

The Power and Practice of Spiritual Intelligence

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WEBshots

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CHAPTER 1

What Is Spiritual Intelligence (SI)?

Man is a spiritual being on a physical journey. We are made of spirit, soul and body and every wise person will do well to understand the spiritual side of life. There is a spiritual world, which controls the physical world. The man or woman who understands the workings of the spiritual world and applies spiritual understanding to live successfully is spiritually intelligent. As children, we were born with great spiritual intelligence but as we grew older, we became 'domesticated' by cultural beliefs and prejudices acquired over preceding generations. We cease being innocent, curious, enthusiastic, friendly, open-minded, accommodating, harmless, adventurous and fearless like children. Those childlike qualities are measures of spiritual intelligence. It is no wonder we must be like children to enter the kingdom of God.



Being religious is not the same as being spiritually intelligent. You can be very religious, yet spiritually ignorant. This is why many church-goers still find themselves in bondage, failure and constant poverty. One man frantically called me recently. He said that a woman living in their compound is a witch. "How do you know?" I asked.

"Last night my sister sat outside the house because of heat. A big bird came and perched by the woman's window."

"So?"

"My sister tried to pursue the bird," he continued, "but the bird refused to yield. She ran in and called us. By the time we came out, the bird simply disappeared."

"How does that make the woman a witch?" I still asked.

"Because we've never seen that kind of bird before. We only see pigeons during the day." As he told the story, I could feel him sweating and shaking.

I asked him, "Are you religious?"

"Yes, I go to church and I read the Bible."

Now you can see what I mean. People can be religious yet spiritually clueless.

SI And The Fear Of Evil

After my television broadcast on how to deal with witchcraft, Sophia, a brilliant 20-year old student sent a text message instantly to me.

She said,

"I dnt believe totally with what u discusd 2day. Of course u're right 2 some extent bt witchcraft still exist especially in dis our western region. But kudos 2 ur program it was fantastic."

I told Sophia she was right that witches exist. No one can doubt that. However, a spiritually intelligent person does not have the time to bother about witches. There are more exciting things to do with your life than worry about witches. You waste so much precious energy trying to unearth who in your neighborhood is a witch or not.

In some parts of the world, witch hunting has led to the murder of countless innocent people. Recently a pastor in a part of southern Nigeria tortured and murdered children whom he claimed he was exorcising demons from. As I watched those helpless children, I felt that if the pastor had given them food and sent them to school, he would have cast out the demons faster than the torture and beatings he subjected them to.

You may spend weeks fasting and praying, or living in your church building and yet be spiritually ignorant. In fact, you can pray and fast out of spiritual ignorance instead of faith and knowledge. For instance, prayer and fasting cannot substitute the need to take action in some areas of your life. If your house is leaking, you do not kneel and start praying. You fix your leaking roof! If your business is ailing because you do not treat your customers with sincerity, you do not hold vigil, you correct your attitude to your customer or fire your rude employee.



Chapter 2

What Are The Marks Of Spiritual Intelligence?

The greatest mark of a spiritually intelligent person is love. Love is the highest spiritual law. In fact, God is love. A spiritually intelligent person loves God and is sensitive to things that make God happy? What makes God happy? God is happy when you are growing as an individual in every area of your life. He made you to succeed spiritually, financially, career-wise and in your relationship with others.

Many people are afraid of success. They think that God is happy when they are poor and miserable, another sign of spiritual ignorance. Why would God want you to be miserable on earth? What would He gain by making you poor, sick and tired? We accuse Him falsely and blame Him for our own ignorance.

People often ask me, "How can I know that I love God?" The answer is that if you cannot love the man or woman next door, your customer, your coworker, your family, then you do not know God. If you cannot love the person that you see, then how can you love God that you do not see?



The Fall and Die Prayer

During one of my television episodes, I mentioned that it is absurd for you to pray that your enemy should fall and die. Indeed, that kind of prayer is glorified witchcraft, even though it might be clothed with religion. One viewer immediately sent me an angry text:

"You r stupid to say that fall and die is stupid. In a few days, u'll swallow ur words."

I sympathized with this listener. I did not bother replying him but he illustrates the point I am making. Swallowing my words meant he was going to pray for me to fall and die, all in the name of defending his religion.

