

# Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall: *SQ - Spiritual Intelligence, the ultimate intelligence*

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Hopelessly syncretistic and wonderfully fascinating. It's effectively the popularisation of the most recent neurological research.

## **PART I: WHAT IS SQ?**

### **1. Introducing SQ**

Early C20 – IQ (rational intelligence) the big idea. Mid 1990s, Daniel Goleman popularised research from neuroscientists and psychologists which demonstrated existence of EQ (emotional intelligence). EQ (feeling) is a basic requirement for use of IQ (thinking).

Now: further research shows there is a 3<sup>rd</sup> Q. Spiritual intelligence or SQ. This is the intelligence with which we address and solve problems of meaning and value, the intelligence with which we place our actions and lives in a wider, richer, meaning-giving 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 both IQ and EQ; it is our ultimate intelligence. It allows us to be creative, change the rules, alter situations; to dream, aspire, see the uses and limits of both understanding and compassion. EQ allows me to judge a situation and behave appropriately within it; SQ allows me to ask if I want to be in it at all, or would I rather change it, create a new one?

IQ, EQ and SQ correspond to 3 distinct neural arrangements in the brain.

In knowing only IQ and EQ, Western psychology effectively places a hole at the centre of the self. Models have had 2 layers: outer, rational, conscious personality, and the inner, unconscious one. Now we have found a third layer, a central core. Conscious personalities can be described with the standard personality profiles. She uses Holland (vocational choices), Jung (Myers Briggs) and Cattell (motivation). Gives 6 personality types, and discusses ways to be spiritually stunted or spiritually intelligent for each.

SQ not connected to religion; can be religious and spiritually stunted or vv. More people have religious exp outside the confines of mainstream religious institutions than within them. SQ is the soul's intelligence, the one with which we make ourselves whole.

Evidence. Has been demonstrated in 90s that there is a 'God spot' in the brain, located among neural connections in the temporal lobes; activated during discussion of spiritual topics. Also that there is a neural process in the brain devoted to unifying and giving meaning to our experience – the 'binding problem'. Singer found synchronous neural oscillations across the whole brain. Previously we only knew 2 forms of brain neural organisation: serial neural connections which allow rational thought, and neural networks in which bundles of up to 100,000 neural connections are connected to other bundles – these form basis of EQ, our emotion-driven, pattern-recognising, habit-building intelligence.

Using SQ. Creativity, spontaneity, vision. We use it to deal with existential problems. Fully developed in those who have known the possibility of despair, pain, suffering, loss, and made peace with them.

Indications of high SQ:

- ❖ Flexibility
- ❖ Self-awareness
- ❖ Capacity to face and use suffering
- ❖ Capacity to face and transcend pain
- ❖ Quality of being inspired by vision and values

- ❖ Reluctance to cause unnecessary harm
- ❖ Tendency to see connection between diverse things
- ❖ Tendency to ask why, what if, and to seek answers
- ❖ Facility to work against convention
- ❖ Servant leader

Collective SQ is low in modern society – we live in a spiritually dumb culture characterised by materialism, expediency, narrow self-centredness, lack of meaning and dearth of commitment. But we can raise SQ as individuals.

## ***2. The crisis of meaning***

Search for meaning is the primary motivation in our lives. When it goes unmet our lives feel shallow or empty. For many today this need is not met; and so the fundamental crisis of our times is a spiritual one. People living in earlier societies would not even have asked questions about meaning. Their lives were culturally embedded in a set framework. They had living traditions, living gods, living communities, functioning moral codes, problems that had known boundaries and fixed goals. We've lost this, and are left with existential problems and the need to cultivate a kind of intelligence that can deal with them.

