



Time to 'Rekindle the Spirit of Ubuntu'

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'Ubuntu', a concept which originated in S. Africa in mid-19th century, is a Nguni Bantu term meaning 'humanity'. In common translation, 'Ubuntu' is taken as "I am because we are". It is based on a firm belief in universal bond between humans.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated to rekindle the spirit of Ubuntu as it makes sharing of COVID-19 data, knowledge and research essential. The only way humanity can stand up to the challenge posed by SARS-CoV2 is by means of universal brotherhood and cooperation despite territorial disputes, political/religious/ideological differences and unending desire for world dominance.

Globally, exemplary collaboration is currently required with regards to sharing of scientific knowledge, real time COVID-19 data, research findings, pharmaceutical raw materials and trained manpower, medical equipment and supplies and soon, for monoclonal antibody or vaccine development and subsequently ensuring its availability at affordable prices to the most vulnerable sections of the society in the most underdeveloped nations. This is the time when the privileged need to get out of their comfort zones and rediscover their true worth which is not measured by the riches they enjoy; but by the extent and impact of humanitarian work they can carry out at a time when humanity needs them the most. Nations need to realize that they cannot ensure safety of their citizens until each and every citizen of the world is protected. This is the actual meaning of the term 'world community' which we have often taken for granted in our selfish pursuits. We are all in this together and our greatest failure would be in not recognizing this aspect. Each one of us have a limited time on Earth and the earlier we unite to liberate ourselves from the challenge posed by the ongoing pandemic; the more time each one of us would gift

one another to live and enjoy a fruitful life. International travel cannot be kept halted for long and is not in interest of any nation irrespective of its level of development. We must act timely to protect humankind universally.

Nationally, cooperation among states as regards to migrant population movement, essential goods transfer and domestic travel is a necessity taking, of course, all due precautions to prevent the spread of the virus. Different political parties need to work together irrespective of their ideologies in order to ensure their efforts yield desired results. This is, in fact, the right time to prove their dedication for the upliftment of the society, which is a promise they make to the voters prior to each election. If they can lead well in times of adversity, it would definitely have long lasting impact on their vote banks.

Locally, resident associations, friendly neighborhood groups and volunteers need to spread awareness on preventive strategies and ensure compliance of all advisories in order to reduce the spread of the invisible enemy. They must accept responsibility to lend support (medical as well as moral) to the elderly citizens living alone at this time of uncertainty.

As citizens, we must remember that the lives of our loved ones and our own selves are safe only if we ensure safety of others and their loved ones. This is the time where one would witness the well popularized cycle of 'what goes around comes around' in an expedited manner and, hopefully, this observation would impact the current fast-moving human race to take out time for some introspection. We need to empathize and not victimize the COVID-19 infected individuals. This is the time to actually come forward and help thy neighbors, friends and colleagues thereby

developing lifelong associations while physically distancing from them. We all must stay socially and morally connected.

Coordination, team spirit and team effort are required among all corona warriors may it be the healthcare workers, the police personnel, the executive or the essential service providers. Every city/village needs well organized coordinated set up and efforts to ensure delivery of adequate and timely healthcare services to those most in need. Each healthcare facility would be able to serve its purpose only if all those involved in the care of the needy coordinate, support and motivate each other. Employers and business heads need to not only ensure safe working environment but also proactively protect their employees from financial crisis which this ongoing pandemic threatens them with. This would go a long way in building up a team of loyal employees who would, in future, support and uplift the organizations wholeheartedly.

Collective responsibility and responsible behavior are the key to handle such unprecedented crisis. The more we are being required to be physically distanced, the more we should unite in spirit. No threat, however terrible it may appear, can defeat the universal spirit of 'Ubuntu'. Entire humanity is being put to test. Only, if we are able to '*Rekindle the Spirit of Ubuntu*' universally, would we be able to ensure victory of mankind. It requires coordination among various mindsets: world leaders/politicians/scientists/doctors/bureaucrats/epidemiologists/public health experts/businessmen/statisticians and indeed every human living on this Earth. If we are able to achieve *universal brotherhood* amidst COVID-19 crisis, future generations would quote this as an exemplary victory of humankind in midst of adversity.

Remember: "*I am because we are*".

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