People that pray *fall and die* have a liturgy of prayers they call "dangerous prayers." They protest that when they say, "All my enemies, somersault, fall and die!" they are not referring to human enemies but to demons. The question is, "Who told

you that demons fall and die?" Some people claim they are using the Bible and refer to David's imprecatory psalms for authority. I doubt if that is the spirit of the Bible. The spiritually intelligent person is harmless as dove and wise as serpent.

We get What We Pray For

Incidentally, we get more of what we pray for others, whether positive or negative. There is always a return-to-sender clause to the prayers you send up to heaven. Blessing others brings blessings, cursing others brings curses, even when we meant good. If we focus our spiritual energies on enemies, we get more enemies to pray for. If we focus on mercy, love and grace we get more of those too.

The best way to deal with your enemy is to bless and forgive him or her. When you do, you dissolve the issues in your life and they no longer have hold on you. As long as you keep the malice, it will keep eating your spirit and even consume your body in disease. Researchers have found connection between anger, bitterness and ulcer and cancer.



Other Marks of Spiritual Intelligence

A spiritually intelligent person not only loves others, he or she is kind, joyful in all circumstances, humble, meek, self-controlled, gentle, trustworthy, truthful, faithful and given to acts of mercy. These qualities cannot be faked. The spiritual person knows how to control himself and not give in to his lustful appetites. He does not boast but he is confident about his abilities and thankful about his gifts, accomplishments and opportunities in life.

A spiritual person is undisturbed by external circumstances. A person of low spiritual intelligence complains when things are bad and is happy when things are good but the spiritually mature is happy and contented whether things are bad or good. She is not afraid of bad news. They want to sack people in her office, so what? He gets a threat letter from armed robbers, so what? They saw her husband with another woman, so what? The politicians are stealing money, so what? So what does not mean that he or she is passive or uninvolved with life. Instead he has good understanding of human nature, and knows the best way to respond to crisis. She has peace in the midst of the storm.

Chapter 3

The Problem of Spiritual Ignorance

A spiritually mature person does not fear evil. "I fear no evil because God is with me" is his affirmation. She does not focus energy on avoiding witches and bad people. He already knows that he is higher in the spiritual realm because God is on his side. If God is on your side, who can be against you?

Witchcraft is the lower life. The godly life is the higher life. I do not waste prayers on witches. Instead, I am bothered by the problems of ignorance, poverty, hunger and disease in Africa. I do not want to be remembered as the man that spent his life avoiding or pursuing witches. I want to be remembered as the man that loved his family and did lots of good in Africa. I want to be remembered as one that helped people the power that God has put within them.



My greatest concern in life is not that I would die. I do not fear death. What I aim for is to die a noble death. Several years ago, two undergraduates died in each others arms while having sex in a hideout near their hostel. They were unmarried. If that is not an ignoble death for anyone, tell what is. That is a horrible way to exit life. Compare their death with that of Mother Theresa. How would you rather die?

Death is a great blessing. However, the greatest tragedy is for you or me to die without fulfilling our purpose. It is sad to die and be quickly forgotten simply because you did not touch any lives. Not long ago, I took a stroll in the Victoria Court cemetery in Lagos while waiting with others for the funeral of a friend's father. I saw people of different of ages buried under those six-inch deep subterranean rooms. Some died at 23, others at 78, 30, 7, 102.

I also saw something else: unfulfilled hopes, dreams, noble ideas, untransferred knowledge, promises, unused talents, unwritten books, unexpressed forgiveness, unconfessed wrongs, buried in those tombs. Forever!

No wonder King Solomon said, "Whatever your hands find to do, do it with all your might for in the grave where you are going, there is neither

working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom." Why waste your life living in fear of witches, wizards, *mamiwota* agents and 'ancestral spirits'? Why not rather draw close to God and be insured spiritually for the rest of your life?



On Ancestral Spirits

Another popular spiritual technology in Africa is that of ancestral spirits. We are told that the human sacrifices and fetish things our ancestors did decades before we were born might be responsible for our financial problems and failures in marriage and business. Is this true? Maybe, since we are connected human families and decisions that your parents took might affect you in some ways.

Do the blood covenants our ancestors made affect us today? Maybe too, because blood covenant is serious business. Do we all have ancestral spirits? Of course, everyone alive today had ancestors!

Then why is it that only your own ancestral spirits keep you from succeeding in life? Look around you and think about all the successful men and women you know, in your village, in your country and in the world. Did they have ancestral spirits? Did they also have ancestors that sacrificed to idols? If so, why have they risen from a similar background to yours to success and significance, even though nobody had dug up buried objects at the back of their houses? Why is it that some others who descended directly from witches and native doctors are doing very well?

