

## Spiritual Intelligence: The Philosophy of East and West

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### ABSTRACT

This paper reviewed the articles, journals and book on spiritual intelligence, Eastern and Western philosophies related to spiritual intelligence, and humanistic views of spiritual intelligence. Spirituality is religion for some people and for others, they are spiritually aware but they are not religious. But spiritual intelligence is not just confined in terms of relation with God and faith, it has many perspectives and point of views, beliefs, and philosophy. Generally, it is vast in nature. The eastern belief and the western belief and philosophies has some similarities in terms of spiritual intelligence which is discussed by some eminent humanistic psychologists like Jung and Rogers. These similarities between the principles of spiritual intelligence by western philosophers and modern theorists and eastern concepts and hermetic tradition are reviewed here.

**Keywords:** *Spiritual Intelligence, Philosophy, East and West*

For understanding spiritual intelligence, first we have to be clear about the two words used. To be spiritual means to have an understanding that we should do things that we like as our soul. In other words, it is doing things that really makes us happy from inside. On the other hand, being intelligent means doing right thing at right place and right time with right intentions.

Because Spiritually Intelligent people develop a sense of will power and belief in their own capabilities and due to their deep thinking, they not only become aware of the tremendous power of a human, but also practice their will power. This kind of person knows how to balance the conscious and subconscious mind. He/she realizes that conscious mind is the commander and the subconscious mind takes orders from conscious mind. Dr Joseph Murphy (2010) mentioned that – “*The conscious mind is like the navigator or captain at the bridge of a ship. He directs the ship and signals orders to men in the engine room who in turn controls all the boilers, instruments, gauges etc. This men in the engine room does not know where they are going, they follow orders.*”

**Wolman (2001)** defined spiritual intelligence as “the human capacity to ask ultimate questions about the meaning of life and to experience simultaneously the seamless connection between each of us and the world in which we live”

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Wolman has tried to present in his book “Thinking with your soul” the areas that are spiritually significant in people’s life. He didn’t mention any religious ideology but tried to explain that our spiritual makeup, its strength and limitations is hard to understand and also it has a role in improving our interpersonal relations and other relationships in the world. Wolman also created PsychoMatrix Spirituality Inventory (PSI). After studying the responses of the test users, Dr. Wolman identified that there are seven factors comprising human spiritual experience and behavior. These factors are Divinity, Mindfulness, Intellectuality, Community, Extrasensory Perception, Childhood Spirituality, and Trauma.

**Vaughan (2002)** described, “spiritual intelligence as is concerned with the inner life of mind and spirit and its relationship to being in the world. a capacity for a deep understanding of existential questions and insight into multiple levels of consciousness” Spiritual Intelligence is the multiple ways of knowing the inner mind and spirit and also integrating and balancing it with the outer working world. Spirituality lies within the heart of every woman and man. It is one of those intelligence that a person can develop independently and relatively.

**Emmons and Rollnick (2001)** defined spiritual intelligence as “the adaptive use of spiritual information to facilitate everyday problem solving and goal attainment.” He initially proposed five components of spiritual intelligence: a) ability to utilize spiritual resources to solve problems; b) ability to enter heightened states of consciousness; c) Ability to invest everyday experiences: d) capacity for transcendence of physical and material; e) Capacity to be virtuous.

**Brahmakumari Shivani (2011)** says “Spiritual Intelligence is the expression of innate spiritual qualities through your thoughts, actions and attitude.” According to her, Spiritual Intelligence is to realize who we are and to live in that awareness. She says that we have always been who we are, but it takes realization for this. The moment we ‘see it’, that moment we ‘get it’ and then only we can ‘be it’.

