and the Supersoul (a plenary expansion of God). The soul is one ten thousandth the size of the tip of a hair and is located in the heart, and cannot be measured under laboratory conditions. The material body

is currently dead. The only thing keeping it alive is the soul or consciousness (energy emitted by the soul). At the end of this life we reincarnate into another body depending on our karma. Ideally you want to achieve a spiritual body and escape the re-birth and death process and hence travel the entire universe with Krishna in total bliss – that is our purpose in life. Three quarters of the universe is spiritual. There are 8.4 million species of life including 400,000 species of humans (based on our level of consciousness). Every form of life contains an individual soul and a Supersoul.

4. KARMA

According to Krishna.com and discussed in the Bhagavad Gita As It Is, karma is the law of cause and effect. For every action there is a cause as well as a reaction. Karma is produced by performing fruitive activities for bodily or mental development. One may perform pious activities that will produce good reactions or good karma for future enjoyment. Or one may perform selfish or what some call sinful activities that produce bad karma and future suffering. This follows a person wherever he or she goes in this life or future lives. Such karma, as well as the type of consciousness a person develops, establishes reactions that one must experience. So, when the living beings take birth again, they get a certain kind of body that is most suitable for the type of consciousness they have developed. There are 8.4 million species of life, each offering a particular class of body for whatever kind of desires and consciousness the living being may have in this world. In this way, the living entity is the son of his past and the father of his future. Thus, he is presently affected by his previous life's activities and creates his future existence by the actions he performs in this life. A person will reincarnate into various forms of bodies that are most suitable for the living entity's consciousness, desires, and for what he deserves. So, the living being inevitably continues in this cycle of birth and death and the consequences for his various good or bad activities as long as he is materially motivated. For example, if one chooses to eat meat, then they run the risk of being reincarnated into a tiger since tigers are used to eating meat. If a young girl walks around half naked attracting attention of the opposite sex, then they run the risk of being reincarnated into a tree since trees stand their naked all day.

5. TYPES OF YOGA

Yoga can be classified into four types: Hatha Yoga, Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. Yoga is typically known amongst Western society as Hatha Yoga and this is generally the way society is introduced to yoga by performing postures in a gym. Karma Yoga generally applies to our working lives; where carried out properly one should not become attached to the results of their work but rather all the work is done for the Supreme and owned by the Supreme, and thus the living entity has no reactions of lamentation or hankering. Jnana Yoga is about knowledge of the absolute and typically applies to knowledge that we obtain throughout our educational experiences. The problem with Western society is the knowledge taught at secondary and tertiary level is focused on 'material' knowledge rather than spiritual or true knowledge. By teaching such knowledge (emanating from high school) as outlined in the Bhagavad Gita As It Is (as the highest authoritative text on yogic philosophy) would significantly reduce illegal (and criminal) acts, bullying, and students becoming depressed resulting in high suicide rates.

The highest form of yoga is Bhakti Yoga (which also integrates elements of Hatha, Karma and Jnana Yoga); and this is a complete devotion to the Supreme. Religion could also be considered a form of Bhakti Yoga since religion generally involves worshipping a Supreme. However, the highest form of Bhakti Yoga is Krishna Consciousness (also known as the Hare Krishna movement). This involves regular chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra and abstaining from sense gratification of smoking, gambling, intoxication, meat-eating and illicit sex. By following a yoga process one can progress in spiritual life and increase their level of consciousness.

6. POLICIES

The following education policies could be implemented as public policies globally to significantly reduce high school students engaging in such illegal (and criminal) acts, bullying, students becoming depressed resulting in high suicide rates; protect students for later in life when they enter the workforce; and also help students become engaged in mathematics (through mathematical information on sport and gambling).