### History

She contrasts US with Nepal. Middle Ages – few medieval peasants had to consider the meaning of life or of their work because these were embedded in the necessities and traditions of daily life. Just as when we drive a car or ride a bike we don't think consciously what we are doing, so in societies with a healthy middle layer, people rely on spiritual values, webs of meaning and habits of relationship that are skills of the community. Most urban people today lack that. All went wrong from C17 scientific revolution and the Enlightenment, with its erosion of the religious beliefs and philosophical outlook that had underpinned society.

### Symptoms of a meaning-deprived society

Obsession with health. Fear of death. Diseases of meaning – cancer, heart disease, dementias, depression, fatigue, addictions.

Threats of extinction – holocaust and similar, so painful we refuse to think about them

Search for immediate pleasure and satisfaction, due to loss of capacity of imagination

Sense of a job as a vocation

Solution – we must all, through our own deepest resources and through the use of our spiritual intelligence, access the deepest layer of our true selves and bring up from that source the unique music that each human being has the potential to contribute.

## **PART II: THE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE FOR SQ**

### ***3. Three kinds of thinking, 3 kinds of intelligence***

3 kinds of neural organisation in the brain which allow 3 different kinds of thinking, corresponding to the 3 kinds of intelligence.

We now know we grow neural connections throughout our lives; not the case that we start off with a fixed number and then lose them. Hence growth in children's intellectual capacities.

We think in different ways with different parts of the brain. We think with our heads but also with our emotions/bodies, and also with our spirits. Brain contains 10-100,000,000,000 neurones; there are c 100 different sorts. Each cell has roots, cell body, trunk, branches. Sensory inputs arrive at the roots, reach cell body if strong enough, fire along axon like a lit fuse, reach terminals, and jump over synapses to neighbouring neurones. Synapses work by chemical signalling; and use over a dozen different chemicals to do the job.

### Serial thinking: IQ

Done along neural tracts – like phone cables, or chain of Christmas tree lights wired serially. Serial processing. This is what we use for rational thought processes, and this is what IQ tests measure. Examples are mental arithmetic, strategic planning.

### Associative thinking: EQ

This kind of thinking helps us form associations between things like hunger and food, mother and love, dogs and danger. It underlies EQ. Enables us to recognise patterns like faces, smells; learn skills like bike riding, piano playing. It is thinking with the heart/body. Done in neural networks. Each contains bundles of up to 100,000 neurones, and each neurone may be connected to as many as 1000 others. Neural networks have ability to rewire selves with experience. Each time I see a pattern, the network connections which recognise it grow stronger. Ones that fire together become more strongly interconnected – eg as we learn to drive a car (touch type?!). Associative learning is done by trial and error. Most emotions are trial and error; once I learn to feel angry at a certain stimulus, it is hard to react differently next time. Psychotherapy helps people break longstanding but inappropriate emotional association. Associative intelligence, inc emotions, are not immediately verbal; hard to talk about them. We have 2 memory systems, one based on precise neural wiring in the hippocampus, one based on associative neural networks located throughout the brain. First one subject to decay with age; second not. So hard to teach an older person serially wired skills, but not motor skills. Recent memory is in the first; long term memory, inc emotions, based in the second. Emotional reactions have an associative base.

Associative thinking learns as it goes; but it tends to be habit bound. Hard to relearn an emotional response. And hard to share associative thinking with others.

Co-operation between IQ and EQ: ordinary chess players use IQ, serial thinking, only. Grandmasters use IQ and EQ – associative thinking, pattern recognition, too.

### Unitive thinking: SQ

Computers can do both serial and associative thinking. But they aren't conscious. We have a third kind of thinking, which is creative, insightful, intuitive. We learn and understand with IQ and EQ, but we invent and create with SQ. Neuroscientists have long been occupied with what they call the 'binding problem' – how do we put everything we take in through tracts and networks into a single coherent whole? Singer and Gray have now isolated synchronous oscillations which pass over specific areas of the brain, ie electrical signals oscillating at various frequencies. ECGs of people meditating show coherent brain waves across large areas of the brain. Magneto-encephalography is a new technology which has enabled detection of oscillations at 40 Hz over the whole brain. It is postulated that these enable information processing between the serial and parallel neural systems in the brain; provide a neural basis for consciousness itself; and are the neural basis for SQ.

