

An Awakening Call to Save Our Animal Kingdom

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Ephesians 5:14a&b (KJV)- "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest" ...

We've all slept enough- permitted poaching, hunted endangered species for games and sports, cared less about even the captive animals in zoos and those in reserve parks and this has done nothing but cost us the health of our ecosystem and ours (as humans) too.

The question is, how has this ostensibly great devastation occurred?

To answer this, few out of a host of a myriad causes will be discussed.

One path that we as humans have trod upon in putting the animal world at risk is our indiscriminate felling of trees with little or no replacement. This vice has birthed many others havocs which include: global warming, wildfires, floods, etc. Each of these secondary havocs have also in one way or the other had adverse effects on the health of animals and man. For instance, global warming characterized by a world-wide increase in the temperature, favours many thermophilic pathogens' growth and spread that adversely affect the health of animals. Also, deforestation and its sequelae- wildfires, has also resulted in the huge loss of habitats for wild animals and in some cases, the loss of the animals themselves.

Another way this calamity has come about is the gross neglect of the overall welfare (expressed in the freedom from hunger & thirst, freedom from discomfort, freedom from pain, injury and disease and freedom to express natural behaviours) and health

of our animal kingdom. Over time and especially in low-income, under-developed or developing countries, little or in some cases no attention has been given to the health and welfare of domestic and wild animals owing to poverty, cultural beliefs, absence of laws that should protect the welfare of these animals and in some cases, when such laws are present, they are not enforced. As a result, majority of the population is doing nothing (in other words, 'sleeping') about the critical state of health of our animal world, oblivious of the fact that this nonchalance will birth boomeranging consequences on the human population eventually.

One other human vice that has led to this critical state is industrialization in the sense that many industrial wastes are churned out, in tonnes into water bodies, thereby endangering the health of many aquatic creatures. Over decades, since the developing era of industrialization with a continued poor disposal or recycling of wastes, as a major chunk of such wastes end up in aquatic bodies, many aquatic creatures have gone into extinction and many more have now become endangered.

It is important to add that a major impact of this woe on the human populace has been felt in the recent, gradual but arising increase in the incidence of zoonotic diseases in the world at large. This has been seen in the discovery of new strains of pre-existing infectious agents and newly discovered disease-causing pathogens.

Just from the above few points, it can be agreed conveniently that the human population globally has been 'sleeping' and needs to be 'awakened' to prevent the woe about to come upon us as a

result of neglecting this very vital and unreplaceable component of our ecosystem.

The question hence is this; “how do we get awakened and what do we as humans need to do to salvage what’s left of our animal kingdom?”.

It’s simple, though easier said than done. So, a lot of deliberate efforts must be put into carrying out these tasks to the details.

- First, laws should be enacted and strictly enforced in every region and nation, prohibiting poaching and deforestation without afforestation.
- Second, more livestock production improvement projects should be embarked upon by governmental and non-governmental agencies with the aim of increasing food supply to the human populace in high, middle and low-income countries, as this will eventually cause a diversion of interest in game/hunted animals to ideal food animals.
- Third, private, corporate and government agencies should get involved in establishing more zoos and reserve parks.
- Fourth, veterinary institutes should pay more attention to improving the general welfare and well-being of animals through vaccinations, prophylactic treatments and prompt treatments of sick animals.
- Finally, industries should pay more attention to recycling non-biodegradables, chemicals and radioactive wastes rather than releasing them into water bodies, directly or indirectly.

So, I say to every governmental and non-governmental agency, private individual, zoologist, ecologist, wildlife conservationist, animal scientist, veterinarian, para-veterinarian and all animal lovers all over the world, “Awake!”.

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