

## ***Working model for gaining Spiritual Intelligence (SI)***

All along man has been innovatively harnessing his intelligence to gain happiness. Problem solving skills (IQ) gave way to emotional intelligence (EQ). Its inadequacy is blatant as society is increasingly grappling with problems of stress, depression and inequalities resulting in terrorism, suicides, drugs, alcoholism and other negativities. To combat this and to promote the joy of universal love<sup>i</sup>, the concept of Spiritual Intelligence is gaining strength in this decade. In fact, it has been declared the ultimate<sup>ii</sup> intelligence. Some models of spiritual intelligence are in vogue abroad. **In this paper, Spiritual intelligence as modeled in the pioneer of spiritual intelligence Vēdānta, has been detailed.**

In all models of Spiritual Intelligence that have been propounded until now, the importance of awareness of inner self or higher self or the transcendental nature has been emphasized<sup>iii</sup>. The Upaniṣads also called Vēdānta as they are the decisive conclusions of the Vēda, declare univocally that only those with awareness of the self are living; for the rest, life is a great disaster<sup>iv</sup>. **It calls a person who is conscious of the self, as *Dhīraḥ* – an intelligent or a wise one.** Being relieved of worldly miseries due to dispassion, a wise one makes an effort to gain knowledge of the Supreme self and is finally liberated<sup>v</sup>, it says. Not only that, while here in this world, using **spiritual intelligence (SI) helps in remaining blissful, thereby allowing others also to remain happy.**

### ***1.1 Definition of spiritual intelligence in Vēdānta***

The Kaṭōpaniṣad, naming an intelligent one as a *Dhīraḥ*, describes such a person as one who has turned inward and is aware of the inner self. As in<sup>vi</sup>

पराञ्चिखानि व्यतृणत् स्वयंभूः तस्मात् पराङ्पश्यति नान्तरात्मन् ।

कश्चिद्धीरः प्रत्यगात्मानमैक्षतावृत्तचक्षुरमृतत्वमिच्छन् ॥४-१

The self-born (Supreme Lord) condemned the senses to reveal outer objects. Therefore they see the outward objects and not the inner self. A rare **intelligent man** desiring immortality sees the inward self with his eyes turned inward<sup>vii</sup>.

This mantra clearly points out to an intelligent one as one who has turned inward i.e. is aware of the inner self. The ordinary, swayed by sense organs that have been created with a capacity to experience only the outer, are therefore the majority, and are materialistic or worldly. Only an exceptionally intelligent one remains unswayed by the world around and desiring permanent bliss turns inward through the knowledge of the self. Thereby

**Spiritual Intelligence can be defined as: the ability to be steadily anchored in the self even while being constantly engaged with the material world.**

## ***1.2 Need for a model for developing Spiritual Intelligence***

It is well known that talking about SI is very easy and also very nice, but starting to practice it is very difficult and mastering it is the ultimate. For developing SI, **workshops on gaining SI are the need of the hour**. A series of committed workshops over long periods of time are more likely to fetch results **since constant, continuous effort is to be put to gain this intelligence**. A model for implementing the recommendations of the scriptures, comprising series of workshops and measured facilitated self-evaluations, has been proposed here.

**A model for gaining SI brings rigor into the process. It brings focus and measurability into the process. When a process is measured and corrective / preventive actions are taken, the process is bound to succeed. This is called engineering the process<sup>viii</sup>**. Five stages in development of SI have been identified

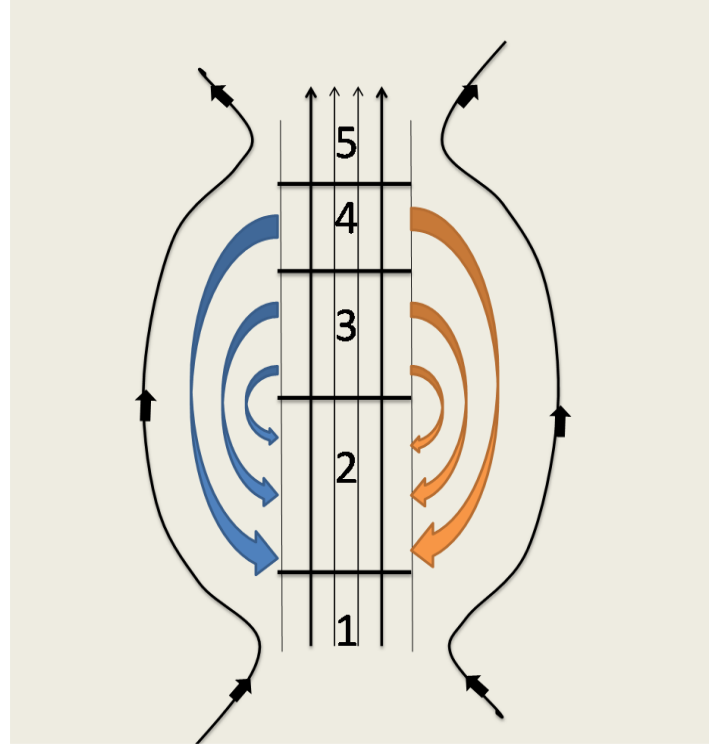
so that one is conscious of one's progressive growth along the steps. **Also, a huge task like gaining SI is made easier to manage when it is split into smaller progressive steps or tasks.**

