

# POINT-COUNTERPOINT

## SQ > EQ + IQ

*More than intellect, it's spirituality that leads us to bliss*

BY HIREN SHAH

IN my previous two articles, I tried to explain emotional intelligence from a life purpose and a practical perspective. Another word that one comes across is the word spiritual intelligence. Some years ago, I attended a workshop which covered spiritual concepts for successful management. The conductor of the workshop mentioned that the byproduct is to become happy, peaceful and balanced, which more or less matches the goals of emotional intelligence as that would help in good inter-personal relations. The word spiritual however has a wider connotation and would encompass wisdom, compassion, connection with the higher self etc.

In this context, one of the best definitions of spiritual intelligence is by D Zohar and I Marshall. They define spiritual intelligence (which they abbreviate as SQ) as "the intelligence with which we address and solve problems of meaning and value; the intelligence with which we can place our actions and our lives in a wider, richer, meaningful context; the intelligence with which we can assess that one course of action or one life-path is more meaningful than another. SQ is the necessary foundation for the effective functioning of both IQ and EQ. It is our ultimate intelligence." While emotional intelligence is based on the notion that the ability of managers to understand their own emotions, and those of the people they work with, is the key to better business performance, spirituality assumes that one needs to

become fully conscious of the emotions before one can feel what lies beyond — love, joy, peace.

Emotional intelligence is operative at the cognitive/intellectual level or level of the mind, whereas spiritual intelligence is operative at the consciousness level or beyond the mind. One comes across people who gloat about being spiritual rather than intellectual or sometimes go overboard in expressing consciousness vis-à-vis intellect. The objective here is to put things in proper perspective while exploring the common ground between spiritual and emotional intelligence.

In the book, *The power of Now*, it is given that thinking cannot exist without consciousness but consciousness does not need thought. Identification with mind causes thought to become compulsive. The basic error is to equate thinking with being and identity with thinking. Enlightenment is a state of wholeness or felt oneness with being or consciousness and can bring about the end of dreadful enslavement to incessant thinking, which prevents one from the realm of inner stillness that is inseparable from being. The author states that if one is able to

observe the mind as the witnessing presence rather than be swayed by it, one can be in a state of constant peace, if not happiness.

Vipassana meditation explains the significance of experiential wisdom vis-a vis the intellect very well. Vipassana is a meditation technique that was introduced by Gautam Buddha 2,500 years ago. Vipassana literature states that with his strongly concentrated mind, he penetrated

deeply into his own nature and found that the entire

material structure is composed of minute subatomic particles which are continuously arising and vanishing. In the snapping of a finger or blinking of an eye, he said,

each of these particles arises and passes away many millions of times. An

American scientist discovered the same thing through a bubble chamber and found that in one second, a subatomic particle arises and vanishes 10 to the power of 22 times. However that scientist is not an enlightened person and has not been freed from all the suffering because he has not experienced truth directly



and is therefore more of intellectual wisdom. However, intellect is also important in its own place. For one, one needs intellect to have a basic understanding of consciousness. My first understanding of consciousness came from a book which stated that just as you cannot be your shirt or trousers, as anything that is yours cannot be you, you cannot be your body or your mind. Then who are you? Osho said once that you are nothing but your consciousness. When one is able to respond to situations purely as a witness or with equanimity, this may be the pure or witnessing consciousness. This is because it is free from greed and fear, craving and aversion or as described in certain religions, *Raga* and *Dvesha*.

*The Power of Now* further states that emotion is the body's reaction to the mind or a reflection of the mind in the body and arises at the place where the mind and body meet. If there is an apparent conflict between them, the thought will be the lie and the emotion will be the relative state of the mind at that time. Awareness in the context of emotional intelligence however has more to do with the intellect. People who recognise their emotions and their effects know the emotions they are feeling, can label them, can realise the effect of emotions on their actions, can know how their feelings affect the quality of work and working relationships and can readily acknowledge the gaps between the actual and espoused goals and values. People who have this kind of self awareness are more objective and are able to respond to day-to-day situations with poise, self assurance and sound judgment. Emotional intelligence is more about understanding emotions but spirituality is about transcending them. Though connectedness with the being of higher consciousness may enable one to stay at peace with oneself, in day-to-day life, what one says in response to various life situations can be deemed equally important. At a press conference after the 9/11 when mayor of New York, Rudy Guliani was asked what he thought the body count would

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be, instead of saying that he didn't know or the figures were not complied or passing on the question to his aids, he replied "I don't know what the final number will be, but it shall be more than what we can bear". With those empathetic words, he was able to emotionally connect with twelve million New Yorkers who began to then look upon him as the person who would see them through the crisis. Being connected with the higher consciousness may put one at peace but what one says at the spur of the moment spontaneously in response to situations would come within the realm of intellect. Emotional intelligence here is a kind of talent. Some of the greatest leaders in the world, being superb orators have been able to emotionally connect with their audience because of their dexterity with words.

In the context of emotional intelligence, empathy has a prime place. However, one has to be clear on where empathy works and where it does not work or may not work that effectively. Empathy is generally considered one of the best tools to connect and bond with people but there are certain situations where it may not be required or not be effective. For instance, in human interactions associated with activities like credit collections, empathy can prove more to be a liability than an asset. In addition to being spiritual, being intellectually clear on specific issues is equally important. This would also be issues like violence for instance. The Dalai lama had this to say about violence in one of the books written on him, "Violence

is fundamentally wrong but in some external circumstances with an altruistic motive, when there is no other alternative, one can consciously and full awareness of karmic consequences, commit such an act." Even Mahatma Gandhi had to clarify once in the context of Hindu Muslim riots: "To stand by and do nothing when your brothers and sisters are killed and raped is not Ahimsa but cowardice." These statements clearly show that intellectual discretion and discrimination is equally important, especially on critical, provocative issues. At the same time this should be in the right proportion. Considering that "Knowledge is food for the ego" endless intellectual discussions is against the very essence of spirituality. J Krishnamurthy was perhaps able to put things in the right perspective. He said that meditation of the heart is understanding, which is the very basis, the fundamental process of meditation. Understanding means giving right significance, right valuation to all things — the right value of property, the right value of relationship, the right value of ideas. The beginning of meditation is self knowledge, which means being aware of every thought and feeling and action as it arises. Here the implication probably is that if one looks at a negative emotion like jealousy/ envy without understanding the false importance or over valuation to certain things/issues which caused the emotion to arise in the first place, the whole practice of meditation would be superficial. The conscious mind has to understand the significance of its own activities and thereby bring tranquility to itself. According to Krishnamurthy, the mind is an excellent instrument of thinking and communication in the functional context. However, the very same mind in the psychological sphere could create severe problems if thoughts and emotions are not observed without reaction and transcended.

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