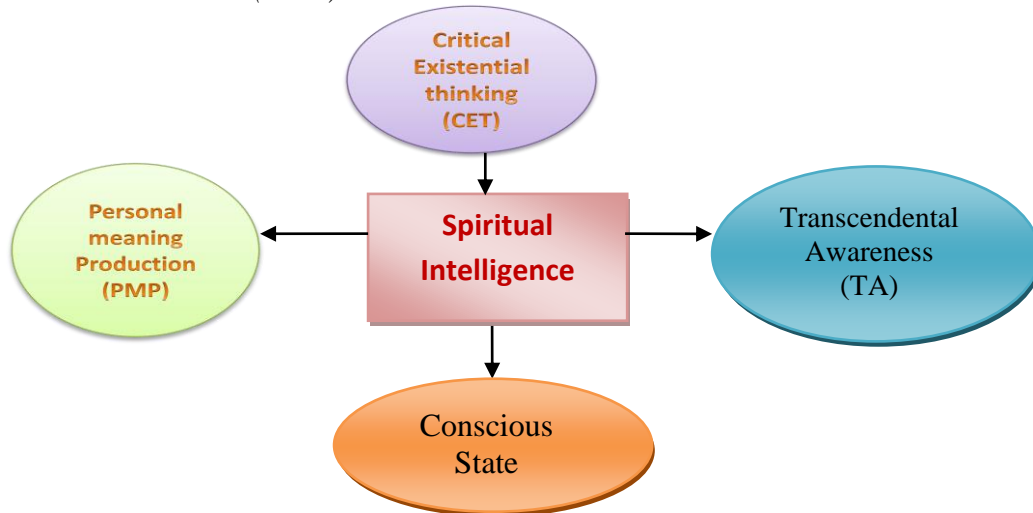
**Carl Gustav Jung (1947, 1948, 1953)** His work on himself and his patients convinced him that life has a spiritual purpose beyond material goals. He believed that our main task is to discover and fulfill our deep innate potential. Jung proposed and developed the concepts of the archetypes, the introverted and extraverted and the collective unconscious. In psychiatry and in the study of religion, literature, and related fields, his work is influential. He studied his patients with illogical and peculiar responses to words, stimulus and found that they were caused by emotionally charged clusters of emotional associations from Consciousness. Jung gave importance to the so-called Hermetic tradition. He believed that the Christian religion was part of a historic process necessary for the development of consciousness.

According to the above discussions, A Spiritually Intelligent possesses- (1) Capacity to ask ultimate questions about meaning of life, (2) Ability to behave with wisdom and compassion, (3) Deep understanding of Existential Questions, (4) Insight to Multiple Levels of Consciousness, (5) A source of guidance, (6) Expression of inner spirituality through thought, action and attitude, (7) Tendency to create mythology and symbols, (8) Ability to balance conscious and unconscious mind, (9) To be self-aware.

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### A. Aspects of Spiritual Intelligence and their relation with Jung's theory:

**Diagram-1:** Model of Four Core Components of Spiritual intelligence by David.B. King and Teresa. L. Decicco (2008)



**1. Critical Existential Thinking (CET)**-This component of spiritual intelligence is related to the potential to critically examine the purpose, meaning, other existential issues and also metaphysical issues like universe, time, death, space etc. The current Argument related to critical existential thinking is that it can be applied to any issue of life as any event or object can be viewed in relation to one's existence. While some others practically consider it as a related pattern of behavior. Further it is concluded that simply questioning existence does not show that we have gained mastery in this ability. We must be able to examine such existential issues using critical thinking and sometimes come to conclusions or having personal philosophies regarding existence by integrating scientific knowledge and personal experience.

#### **Relation with Jung's western and eastern spiritual principal-**

According to Jung and one of the eastern hermetic traditions, our ego which is full of distortions and projections, should be dissolved before we emerge as 'self'. Here he emphasizes the role of Critical existential thinking, as we critically examine our 'self' (our existence) without the interference of ego, then we examine metaphysical issues like universe, time, death etc which in turn emerges our 'self'. This shows that simply questioning the means of existence does not make us a master of this component. Combination of philosophy and knowledge with absence of ego is needed to achieve this stage.

**2. Personal Meaning Production (PMP)** - This component is the ability to build meanings that are personal and purpose in all physical and mental involvements including the potential to create and master a life purpose. Personal meaning, just like existential thinking, is frequently described as a component of spirituality, making it considered as a model of spiritual intelligence.

