

Three A's and Remaking Ourselves as Human Beings

- Dr. G.P. Rao

I, for one, believe that it is the most obvious which we miss most. The fact that human beings are endowed with divine qualities which are more often than not known to us is one such truism. Related to this there is another truism that both the willingness and ability to do either good or bad are 'designed', so to say, within the human brain. The latest research reveals that the left side of the brain relates to reasoning, mathematical and analytical skills and intellect; while the right side refers to emotions and sentiments, imagination and descriptive skills and intuition. The fact that the elements facilitating discretion, wisdom, and, decision making are 'built in' within us is not at least not made use for the good of the human being or the society is the other most missed or ignored quality endowed to the human beings.

The lack of knowledge (Awareness), unwillingness and inability of believing in strong enough (Acceptance) to do what oneself believes in (Adherence) has, in a way, been my own evolution as a human being, eventually leading to *Spandan* (Heartbeat) approach. This has thus two facets. The first relates to my own learning about human nature over a period of time – that it is most difficult, as also, very easy to deal with others. The other relates to a plausible reason for such human nature and relationship – incredible human behaviour

Let me explain. .

At the end of nearly four decades of my efforts at understanding human behaviour (late 1990's) a, rather quixotic, lesson I have learnt was that dealing with others effectively was at once the most difficult as also the easiest task. Most difficult, as one can observe, is because of the highly unpredictable nature of human beings. How is it also the easiest task? The answer lies in the concept of *Spandan* – a word in Sanskrit *, the nearest expressions in English of which are throbbing, pulsation, vibration and echo. *Spandan* connotes a high level of empathy with others, so much so that one is able to anticipate the needs of others even without being asked. The Mother – Child relationship is a classic example in this respect. When the concerned individual or institution feels the necessity of being able to understand others and their needs through empathizing, then the wave length, equation, vibration is created. As a consequence, lessened misunderstanding, increased appreciation and warmer interpersonal relations, better working conditions, higher productivity and commitment characterize the given interpersonal relations and work situations. When the individual concerned is *willing* and able to develop such vibrations (*Spandan*) with others, therefore, dealing with others becomes an easy task.

This lesson on kindling the emotional bond of empathy in the self and others as a means of 'remaking' (Mahatma Gandhi) ourselves as human beings at individual and institutional levels has been instrumental in evolving *Spandan* (Heartbeat) approach. This approach, thus originates from the belief of the author about human beings. The

belief is that all human beings are innately divine. Their innate divinity is manifested through their basic goodness. The basic goodness of human beings is reflected through their desire to be of help to others; to do good without necessarily expecting any return or reward. The innate divinity, basic goodness and the intrinsic altruism of human beings are the crux of human existence. The belief in these three tenets is the driving force for human progress. Human interactions and activities based upon this belief is the touchstone for human harmony.

What all has been discussed appears easy enough to happen. As we are aware, however, human interactions and behaviour are thing other than easy and smooth, to say, the least. This brings us to the second facet, the incredibility in human nature. Human beings are incredible. They have innate divinity in them. They are basically good. They are therefore inclined to be of help to others- without always necessarily anticipating any return for their help.

From here itself, the human incredibility begins. Whether the human beings are aware of these noble qualities in them, or not, we are not sure. The nature and extent of awareness or otherwise of these qualities varies from person to person, time to time and place to place. This is the first incredibility in human beings.

Whenever and whoever is aware of these qualities, may or may not be making use of these qualities for the good of themselves and – more certainly of others. This is the second human incredibility.

Whenever and whoever is doing good to others, chances are that they overestimate the goodness they have done to others. This is the third incredibility.

When the human beings feel that the good they have done to others is not reciprocated properly, they may not be inclined to do good again in future. This is the fourth incredibility.

More important, however, is that this is the first occasion when human being is *wily nily* acting against the noble quality of doing good to others without necessarily looking forward for any return. This incredibility of being cautious and calculative while helping others on the part of a human being in turn erodes his basic goodness, the second noble quality endowed to him. This is the fifth incredibility of human beings.

The dent in one's basic goodness eats, over a period of time, the innate divinity in human beings. And sooner than later the divinity in human beings is replaced by the devilry. The childlike simple, innocent and inquisitive nature of human beings is eclipsed by childish impulsiveness, insensitivity and greed. This is the sixth incredibility of human beings. This also tragically symbolizes the self-negation by human beings of all the three major noble qualities, viz. innate divinity, basic goodness and intrinsic altruism, endowed upon them. These are the incredibility's which understandably have had been baffling – who else, human beings themselves! Galileo Galilei, the great scientist, for instance, states: "I do not feel obliged to believe

that the same God who has endowed us with sense, reason and intellect has intended us to forget them.”

The first dimension of human incredibility, we had been mentioning, about the human beings being at the same time being aware and unaware of their noble qualities. When we turn to the human beings unaware of their innate divinity, basic goodness and intrinsic altruism, it is not that they are really not aware of these qualities. They are aware, for some reasons or the other; they are not able to translate these attributes into action. The possible reasons could be inadequate strength of willingness and/ or inadequate possession of abilities consisting of knowledge and skills. They have, in other words, these qualities embedded in them; but not willing enough or able to project these qualities through their sayings and doings. As has been proved empirically more than once, awareness is not always accompanied by action. This is the seventh incredibility of human beings.

The question, then, is as to who should enable the human beings to ignite, rekindle, and activate the innate divinity, basic goodness and intrinsic altruism in them for the good of others. The others may help. The trigger however should come from within, the self. This truism is not always known to the human beings. This is the eighth incredibility of human beings.

What is the way out? A question, it is said, contains its own answer. The question posed earlier in the context of the eighth incredibility was, who should ‘activate’ the dormant goodness of human beings. The answer was ‘self.’ The way out is therefore to be the human beings themselves. The first step is thus to be taken by the human beings at their individual levels. Back to self, has not surprisingly become, so to say, a buzzword!

Spandan approach of remaking ourselves as human beings in relation to others consists of experiential learning. Experiential Learning consists of introspection by self and feedback by others on any specific issue, so that proper insights are obtained on the said issue (Diagnosis), the nature and extent of the ‘existence’ of the issue is assessed (Discovery), and, suitable ways and means are thought of to deal with it (Development). The person doing introspection is Focal Person. The person(s) offering feedback are Resource Person(s). The resource persons could be parents, and relatives; friends and well wishers; teachers and superiors; and, bosses, colleagues and peers, and subordinates in a work situation.

The condition necessary to be a focal person, as stated, is the ‘felt need’ – the feeling that (s)he needs to change (Awareness), the urge to change (Acceptance) and undertaking action to change (Adherence).

The conditions necessary for persons to be effective as resource persons are: Their being close and aware of the given focal person, situation and the issue (Awareness); their interest and involvement in the growth of the given focal person (Willingness); and, their being able to be free and frank when needed in offering their feedback

(Ability). Awareness, Willingness and Ability are thus the three critical components of an effective Resource Person.

The selection of the issue(s), resource person(s), timing and place are to be informal, spontaneous and open. It has been found that such interactions between and among the persons involved and interested in mutual growth go a long way in easing interpersonal relations and enhancing mutual understanding and respect.