## **4. More about 40 Hz neural oscillations, consciousness and SQ**

Pare and Llinas: consciousness not dependent on sensory input, but on internal activity. Their research on 40 Hz neural oscillations overturns conventional view of consciousness by suggesting it is an intrinsic property of the brain. EEG measures electrical activity in brain; MEG measures associated magnetic activity and enables picture of whole brain. 40 Hz oscillations are among the fastest, and occur all over the brain. They aren't present in patients in coma, or under anaesthetic, or in dreamless sleep, but they are in dreams. They form a means by which experience can be bound together and placed in a frame of wider meaning. Chalmers suggests something called proto-consciousness is a property of all matter; form of the philosophical view (Whitehead et al) that consciousness pervades the universe. If neural oscillations in the brain were a coherent version of a fundamental property pervading the whole universe, then SQ roots us at the very heart of the universe. And SQ becomes an expression of sth that most W people have usually called God. She wonders whether the oscillations are quantum oscillations, ie with characteristics of both waves and particles.

## **5. The 'God spot' in the brain**

In all cultures people communicate with God and with spirits, good or evil. Neuro-psychologist called Persinger experienced God for first time when he set a device to stimulate tissue in his temporal lobes (the bit under the temples). Epileptics, who have seizures there, have above average tendency to report profound spiritual experiences. Temporal lobe activity in normal people increases sharply during spiritual activity / conversation. So neurologists call this the God spot in the brain. Gives examples of experiences of God involving the sense of a presence. Research links mystical experiences with greater capacity for creativity; both go with increased temporal lobe activity. Also a correlation with madness! Schizophrenic and manic depressive patients experience increased temporal lobe activity, with visions, voices, presences, instructions – but usually negative. It seems that mystics are closer to their unconscious minds than others; and more vulnerable to mental instability. 90% of writers suffer from mental instability!! 74% of intellectuals. 42% scientists. Link between creative genius and mental instability. Close link between manic depression and the artistic personality. God spot contributes to spiritual experience, but not to SQ. To have high SQ is to be able to use the spiritual to bring greater context and meaning to living a richer and more meaningful life, to achieve sense of personal wholeness, purpose, direction.

### III: A NEW MODEL OF THE SELF

#### *Interlude: a brief history of humanity*

(!!) Creation stories from various religious traditions.

#### *6. The lotus of the self I: the ego layer*

She organises the self into a central bud (SQ), inner petals of the associative unconscious (EQ), and outer petals of the ego (IQ). We know ourselves first from the conscious ego, rational associated with serial neural tracts. Next we become aware of the personal and collective unconscious, pool of motives, energies, images, associations and archetypes that influence thought, personality and behaviour from within. This is the associative middle of the self, part associated with parallel neural networks in the brain. 50% of Westerners have had a mystical experience of unification, a deep sense of being at one with reality; they may have had a brief awareness of the self's centre. This centre is associated with the synchronous 40 Hz neural oscillations across the brain.

She identifies 6 outer petals, or 6 personality types, based on Holland (vocational guidance test):

- |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| ❖ Conventional  | ❖ Artistic     |
| ❖ Social        | ❖ Realistic    |
| ❖ Investigative | ❖ Enterprising |

Paired in opposites, so an artistic person displays very different characteristics from a conventional one, and so on. But a person may score highly in 2/3/4 different traits. Tendency to display characteristics from different traits goes with high SQ.

#### Conventional personality

Extroverted perception. Careful, conforming, methodical. Unimaginative. Receptionists, computer operators, accountants. Value tradition and order.

#### Social personality

Extroverted feeling. Friendly, gregarious, kind, empathetic, persuasive, idealistic, tactful, warm, responsible; therapists, ministers, management consultants, homemakers, teachers.