Metrics helps to measure the effectiveness of the process. **The method of using metrics is incorporated because one can achieve a target easily when it is repeatedly measured.** When one starts observing one's own self carefully and periodically, the required change in oneself will automatically happen. For example, if one starts observing one's breath, the manner of breathing will get corrected by itself. Listening to sermons and practicing some recommended religious rituals will definitely help in improving SI. But influence of materialism and other disturbances around may also be countering the efforts to gain SI and pulling it down. **On continuously measuring and monitoring one's SI, one can be sure of steady progress in gaining SI.** This builds robustness in the model.

### ***1.3 Working of the proposed SI model***

As shown in the diagram below, a model with five stages has been proposed to gain mastery over SI; the seeker has to progress through the five Stages - one after the other. **However, as indicated by the backward arrows in the diagram, Stages #2, #3 and #4 have to be repeatedly visited to maintain a certain level of SI.** At each stage, the seeker is exposed to facets of Vedanta through **thought-provoking questionnaires** and discussions. Then, the candidate is let off with a facilitated **self-evaluation measurement tool** to ensure practice of the concepts learned. This is used for measuring the effectiveness of the process on hand, setting targets, reporting progress and qualifying the candidate at any point of time. The candidate has to reach the target set in the process in order to qualify as 'passed' in the preceding stage and enter the succeeding stage.

## SI GROWTH MODEL - उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानम्



**1:** श्रुतौ विश्वासजननम्    **2:** तत्त्वार्थबोधनम्  
**3:** अनिष्टनिवृत्तिः        **4:** इष्टप्राप्तिः  
**5:** मार्गदर्शनसामर्थ्यप्राप्तिः

**Stage 1:** Developing faith

**Stage 2:** Understanding realities

**Stage 3:** Getting rid of negativities

**Stage 4:** Gaining bliss

**Stage 5:** Being a guru

Each stage has a set of parameters defined:-

1. **Goal:** What will be achieved at the Stage?
2. **Key objectives:** Skills to gain in this Stage

3. **Best Practices:** Methods for gaining the required skills
4. **Measurement tools:** Reports used for measuring the effectiveness of the process
5. **Metrics:** Indices for quantifying the outputs of measurement tools.
6. **Evidences:** Statements of Vedanta evidencing the best practices

Each stage in development of SI is a process like the processes in the software quality maturity model<sup>ix</sup>. Each stage has target to be achieved. That is the goal. The key objectives delineate the skills/ knowledge to gain in order to achieve the goal. The best practices suggest practices that would definitely aid in achieving the key objectives. Periodic evaluation of oneself would give an idea how one is faring in achieving the goal. In order to measure one needs a measurement. For each stage, measurements in the form of certain self-evaluation reports have been suggested. Only when the results of the reports are quantified concrete conclusions about performance can be reached. For this sake, metrics have been suggested for each stage. Metrics are calculations made based on the reports. **The reports along with the metrics are evaluated with the help of the facilitator, and corrective and preventive actions to be taken to reach the goal are charted out.** One applies the corrective and preventive actions and continues with the best practices and with periodic self-evaluations like this, the goal becomes achievable.

Apart from the best practices suggested in each stage, some other general spiritual practices are also suggested as **tools**. The seeker is free to use any other practice too for orienting the mind towards spirituality. **All spiritual practices have to be done regularly over long periods of time to obtain benefits.** This

model helps only to set goals and provide a measured guidance to the candidate on the path of gaining SI.

**Understanding of the deep sense of commitment that is required for gaining SI is also demonstrated while explaining the model. Gaining SI is a constant conscious and concentrated effort put in for long periods of time<sup>x</sup>: this is reiterated at all stages.**

Apart from these, **training aids such as session plans, case stories, questionnaires** have been provided to make it easy to roll out the model as a course. These have been tried and verified by author during classes conducted.

## ***1.4 Stages in the model***

### ***1.4.1 Stage One - Faith development***

At the outset, this model can be used **only** by a person who has faith in scriptures, god and other aspirants like the guru and hence lives a disciplined life. Therefore, **for a newcomer the idea of scriptures as a trustworthy source of knowledge is established in this stage.** Here the logical mind of the newcomer is made to consent to faith. With this, exercises are prescribed for day-to-day use in faith development. Measurements and metrics based on these exercises are suggested. After sincere application of these exercises, measurements and metrics, an average one's faith would be well established. **Only after the metrics have reached the preset target levels and the guru is convinced about the faith of the candidate, the next level in the path to gaining SI maybe commenced.**

It is very important for the candidate to have full faith before the next stage of understanding the realities – i.e. the transcendent – commences because after

entering that stage if one loses faith then only utter confusion will result. It is said that **spirituality is like walking on the razor's edge**<sup>xi</sup>.