#### **Relation with Jung's western and eastern spiritual principal-**

What Jung tried to explain is that we as 'self', strive to balance our conscious and unconscious because by this we can get wholeness, self-realization and meaning or purpose of existence. And we urge for all these. Here also we can see that Jung emphasized the

necessity and importance of having a personal meaning and direction of our life. And having a reason of existence is not limited to us and our own awareness, but also to every object and event that we as 'self' encounter because then only it will help us to evaluate our 'self' as it is a union and balance of conscious and unconscious.

**3. Transcendental Awareness (TA)**- This component counts in the ability to perceive supreme dimensions of our self, of others, and of the physical world when we are in normal and waking state of consciousness. It describes our cognitive potentials of awareness and perception whose targets are often said to exist outside of ordinary consciousness. For example – non materialism, holism and transcendent aspects of self and others.

### **Relation with Jung's western and eastern spiritual principal-**

Jung not only tried to explain supreme levels of our self that can be achieved through the balance between conscious and unconscious. But through his concept of Anima, he again tried to explain covering the physical world in which we live, that the combination of so called feminine and masculine properties are crucial for psychological balance of an individual as a self. Here he tried to explain his balance of conscious and unconscious by Anima principle to merge it with physical surrounding and awareness in our waking state. Similarly eastern world describes the concept of Anima as Union of properties of Gods and Goddesses.

Here also we can see the importance of perception of not only pure dimensions of ourselves but also of others and our physical world. Hence, we not only need self-awareness, here we need transcendental awareness. It means awareness of our supreme quality self and the physical world in which we live.

**4. Conscious state expansion (CSE)** - This component of the model is the ability to enter spiritual position of consciousness like pure consciousness, cosmic consciousness etc. at one's own circumspection. From a Psychological point of view, Transcendental Awareness (TA) stage must occur during our normal waking state, while this stage progresses to transcend the waking state and enter higher or spiritual states entering into the conscious expansion stage (CSE)

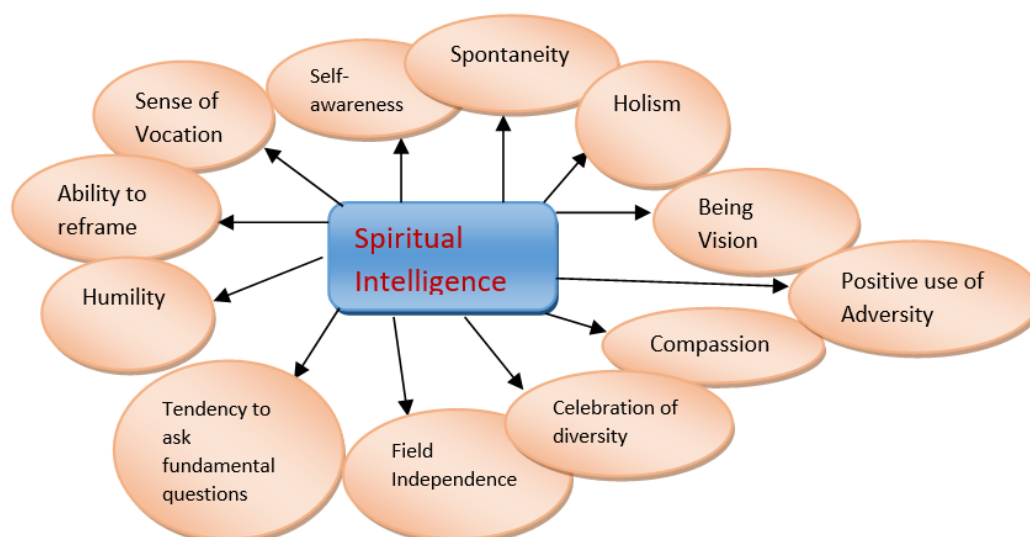
### **Relation with Jung's western and eastern spiritual principals-**

One of the major concerns of Jung is the process of growth of consciousness and spiritual transformation which is also a direct concern of one of the eastern hermetic religions. This eastern religious path says that when the mind is conscious, awakened, then there is no dissatisfaction. Here also, we can see that expansion of consciousness is necessary and important and that it is the continuation of Transcendental thinking because Jung has already mentioned that integration and balance of consciousness and unconsciousness can bring result in expanded conscious states. This integration process starts during transcendental awareness stage and results in this stage.