#### Investigative personality

Introverted thinking. Ideas, intellectual, analytical, complex, needs periods of own company, independent, introspective, retiring, unemotional. University teachers, translators, doctors.

#### Artistic personality

Introverted perception. Often at odds with artistic type, and sometimes within the same personality. Complicated, untidy, emotional, idealistic, independent, introspective, imaginative, nonconformist, intuitive, sensitive. Writers, artists, musicians, designers, photographers, architects.

#### Realistic personality

Introverted feeling. Down to earth, practical, not intimate, conformist, persistent. Farmers, pilots, engineers. Often married to social personality type.

### Enterprising personality

Extroverted thinking. Ambitious, adventurous, domineering, optimistic, sociable. Politicians, managers.

Average person is blend of 2 or more types. Person with developing SQ will grow to include a balance of all 6. Most people however produce same results tested as young then mature adult.

### **7. The lotus of the self II: the associative middle and the deeper roots of personality**

Motivational SQ links the conscious IQ with the unconscious EQ. IQ is how we perceive situations, EQ how we feel about them, and SQ what we want to do about them. Why does the artist want to create sth that doesn't exist; the enterprising type want to climb a high mountain or communicate a bold idea; the investigative type so deeply need to know? Understanding motives is crucial to exercising SQ. [ie there is link between SQ and calling/gifting??]. We are always partly strangers to ourselves because we are always more than our conscious selves. Cattell isolates motivations, of which she chooses 6, to correspond to the 6 personality types:

- ❖ Gregariousness – the conventional personality : Saturn – stability, balance
- ❖ Intimacy (parental) – the social: Venus – nurturing, helping, intimacy
- ❖ Curiosity – the investigative : Mercury – achievement and conquest
- ❖ Creativity – the artistic : Diana/Artemis – healing and transformation
- ❖ Construction – the realistic : Mars - persevering
- ❖ Self-assertion – the enterprising : Jupiter – leadership, authority

Then she links them with Hindu chakras and the planets and even the sacraments.

### **8. The lotus of the self III: the centre**

Modern W culture could be described as *the culture of the absent centre*.

Neurologically.. the brain's intuitive experience emanates from synchronous 40Hz neural oscillations that travel across the whole brain. They provide a 'pond' or 'background' on which more excited brain waves can 'ripple', to generate the rich panoply of our conscious and unconscious mental experience. These oscillations are the 'centre' of the self, the neurological source from which 'I' emerge. They are the neurological ground of our unifying, contextualizing, transforming spiritual intelligence. It is through these oscillations that we place our experience within a framework of meaning and value, and determine a purpose for our lives. They are a unifying source of psychic energy running through all our disparate mental experience.

If the petals/personality types exist in isolation, the result is a spiritually stunted person.

## **IV: USING SQ**

### **9. How we become spiritually stunted**

3 main ways: not to have developed some side of the self at all; to have developed some side out of proportion, or in a negative/destructive way; to have a conflicting/absent relationship between different sides. Schizophrenia originates from problems with low SQ. Schizophrenics cannot integrate selves or their world. It is an extreme form of schizoid conditions, in which a normal person feels disconnected, isolated from meaning by a glass cage; this is associated with raised activity in the brain's temporal lobes. This often linked to creativity.

Most common form of spiritual stuntedness in W is because we are too rational, cut off from the body and its energies, from dreams and imagination. When we have high SQ our personalities express a little of the leader, artist, intellectual, mountaineer, nurturing parent, etc.

Low SQ in the various personality types looks like this:

- ❖ Conventional: fanaticism
- ❖ Social: addiction, sociopathic tendencies, sadism
- ❖ Investigative: obsession, hysteria, phobia, repression
- ❖ Artistic: mania, depression
- ❖ Realistic: self indulgence, self-hatred
- ❖ Enterprising: misuse of power, paranoia

Possession, evil and despair result from low SQ. Low SQ is inability to see beyond the moment or place things in a wider framework of meaning and value.