#### ***1.4.2 Stage two – Understanding realities***

After one develops absolute faith in the scriptures and guru, the realities about this world as revealed in the scriptures are explained. It is true that ‘we need to look beyond what we see’ and understand the transcendent. Here the three **transcendent realities** are explained. Creation and destruction of the world is explained. The **karma theory** which explains happenings here including the taking on of a body is put forth. The **philosophy of work** is explained to make contemplation a part of each piece of work done henceforth. All other relevant philosophical details are furnished here. The **measurements here are on how this knowledge of realities is used on a daily basis. There is also a quiz to get through before going to the next stage.**

#### ***1.4.3 Stage three – Getting rid of negatives***

This is the central, most important and currently most beneficial stage of the model. The goal of this stage is to get rid of all negativities. In this stage, it is urged that one must stay in their true identity – **svanishtha** - of the self that is ever totally subservient to the Supreme Self<sup>xii</sup>, following the discipline of **upaaya nishtha and purushartha nishtha** in order to live in bliss. The characteristics of one in his true identity – **svanishtha abhigyana**<sup>xiii</sup> – are spelt out. Knowledge of realities is applied and the thoughts to be brought on when fear, sorrow, disappointments and other such negative feelings abide have been discussed. **A mind map comprising knowledge, thoughts and feelings is described for situations of fear, sorrow and disappointment has been presented**<sup>xiv</sup>.

The **measurements prescribed document the time taken to recognize the stress, the time taken to beat it** and the thoughts used. Metric is about the time and attempt that is made to bring it down.

The corrective actions include revisiting the previous stage. The preventive actions include regular use of atleast one of the tools listed.

#### ***1.4.4 Stage four – Gaining bliss***

After learning to get rid of negatives and keep calm in every situation atleast 95% of the times, the aspirant can aim for a blissful and ecstatic life thereon.

***Nishkaama Karma – Contemplative detached work, daily worship*** with mindfulness and following the *Pancakala prakriya*<sup>xv</sup> is said to grant a blissful state. All work is done only as a service to god thereby the only gains from work being increasing one's faith in god.

Also, it is said that to gain happiness **one must study, contemplate and narrate the Vedanta texts** time and again with learned scholars. Reciting of hymns with a group of devotes is the next best option. Doing service in the temples and finally staying under the shade of a noble vaisnava: these remind one of the realities and bring on one's own natural state of bliss<sup>xvi</sup>.

Group activities like bhajans,, discourses, festivals in temples make for an ecstatic experience, provided the aspirant is generally in a state of awareness. Prayers and answers from god, miracles and coincidences also make one ecstatic. Meditation begins with calming and could end with a vivid perception of god which becomes a memoir for the aspirant.



**A long list of tools for enhancing SI** and thus gaining bliss have also been suggested in the model for the aspirant to choose from and master one by one.

**Measurements of time one spends in happiness** have been suggested in order to take corrective and preventive actions which could include revisiting the previous two stages.

### ***1.5 Stage five – being a guru***

For the aspirant to progress through the stages of the model, guidance in the form of a facilitator who rolls out the model and also facilitates the self-evaluations is almost mandatory, just like the coach in sports. Generally, it is said **that a guru is a must for those on the path of spirituality**. The guru must have good knowledge of Vedanta and must be practicing it extensively thereby being in bliss at least 95% of the time. This is the prerequisite for this stage. It is expected that this stage one would never need to return to other stages. This means that one cannot become a guru unless one has mastered the previous stages.

Guru needs to have a very pure mind and must have learnt Vedanta from a guru in the traditional *kalakshepam* manner – with regular interactions over very long periods of time from five to twelve years. The guru should be belonging to the hierarchy of gurus of any one Vaishnava tradition.

Guru must be a practitioner with perfect spiritual discipline. The guru must also have great love and respect for God and Godly. The guru must be naturally dispassionate and have no inclination towards material gains<sup>xvii</sup>.

The guru must be a good communicator, and a very compassionate person. Guru must be blemishless in conduct, speaking the truth always, noble, devoid of

arrogance, envy etc., devoid of material interests and a good friend of the seeker for all times. Guru should be able to tailor the model to suit the times and seeker.

Best practices for developing the above qualities include all the tools for spiritual development and additionally spending time with a senior guru who is mentoring gurus. Guru should be a good disciple too.

Measurements for this stage include feedback from disciples and the happiness index.

### ***1.6 Ever-improving model required for sustenance***

**This model has been successfully tried on several candidates who have reported exhilarating benefits including getting rid of chronic diseases.**

But time and again the model has to be audited and improvements to the model made, to make it more effective<sup>xviii</sup>. With changing times, the workings of seekers would also change and the model absorbs that too.

The core of the model – the stage concept – would not change, I believe. Changes are expected in targets, metrics, measurements, tools and training aids.

### ***1.7 Conclusion***

Spiritual intelligence which is the need of the hour is being modeled world over. This model is combination of Vēdānta and Software engineering. Its highlight is the concept of stage-wise development and measured development. This ensures very high rate of success. **It has been tried and found to be very beneficial.** It is hoped that this model would be used by public for the benefit of the individual and the society also.

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