In Shakespeare's time, people blamed the stars. In our time, we blame ancestral spirits. But Shakespeare insisted, "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in us that we are underlings."



There are a few observations I would like to make concerning the ancestral spirit problem:

1. Your ancestors will answer for their sins. You will answer for yours. The politicians, too, will answer for their sins, you will answer for yours. They will account for the stolen billions, you will account for your thousands.

"The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness

of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.” Ezekiel 18:20

2. Spiritual laws always work no matter who applies them. It does not respect gender, age, religion or race. If a Chinese applies success principles, it will work, if an African or American applies them, they work too.
3. Generational poverty, generational sickness or generational failure is real, not necessarily because of spirits but because these families have internalized practices, superstitions, beliefs and behaviors that keep them poor and miserable. However the moment someone in your family wakes up and declares, “It is enough!” the curse can be broken.
4. You have the power to choose your destiny. You can hand it over to your ancestors or to astrology or you can take responsibility for what you want to achieve in life and go ahead and do it.
5. No one is stopping you but you! On the day of reckoning, you, not your ancestors will give account of your life. The day you die, you die as you.
6. You are someone else’s ancestral spirit in the making. In a hundred year’s time, someone would be referring to you as their ancestral spirit. That is why you should make responsible choices today



As a result, you must leave your ancestors alone and mind your business. You do not fully understand the circumstances that made them act the way they did during their time. You cannot judge your ancestors based on today's societal values, technology and culture. They did not have closed circuit TVs to warn them of the snakes and lions approaching. There were no ambulances to rush their dying child to any hospital. Today you call your healers doctors but they called theirs herbalists. They did not have cars, airplanes, credit cards and cell phones. They had their own ways and means, which you cannot condemn or ratify using your own ways and means today.

Operate Your Remote Control

Do I have control over the influences of my past? Of course, I do! I am not a helpless, remotely controlled robot. Though we have universal remote

control devices, each television model has its remote control. You might not use an LG remote control to manipulate Sony TVs.

The remote control for your life is in your hands. When God made you, he handed over the remote control for your life to you.

But you can surrender this control to others. It is entirely up to you.

When you do not think for yourself, you lose control to others. Whoever thinks for you controls you. You can surrender control to your past - to your ancestors. You can surrender it to the government, to your priest or imam. Many people surrender control of their lives to the television. They sit in front of the TV all day and wonder why nothing is going well in their lives! They devour home movie after home movie and wonder why their marriages and businesses are failing. They fail to see that the movie script writers are doing their thinking for them, shaping their ideas about marriage, about money and about life.

I prefer to hold my own remote because no one loves me better than I. No one understands my pains, struggles, wishes and aspirations better than I. I hold my remote control with confidence because it was given me by God.



Faith Versus Superstition

We are bothered by so many beliefs and superstitions we inherited from our past. In my village, a sighting of the owl in the night, we are told, meant that someone in the neighborhood was going to die.

In some parts of our continent, when we see a rat or bird at odd hours, the immediate explanation was not biological but spiritual.

When my old uncle saw the magnificent Niger Bridge for the first time he exclaimed, "The *oyibo* witchdoctors are awesome!" In his reality, anything that cannot be explained within his knowledge domain is spiritual power. I tried fruitlessly to explain engineering concepts to my old uncle.

Many of us still live in similar domain. The man who seeks a supernatural explanation for everything is superstitious; the man who explains everything as material and ordinary is ignorant. Neither is free but suffice it to say that the just shall live by faith, not superstition.

A spiritually mature person lives by faith. The spiritually ignorant lives by superstition. A good exercise for you is to examine your beliefs and superstitions. They will give you a perfect explanation for why things are the way they are for you.

To increase your SI, you need to clean up your superstitions and replace them with faith in the promises of the All-knowing, Almighty God and Father of Creation.

Chapter 4

How to Deal With Witchcraft

I am not a student of witchcraft for the very reason I had mentioned earlier. I do not spend time studying witches or how they operate. It is a waste of spiritual and mental energy. I would rather focus on my mission in life and every other thing falls in their place.

When you focus on your God-given tasks on earth, God takes care of everything around you, including spiritual protection. If God is on my side, and I am on God's side, no weapon fashioned against me by anyone can prosper. I've been threatened severally by people that practice curious arts but I just batted them off and continued with my business on earth. I am not threatened by death. I would die in my time but why waste my time being afraid to live?