### **10. Healing ourselves with SQ**

Spiritual illness is a condition of fragmentation, spiritual health one of wholeness. SQ is the means by which we move from one to the other. Key activity is recollection. Her own personal background of resolving alcoholic father and suicidal mother. Children show high SQ – always asking why. Any time we step outside our assumptions or habitual way of seeing things, any time we break through into some new insight that places our behaviour in a larger, meaning-giving context, any time we transcend ego and act from our centre, any time we experience the thrill of beauty or truth larger than ourselves, hear the sublimity in a piece of music, see the majesty in mountain sunrise, feel the profound simplicity of a new idea, feel the depths of meditation or the wonder of prayer, we are experiencing our SQ and using it to heal ourselves.

I think I am conversing with God when I do this. She thinks I am in fact conversing with my own SQ, my own deepest self.

### **11. Our compass at the edge: using SQ to build a new ethic**

1997 Sunday Times ran 2 Gallup polls. First found 10% people go to church on Sunday. Second found 80% believe in God. p 202.

Being at the edge – an expression from chaos theory; the meeting point between order and chaos, the known and the unknown. When we use SQ, our minds stand at the edge. It makes our lives and creativity possible, but also adds an element of fear. Today we all live at the edge. Nietzsche has image of tightrope walker walking between the towers of certainty. SQ sees with the eyes of the heart. We may fall off the tightrope, but trying brings deep joy.

### **12. What personality type am I?**

12 questions for each: 5 on preferred occupations, 2 on preferred leisure activities, 5 on likes/dislikes. I score 3 on conventional, 6 on social, 7/8 on investigative, 9 on artistic, 6 on realistic, 2 on enterprising. Average adult will score 6 or more on 3 types.

### **13. Six paths towards greater spiritual intelligence**

In the course of a lifetime a person's main spiritual path changes, gradually or abruptly, eg in 40s. If it is a genuine energy shift we are likely to remain on good terms with our previous path while adding other dimensions.

Obvious error is to try and solve the problems associated with one spiritual path by methods appropriate to another. An artistic/realistic type cannot solve his problem of deep loneliness by joining a conventional tribe/group. An introverted investigative type cannot become an outgoing public speaker by joining a committee. Marital problems (4-5) cannot be solved by simple nurturing (2). We get stuck like this because we know no better alternatives.

- ❖ Conventional: the path of duty; motivation is belonging; religious emphasis is observance. Means commitment to my community; not self-indulgence, or following the rules from fear. Means wanting to understand self and lead a more creative life; making every action and attitude a celebration of how duty serves the centre and source of existence.
- ❖ Social: the path of nurturing; motivation is intimacy/parental; religious emphasis is love; myth is the Great Mother; practice is nurturing, protecting, healing. Means not suffocating love, do it for you love, animal rights type love. Deepest motivation is intimacy, deepest value is nurturing. 1 Cor 13. Love high in SQ is transformative, releasing self and others; about potential.
- ❖ Investigative: the path of knowledge; motivation is understanding, myth is Plato's cave, practice is study. Means not becoming cold pedant preoccupied with isolated intellectual problem, not isolating knowledge from a wider knowledge of people, processes and life in general. Means reflection, understanding, wisdom.
- ❖ Artistic: the path of personal transformation; motivation is about creativity, eros; religious emphasis is wholeness; practice is dreams/dialogue, myth is journey to underworld. Means exploring the heights and depths of ourselves, welding the disparate parts of our fragmented selves into an independent, whole person. Is the most closely

associated with the God spot activity, with personalities open to mystical experiences, extreme emotions, those who are eccentric, those who battle to keep sanity. Dante. The journeys produce personal healing, yielding everyday art; or transpersonal healing, yielding great art. Motivating energy of the path is Eros, order out of chaos. Spiritually dumb ways include destructiveness, sterility, mess. Artistic people are particularly conflict-ridden; capacity to know extremes of light and darkness, elation and despair. Needs not to fear them; to be willing to reflect on dreams, enter into creative dialogue with self/others, place one's head in the jaws of the demon. Needs to be anchored in daily reality.

