

The Higher Order of Being

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Karama is a popular neighborhood of Dubai City. The streets in Karama are deserted and eventless on Friday afternoons, when the city goes to her weekly siesta.

That Friday afternoon, parking the car in the parking plot, I walked across Tariq Bin Ziyad Road, which was an undaunting task at that time of the day and week. There was only one car approaching in my general direction from a safe distance. Both myself and the car could have easily passed each other without being mutually challenged. Nevertheless, the car reduced the speed and rolled into a polite stop, clearly allowing me to complete my passage. I thanked the car and its occupant with my waving hand.

I did not know who was in the car; but his act left an indelible imprint on me. He left behind a trail of thoughts in me. Why did he stop for me? Perhaps, he was in no hurry to reach anywhere? Perhaps, he was on a relaxed trip to pick up his wife from the hair stylist and was ahead of his appointed time? Yet, there was no substantial need for him to stop. He, indeed, lightened up the rest of my day. I preferred to conclude the incident that he was a fully “conscious” and “responsible” human being living in the magic of the present moment, doing the right things at the right time. He certainly had that unmistakable mark

of higher order of thinking and higher order of doing.

Higher order of thinking and higher order of doing are infact, not two different things. They can be simply rolled into one as higher order of ‘being’ - a state of mind where our awareness is not just mundane, where our mind is not merely grappling with the ordinary issues of our day to day life for existence. Vast majority of the population is living in a low order of being, as reflected in their general action centered around their selfish motives and attitudes. Higher order of being is reflected in our concern for the welfare of others, a respect for issues related to society, environment, plants and animals, our world, our universe, about our own purpose of life etc.

If we observe, we can easily notice that the majority of the people are existing in low order of being. Only in extra ordinary situations of calamities like tsunami or earth quake or fiercely violent wars that we humans temporarily break out of this insulating shell of apathy. In a sense, these calamities do have that beneficial effect to give humanity a shock treatment to wake up from its indifferent dream!

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Imagine if all the 6.8 billion humans on planet earth conduct their lives with higher order of being, how profound our life would be on this planet! However, research findings indicate that it is not necessary that hundred percent of people need to change to bring about massive social changes. Only a certain threshold fraction of the entire population needs to initiate the change first to catalytically induce global changes. This threshold fraction is believed to 0.5%, which means it is enough if some 35 million people on earth engage themselves in living consciously and ethically with higher order of thinking and doing to bring out catalytic changes across humanity. Considering that there are at least 192 United Nation member States, an average figure of 180,000 people per country is enough to bring up humanity to this reach this state. Of course, most populous countries like China, India, United States of America, Indonesia, Brazil etc can chip in hugely large numbers to compensate for less populous members.

Don't you feel there is hope for us?

We can see this principle of catalytic social changes at work if you see how the world has changed in the last ten to fifteen years. All airports of the world look the same today. All hotels of the world over look the same today. All supermarkets of the world over look the same today. Our education systems are undergoing considerable changes in a common global direction. Only the language spoken, cloths worn, currencies handled are different currently. Similar trends, habits and systems are sweeping our world like wildfire.

The “peer pressure” that we often talk about is nothing but this very principle at it's subtle work. Gandhiji, revered as the father of

Indian Nation, has said “be the change that you want to see in others”. He was urging us to become the catalysts ourselves instead of waiting for others to become the harbingers of change.

Don't you feel there is hope for us?

In reality, the world we live in is hugely interdependent, no matter how much otherwise we may feel about it. If we care to closely observe, we can see this great drama of interdependency in our own lives; As children we are dependent on our parents; as adults we experience a pre-eminence of independency; as we advance in age, when wisdom takes the driver's seat in our life (assuming that it does) we realize that there is no such thing as absolute independence but there is only absolute interdependence. The frail health and the failing memory throw us back to a state of dependency. The reality of our life is neither dependence nor independence, it is interdependence.

Today, when we are hungry we can go and sit at the dining table or walk into a restaurant and the food appears before you. Is that not magic? We have not literally done anything for the production of food. “I gave money”, the lower being state of mind might debate. But would that money bring the food to the table, had there been no production of food materials in this world? Or had there been no transportation systems in the world? Think of the millions of farmers, millions of vehicles, millions of workers in the material re-distribution system who worked hard so that we get the food in a plate when we are hungry every single time? If this is not magic, what is it?

Look at the interdependency of nations! Certain nations have large deposits of oil, for example. But they lack manpower and agricultural produces, for which they need to depend on other nations. Other nations do not have oil for which they need to depend on oil producing nations. Certain nations have technology but no manpower and the other way round too. Life on our planet is sustained through a huge barter system that is largely invisible to our eyes, because the concept of money has camouflaged it.

The economic turmoil that our entire world undergoes now is a glaring example of this truth.

I have no life, independent of the unknown person who stopped the car on the road for me. I have no life, independent of that unknown, unseen farmer who feeds me every day. I have no life independent of the thriving forests of Amazon or Kalahari Desert or river Ganges or river Mississippi. We live in a reality that is totally shared with everyone else.

Dependence and interdependence are misnomers – the one final word symbolizing the survival of our planet is interdependence. Ethics is a way of life in full honour of this interdependence of our collective existence.

Welcome to the Higher Order of Being!

A Lesson from the Geese

Have you ever wondered why migrating geese fly in a 'V' formation? As with most animal behavior, God had a good reason for including that in their instincts. As each bird flaps its wings, it creates uplift for the bird following. In a V formation, the whole flock adds at least 71% more flying range than if each bird flew alone.

Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to fly alone...and quickly gets back into formation. Like geese..... people who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier than those who try to go alone.

When a goose gets tired, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies at the point position. If people had as much sense as geese, they would realize that ultimately their success depends on working as a team, taking turns doing the hard tasks, and sharing leadership.

Geese in the rear of the formation honk to encourage those up front to up their speed. It is important that our "honking from behind" be encouraging.

When a goose gets sick or wounded, two other geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and provide protection. They stay with the unhealthy member of the flock until it is either able to fly again or dies. Then they launch out again with another passing flock or try to catch up on their own.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A SCIENTIST.....To learn from God's marvelous creation; you only need to stop long enough to observe and let God reveal His wonders to you.

"Ask the beasts, and they will teach you; and the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you; and the fish of the sea will explain to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this?"

Transcribed from a speech given by Angeles Arrien at the 1991 Organizational Development Network and was based on the work of Milton Olson. (Source: Dr. Jagan Mohan Reddy)