However, because many people live in astonishing dread of dark powers, I thought it necessary to do a television episode on dealing with witchcraft.

Here is the transcript of that episode:

Many people have been writing to ask me about spiritual growth, spiritual protection and so on. Today, I would be showing you the secrets to dealing with witchcraft in your finances, marriage, career and health. If you would like to tell me about your own experience with spiritual attack, feel free to do so and I would send you my article on spiritual intelligence when I complete it.

A young man called me recently. He said, "Please can you help me? My family is under the attack of witchcraft." Well, I'm used to people in our part of the world attributing every misfortune to witchcraft especially because our Nollywood home videos have popularized the notion that witch doctors have omnipotent powers. It is a lie, witch doctors themselves are in bondage. They are in bondage to the spiritual powers they serve. So when you go to them to solve your problems it is like a slave running to another slave for protection.

I do not believe that every problem in your life is due to witchcraft. Many problems in your life are due to ignorance, superstition and lack of thinking skills. Nevertheless, witchcraft is real. Some people use diabolical powers to attack other people. All the people that use diabolical powers are weak and insecure.

I asked the young man, "How do you know that witches are attacking your family?" He gave me three reasons. People in their family are dying young; the men do not progress, and their women do not marry.

Many people find themselves in this kind of situation. During my school days in Port Harcourt, I knew students who would never visit their village for fear of witchcraft. It is truly sad in Africa that if your family begins to do well in your village, rather than your village people support you they look for ways to pull you down. Some people do not want progress and do not want your family to progress either. I believe it is better to rejoice with those who rejoice and cry with those that cry.

Back to witchcraft. Let me tell you the four secrets of witchcraft.

(1) *Witchcraft operates through ignorance. There are two forces in the world - the force of evil and that of good. Never, never, never will evil overcome good. Never, never, never will darkness overcome light. This is divine law. Evil might seem to prevail for a time - young children are being raped, ritual murders are being committed, armed robbers are terrorizing, justice is being denied the poor, corruption, wars, tribalism and hatred make the news headline everyday. However deep within evil people's heart is the knowledge that Good is powerful and Evil is Weak. The forces of good and love will prevail. If you are ignorant of this, then you may suffer unnecessary attack.*

(2) *Witchcraft gets its nourishment from your fear. By divine law, you attract your fears. The Jewish patriarch Job said that what he feared most happened to him. Fear is a worse enemy than death. Fear will kill you many times before death. If you fear witchcraft, you invite unnecessary torment to yourself. There is nothing to fear about witchcraft if you understand and embrace the power of God. Many years ago, a witch told me I was going to die in a motor accident within 7 days. I told him he was a liar. I refused to accept his curse. Well, that was August 1984. I am still alive. However, there's a secret here. If I had believed him and become afraid, I would have died out of fear. That's the way it works, through fear.*

(3) *Witchcraft also operates by Superstition. We inherited many superstitious beliefs from our villages. When you sneeze, it is interpreted that someone has called your name for evil somewhere. I know people who would not sleep at night if they saw a bird on the tree nearby. If a rat passes by, they chant incantations for protection. Well, witches may turn to rat or whatever they choose but it won't disturb my sleep. You are a prisoner of your superstitions. Your superstitions become your reality but I tell you it's all in your mind.*

(4) *No curse can rest on you except there is a cause. The devil does not enter your house if you don't owe him rent. See, your landlord cannot come to my house and collect rent, can he? The devil will visit you if he is your landlord. So to overcome the attack of witchcraft make sure the devil isn't your landlord. The devil is your landlord if you steal, lie, sleep with your neighbor's spouse, cheat or kill. The devil is your landlord if you practice the advance fee fraud or 419. The devil is your landlord if you make a living by destroying lives. Because of money, someone made a fake drug that killed many innocent children. When you do such things, you easily fall victim to spiritual curses.*



Can the sins of your ancestors predispose you to spiritual attacks? Maybe. Not because there is something mysterious there but because you acquired limiting beliefs that hold you back. Would you need to go dig up things under a tree in your village? Some people have made a technology out of that. Some group asked me to pay them money so they could go to my village and dig up the problems my ancestors buried there centuries ago. I told them I preferred to use the money to pay my children's school fee and invest in the stock market. Besides, I have no problems with my ancestors. I am proud of my heritage.