- ❖ Realistic: the path of brotherhood. Motivation is construction, religious emphasis is sacrifice, justice.
- ❖ Enterprising: the path of servant leadership. Motivation is power, redemption, service; religious emphasis is priesthood, practice is self knowledge. Leader evokes in his followers the kind of meaning he himself is led by; central energy is power; shadow form misuses it. Most spiritually intelligent form is servant leadership.

7 practical steps to better SQ:

1. become aware of where I am now
2. feel strongly what I want to change
3. reflect on what my own centre is and on my deepest motivations
4. discover and dissolve obstacles
5. explore many possibilities to go forward
6. commit myself to a path
7. remain aware there are many paths

The mystics of every great tradition speak of a place within the self, of light, a feeling of holiness in everyday objects and events, the sense of the sacred in the act of loving, the ecstasy in understanding something for the first time, the elation of bringing sth new into the world, the satisfaction of seeing justice, the peace of serving God. All 6 paths lead to the centre, and also back to the world.

#### **14. Assessing my SQ**

Duty: what groups have you belonged to; become estranged from; would like to belong to; what is your moral code; how do you feel about these things

Nurturing: are there people to whom you happily give more than receive; from whom you receive more than give; any who you neglect/resent; want to help but can't; can you have close friends if they don't need your help/advice; can you in intimate relationships be open about difficult topics; do people find you easy to talk to?

Understanding: do you take interest in lifestyles of those around you; do you get bogged down in problems or find ways of making progress; can you see both sides of an argument; are you intellectually seeking sth and can you define it?

Personal transformation: do you have passion; evaluate a person/dream that filled you with longing but did not reach a completely happy conclusion, and how you feel about it now – write a poem. Identify with a writer you respect, see that pain can become a contribution to others. Look at eggs of behaviour that moves you.

Brotherhood: would you like to have a conversation with just anybody; reverse roles; are there some people with whom you can't feel at ease and why; is justice important to you; is death a hard subject?

Servant leadership: have you been accepted as leader of any group; had visions of the way an ideal group could live; made hasty decisions when stressed; do you give up if your vision is challenged; become assertive; debate democratically; are you willing to stand up and be counted?

The centre

Have you felt self to be in the presence of a powerful spiritual force; do you have nightmares; dislike being alone; how would you deal with it if you disagreed with your associates even after long discussion; do you have moments not just of pleasure but of deep contentment, and what were you doing at the time; if you were to die tonight would you feel your life had been worthwhile?

#### **15. Being spiritually intelligent in a spiritually dumb culture**

We must know our deepest motives; most don't. Look for the reality behind any surface desire. We have programmed responses – want it, do it / buy it. We don't ask what deeper need lies behind the desire. Nothing in

W education encourages us to reflect on ourselves, our inner lives and motives; to imagine. We are uncomfortable with empty time or silence.

How to improve your communication with yourself:

- meditation
- poetry
- going for a walk in the woods
- really listening to music and examining the mental/emotional associations that result
- noticing some scene or event from the day and going over it later
- keeping diary
- reviewing each day at the end.

The modern collective unconscious resonates to the beat of consumer advertising, and to the sex and violence of immediate gratification. Very few of us are nourished by a living spiritual vision that places our lives in that deeper and wider context within which the centre of the self is anchored.

Our culture is a crowd culture; high SQ knows how to be 'field independent' – hold its own opinion. Our culture is atomistic; high SQ knows how to love. Our culture is unable to deal with death; high SQ understands life, and so puts death in a larger perspective of meaning and value.

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