- Sport and gambling examples to be integrated in the mathematics high school curriculum
- Compulsory high school education on mainstream religions and indigenous cultures
- Compulsory high school education on yogic philosophy
- Compulsory high school education on work agreements and taxation
- Compulsory high school education on political systems and forms of government
- Compulsory yoga meditation and related activities to be a daily practice within schools
- Student information including exam results and progress to remain strictly confidential throughout high school education and not to be circulated by the school to parents/guardians

7. AUSTRALIAN TERTIARY ADMISSION RANK

As documented in the 'Report in the Scaling of the 2018 NSW Higher School Certificate'

"The Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) is a numerical measure of a student's overall academic achievement in the Higher School Certificate (HSC) in relation to that of other students. This measure allows the overall achievement of students who have completed different combinations of HSC courses to be compared. The ATAR is calculated solely for use by tertiary institutions, either on its own or in conjunction with other criteria, to rank and select school leavers for admission. The ATAR, which aims to provide a fair and equitable method of ranking applicants from all states, is based on the assumption that the age cohorts from which the states' Year 12 cohorts are drawn are equally able to undertake tertiary study. That is, if everyone in the age group completed Year 12, it would be fair to consider the same proportion of each state's students as admissible to any particular university course. The ATAR is reported as a number between 0 and 99.95 with increments of 0.05. The ATAR is not a mark. Specifically, a student's ATAR indicates the position of that student relative to their Year 7 cohort. Students who receive an ATAR of 80.00 in 2018, for example, have performed well enough in the HSC to place them 20 per cent from the top of their Year 7 cohort if all the 2013 Year 7 students completed Year 12 and were eligible for an ATAR in 2018".

Calculation of the ATAR is complicated but essentially is averaged over your best 10 units. Subjects can be either 1, 2, 3 or 4 units. 2 units of English is compulsory. This system doesn't take into account outliers. For example, if a student scores particularly well in one subject but only average in all other subjects then the student's ATAR will be only "average". If the ATAR was only based on a student's best subject then the ATAR will be significantly higher than "average". This is best explained by the author's HSC results as given in table 1. The ATAR system at the time the author did the HSC in 1994 required a compulsory humanity unit and therefore had to do 1U General Studies. Also 2 units of English was not compulsory either. The author spent most of his time doing mathematics, a reasonable amount of time on the sciences of physics, chemistry and engineering science, minimal time on English and no time on general studies. The ATAR was based on a "averaged" performance of the author's top 5 subjects and scored 80.75. Note the significantly higher results in mathematics compared to the science subjects of physics, chemistry and engineering science. This indicates that this particular candidate is best suited to doing the highest level of mathematics at a university. Actuarial studies is recognized as being a "high" level of mathematics. The ATAR for actuarial studies at Macquarie University in 2017 was 97.05. If the ATAR was based on a student's best subject then the author could have potentially qualified for actuarial studies. This would also mean that the student would be spending more time on the subject/s that they are performing best at and hence increase this mark even further. If a student is particularly brilliant at either chemistry or biology and only "average" in other subjects then they could potentially qualify for a degree that utilizes chemistry and biology such as medicine. The ATAR for medicine generally requires at least 99, and under the current ATAR system a student would not qualify. But if the ATAR was based on their best subject then the student could potentially qualify for medicine. Note also that the compulsory 2 units of English in the current ATAR system would mean that the author would have an ATAR even lower than the mark of 80.75 that was obtained when the author did the HSC in 1994. Another interesting observation is that a previous ATAR is indicated as 88.9. That is a difference of 8.15 and indicates the instability of the ATAR system which changes over the years.

Subject	Units	Mark
Mathematics	3U	94.4%
Mathematics	4U	91.7%
Physics	2U	65.0%
Chemistry	2U	62.9%
Engineering Science	2U	62.6%
General English	2U	51.5%
General Studies	1U	24.1%

Table 1: HSC results for the author

8. CONCLUSIONS

This article has provided evidence to show why teaching yogic philosophy is important to high school education. In particular, it would help high school students to understand our purpose in life, which is to obtain a spiritual body in the afterlife and live in eternal bliss with God. This in turn would help to significantly reduce alcohol, smoking, illicit drugs, bullying and underage sex which is prevalent in just about every school globally. Teaching yogic philosophy in high school education would also significantly reduce bullying related suicide which can be

connected to any type of bullying, including physical bullying, emotional bullying, cyberbullying and sexting. Further, teaching yogic philosophy in high school would help to reduce depression and anxiety that affects many high school students. A list of policies are given that could be implemented as public policies globally to help significantly reduce such illegal (and criminal) acts occurring at high school and to protect students for later in life when they enter the workforce. Finally, the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank is discussed, in order to provide a revised system that would enable high school students to enrol in a degree that they are best suited for.

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