Will ancestral spirits keep me from succeeding in life? I don't know about that but here's what I know: you can take a stand today and break the generational problems in your ancestry. Your ancestors have enough trouble where they are and you don't have any business worrying about them. You have your life now and I suggest you quit worrying about your ancestors and start living your life today! What you need most is to connect to God in a personal way.



Chapter 5

How to Increase Your Spiritual Intelligence

We can increase our spiritual intelligence in several ways but it is summed up in one word: personal pilgrimage. You must go on an inner journey that has nothing to do with traveling to Jerusalem, Mecca or India. It is easier to go to Mecca than to face your struggle with taking bribe in your office. It is easier to go to Jerusalem than to face your struggle with the groveling beasts of lust and pornography.

Yet, the spiritual journey is your most important endeavor. Unfortunately, many people never even prepare for this journey before they die. To grow in SI, we must ask to receive, seek to find and knock for the door to be opened. We must answer two critical questions individually:

1. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole and lose his soul?
2. What can a man give in exchange for his soul?



Finding Spiritual Alignment

The two questions above gave me spiritual alignment. I am constantly weighing my thoughts and behavior against them. If a deal, a relationship, an activity would endanger my eternity, then spiritual intelligence demands that I cut it off. That is the basis of the divine counsel that if your right hand would cause you to go to hell, it were better for you to cut it off and go to heaven with only one hand than that your entire being burn in hell.

By the way, are heaven and hell real? Are they just hallucinations of someone's imagination? That is part of your spiritual quest. There are a thousand and one opinions about life after death but you have to discover that truth for yourself.

How much is your soul worth? The value you place on your soul would determine how you live your life. It would determine your values, convictions, beliefs, people you associate with, aspirations and ultimately your success or failure.

Spiritual Disciplines

Are there practical tools that could assist you in building your SI? Yes. They are called Spiritual Disciplines (SDs). Some of these disciplines include the practice of gratitude, silence, listening, meditation or contemplation, solitude, study, observation, prayer, reading, fasting.

Fasting is not always related to food only. The most productive periods of my life were the ones I spent without the television. Just three years ago, we packed up the family TV for two years. I refused to renew the digital TV subscription. Surprisingly, no member of family died for not watching the TV! Those were the years preceding my quitting Shell, which turned out to be a major decision.

My thinking was surprisingly clearer, deeper and free from the clutter of frivolous home movies and clever advertisements that pelt the subconscious mind. The things that mattered most in my life began to rise to the surface. I began to ask myself deeper questions that led to better answers. I still fast from the TV and just listen occasionally to news and other programs I enjoy.

The greatest spiritual discipline is to reduce the noise inside your life and increase your closeness with God. "Be still and know that I am God." I found that all problems dissolve in the stillness of eternity but very few people know how to quiet the noises in their mind.



Chapter 6

What Can You Do With This Knowledge?

That is the question you should begin your day with. You may begin with self observation. Socrates said that the unexamined life is no worth living. King Solomon, centuries before Socrates also said that a wise person gives thought to his ways.

What are the gaps in your life? What have you been trying to use in filling these gaps? Many times, the failures, disappointments, tragedies, discontent and frustrations in your life are a call to spiritual growth. We often try to fill our voids with addictions to sex, drugs, alcohol and food. But addictions never fill a void. They create more voids.

Unfortunately, the ultimate destination of addiction is death. No addiction ever leads north. No addiction ever led its prisoner to achievement and glory. Always death and shame. But SI brings healing, peace, joy and success.



Let me end with a quote by a woman unknown to many of us, Grace Hansen. I searched her bio on the Internet without much result but I think she made one of the greatest quotes in history, "Do not be afraid your life will end, be afraid that it will never begin."

If you are low on spiritual intelligence, your life may never begin before it ends. However, all that changes for you today because now you know. Spiritual intelligence is attainable for you.



About the Author

Ogbo Awoke Ogbo spent most of his career working for the oil and gas giants, Shell and Chevron. He resigned last year from Shell to set up a

training and coaching practice to help people find the missing clues in their career, finances, relationships and health. He consults for businesses in the area of organizational performance, talent management, creative thinking and teamworking. He has written a book, first in the financial freedom series, Financial Freedom for Every Youth, to help young people and others deal with issues around their personal success. Ogbo speaks in conferences around the world and appears on the weekly Healthy, Wealth and Wise on Today on STV, Silverbird Television (DsTV channel 131). You can reach him by email: ogbo.ogbo@giantthoughts.com.

