

Spirituality and Religion



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What are the differences between **spirituality and religion**? These two concepts are often misunderstood and one confused with the other. Both do however, seemingly have the same message, which is **one of love** and offer a path to God.

It would seem that ones interpretation of God is at the core of the misunderstandings that riddle the human race.

Here we will look at the different approaches on offer

Fear and Love:

Often religions take the approach of fearing a God and would have you take its word for it. Religion plays on peoples fear to do the right thing so they will not suffer eternally at some time in the future.

The spiritual approach to God is through the **self seeking path of love**. Spirituality educates us not to fear a God, but approach God through the same self seeking path of love.

Religion has without doubt been used over the centuries by the powers that be, as a tool for control and profit. Religion persuades you to explore the thoughts of others and accept them as truths.

Spirituality asks you to dismiss the thoughts of others if need be, and come up with your own. Spirituality encourages you to listen to **your inner feelings** as a way of telling yourself that your last thought was a truth, that your last word was wisdom and that your last action was one of love.

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Echoes of the Past and Here and Now:

Religion seems to take **inspiration** from and place great importance on the past. Religion is in awe of the ancient religious literary texts, and offers this as the way to achieve salvation.

Spirituality is not so worried with the past and believes in the eternal Here and Now. To accomplish individual freedom and sanctuary with the eternal God we need to live in the present.

It's not the past or the future that gives us liberation it's the **Here and Now**. People realise peace of mind when they concentrate on doing the right thing Here and Now and look within themselves for an all knowing God.

Religion tells us that God is out of reach, high in the universal heavens, while Spirituality tells us that God is but a thought away and that we are all God. Religion has asked us to believe that we must pay penance to the great God and ask for his forgiveness for our humanly sins.

Spirituality asks us to use our own **moral compass** and enlightens us to the fact that our sins are no more than natural inclinations that are at the source of lessons we can learn from.

The Path:

Followers of religion believe that 'their' religion is the only path to God and that seekers involved in other religions are treading the wrong path to God. Their faith tells them that others who seek God through different means are on a road that can only end up in one place, hell.

On the other hand **Spirituality is accepting of all religions** and understands that there are many paths to God. Spirituality embraces all religions whilst not getting inhibited with the dogma attached to them.

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Disconnection:

It would seem that there have been generations upon generations of emotional disconnection from our inner voice. Religions teach us that the answers to life lie outside of ourselves, not within.

Shame and guilt are the norm asking us to buy into belief systems such as 'I'm an unworthy sinner' and to act in a certain way to receive Gods love and approval.

We were taught we didn't deserve the things we were asking for or wanted and that we were not good enough in Gods eyes to receive them. We were told that we had no right to know or believe in our inner voice and wisdom.

Spirituality encourages us to work on **spiritual self-development** and take responsibility for our own lives and connect with the dialogue of our own soul.

Emphasis is focused on becoming a loving, all-embracing, healthy, happy and inspirational human being who overflows with love for us and others, the premise being that if we are whole and at one with ourselves, then we are complete and at one with the universe.

Misuse:

Religion has never been the root of the human races desolation. Religion and spirituality's core value and message is one of love, so surely the misunderstanding of religion and spirituality lies with man.

Religion has been but an instrument, and it is mans wielding of, and misuse of, which is the issue. Like any instrument or establishment, religion can be misused as a euphemistic stick to beat man and keep him from his true destiny.

The true message in both approaches is **one of love**, and we should all try and remember this regardless of our own personal views, beliefs or faiths.