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### *B. Aspects of Spiritual Intelligence and their relation with Carl Rogers self-theory of development of personality:*

**Diagram -2:** Model of Principles of Spiritual intelligence by (Zohar 2002)



(a) **Self-awareness:** Knowing the belief and values of oneself, and what deeply motivates us. (b) **Spontaneity:** Living in the moment and being responsive to it. (c) **Holism:** Viewing relationships and connections in a broad way and feeling a sense of belonging. (d) **Being vision- and value-led:** Acting from principles and deep beliefs, and living accordingly. (e) **Compassion:** Having the quality of “feeling-with” and deep empathy. (f) **Celebration of diversity:** Valuing people for their diversity. (g) **Field independence:** Standing against the crowd and having one’s own convictions. (h) **Tendency to ask fundamental “why?” Questions:** Understanding things and getting to their depth. (i) **Humility:** Having the sense of one’s true place and play in the world. (j) **Ability to reframe:** Standing back from a situation or problem and seeing problems in a wider context. (k) **Positive use of adversity:** Learning and growing from mistakes, setbacks, and suffering. (l) **Sense of vocation:** Feeling called upon to serve, to give something back.

#### ***Relation with Carl Rogers theory of self:***

In Rogers view, the ‘self’ is the central constituent of human personality and personal adjustment. Rogers believed that a child has a concept of ‘self’ present in him when he comes into the world. Initially it is like a tiny dot but it develops with the increase in age of the child. Here also self-awareness is given importance as one of the principles of spiritual intelligence. Rogers believed that the person should be touch with the here and now. He also believed in being able to live and fully appreciate the present (i.e., living for the moment). Here also we can see that spontaneity and living in the moment is a necessary principle.

Rogers believed that every person could achieve their goal. This means that the person should be in touch with his or her subjective experiences and feelings, continually growing and changing. He believed that People’s own decisions are the right ones and we should trust ourselves to make the right choices. Here also it is seen that a sense of belonging and growing with the touch of reality is emphasized as mentioned in the being vision and holism principle of Zohar (2002). Rogers, according to his principle of positive regard, believed that feelings, instincts, and gut-reactions should be trusted and paid attention to. It is one’s perception of some self-experience of another which makes a positive difference resulting in

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a feeling of warmth, liking, respect, sympathy and acceptance towards others. Thus, it approves the principle of compassion and celebration of diversity.

Rogers (1961) recognized properties of a fully functional individual, one such property is increasing organismic trust; in which he explains that people having this property trust their own judgment and their ability to choose behavior that is appropriate for moment. They do not rely on existing codes and social norms but trust that the more open they are to experiences; they will be able to trust their own sense of wrong and right. This is quite similar to Zohar's principal of field independence, tendency to ask fundamental questions and humility. Rogers explains in his properties of fully functional individual that a fully functional individual experiences joy and pain, love and heartbreak and fear and courage more intensely. For Rogers, a person who has high self-worth, faces challenges in life, accepts failure and unhappiness at times, and is open with people. This relates to Zohar's principal of Positive use of adversity and Ability to reframe.

### ***Recommendations and Future Research***

If we look at different spheres of our daily life, then we will be able to recognize the role of spiritual intelligence. These spheres are our personal life, family life and working life. Spiritual intelligence sets us free from clinginess and neediness in our personal relationships. When we realize that the love, happiness and peace that we try to seek from others, already exists within us, then we become free to act with any motive or agenda. In return, we act with authenticity that desires nothing of another, but serves only to give. In this way, this makes both the parties to act freely by them. This is the deepest foundation for any open, healthy and harmonious relationship built on the spiritual values of trust and respect. In family culture, at one moment we show resistance, ignorance and avoidance with each other and in the other moment we show attachment, love and dependency. Basically, we show behavior swings. Being spiritually intelligent in a family context allows individuals to find a more mature way to relate, free of emotional dependency and support and embrace each other regardless of their different views and behaviors.

Work is a daily life chore to earn money and to show creativity of service providing. Due to spiritual lesson of individuality, co-workers or business partners are treated as individuals and not objects that can be used to reach our own goals. This helps in developing the abilities of building trust, acting with integrity, empathizing and leadership with positivity and positive control.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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