

How did we get here?

Reflections in time's of the Virus

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With the dawn of the new decade coloured by a virus, 2020 is going to go down history as a decade that ushered life-changing times. The virus apparently is old and seems to have been around since 1968, according to a latest article in BBC. Hoping in times of crisis for a miracle vaccine is only normal. Hoping things will go back to normal is also normal.

But we need to be prepared to accept that days of old normal is disappearing faster as the virus continue its joy ride around the globe. May be worshipping the temple of modernity presided by the trinity gods of Profit-Production and Consumption is also changing.

However, there is something missing in this picture. Caught in a bi-polar world of facts and science, Fake News and Marketing a simple question is not being asked. **How did we get here?** In a world of too much global connectivity, where did we go wrong, how did we miss the mega-wrong-turns compromising our lives to where we have ended up now.

These are considered irrelevant questions (and being irreverent) in times of such crisis of epic proportions. In the haste to put out the fire (agreed, fire of any kind-especially the *all-consuming* ones need putting out)I have been told raising such questions are *dangerous*. *It is indeed dangerous times we are living in*. We have *freedom*. We have *rights*. *But the Freedom*

and rights are cordoned off within the precincts of the “all-consuming” fire of Progress. Even if this Progress did set off the global metabolic system crash by literally eating up life-giving nature, (thus leading to a collapse of global immunity), asking questions about the fall of the Kingdom of Progress seem to be something the collective is not yet ready.

The fear that answers springing up from asking such questions might re-shape reality differently is very real. Re-defining Progress could well de-Throne the priests hoping to continue the old Normal.

I have to be optimistic. I hope moments of lucid thoughts arising amidst less frenzied existence of today’s lone-times might actually influence the collective to abandon the temple of meaningless Progress to embark on a new journey re-instating forgotten life tools from the forgotten-world of simple common-sense.

Recently I came across a talk by Bill Gates from 2011, post Ebola outbreak, with a title ‘Next Epidemic: We are not ready’

For Bill Gates, it may be the question of Vaccines. For me it is the question of global immune system. I am not using the term in the highly medicalised fashion. Any system is sick if its ability to fight back dwindles. Any increase in the cost expended to fight-back and keep a system alive is a good enough indicator that the world is exponentially getting sicker. And we don’t need any train smashing research to prove that world is in a sick state, even as the ‘Power Elite’ continue their pomposity of progress ignoring the rising dissent and planning escape missions to Mars

Our inability to SEE the interconnected bigger picture; our obsession for a technical quick fix and our fear of change seem

to be the three critical factors that has gotten us into this phase of what I call, 'The Great Unravelling'.

Global metabolism has been speeding up (fire raging) as the engines of production kicked-in leading to a post-war economic boom especially after the second world war. Reshaping the global economy to a pitch perfect market included designing the Individual as a super consumer.

By 1970s the plot thickend. Growth reigned supreme. Warnings of 'Limits to Growth' (Donella Meadows) was cast aside. Super confident technological break-throughs flattened forests and dredged the rivers, mining the guts out of the depths of life. Growth rough-shod, expanded. Globally constituted mechanisms aided growth, trade and expansion. In an increasingly globalised world, life simply got reduced to a mere act of endless consumption, endless individual right to consume, without a thought to the collective, to the larger social responsibility, towards an inclusive greater wellness, diverse and unique depending on the context.

South Africa is in no better stage when it comes to consumption. A report from the Department of Health from 2016 states that South Africa's obesity rates are increasing rapidly, and obesity related diseases are on the rise.

The escalating economic disparity, scaling up unemployment have not given the majority of South Africans any respite from the deeply embedded structural poverty. Large sections of the urban township communities living with immuno-compromised dis-eases are thus primed for any opportune viruses attack.

The knock on effect of a system-shock is here to stay much longer than anticipated. While the world's richest are scrambling to live in germ-free cabins and pods, with private

yachts, jets, island get-aways, the ordinary people in dense urban settings have no where to flee.

Our inability to see the bigger picture allowed us to be lost in the minutia, setting in motion a collective amnesia forgetting simple stuff of life that worked to keep the communities together. The more we got mired in this path, the greater the fear of any change.

Thus the Super Consumers across the world are currently in a state of perpetual-panic. The System that created this Super Consumer is getting a big shock by the virus. Sucking Vitality points out with every purchase is not going to be that easy when production-control systems are getting a big whack. The illusion of urban bliss, hoisted on the Super-Market syndrome of life is loosing control. Slowly the veil of Maya is being pulled away. What truly matters to life is being revealed.

The collective consciousness is being recalibrated as I write this. Strangely, the un-intended outcomes of the virus is already proving to be a blessing world wide. Community is being rebuild. Small joys of life, of sharing, slowing down is beginning to show results; from blue skies in China, to cooking simple healthy family meals, eating together is helping to regain time lost in endless drives, shopping, workaholic meetings, meaningless holidays for instagrams, conference-hoping etc. Time lost in busy-ness of life is being gained back for inward journeys, reflections and reminiscing on a life-lived-well. Taking back simple joys of life itself can work as an anti-dote to any mutating virus.

The internal healing from simply slowing down the global metabolism is a protocol that life's intelligence is forcing us to follow. A localised strategy, preparedness at community level, boosting local immune system in multiple ways and so much more yet to be discovered from the Great Unravelling will be

the game changer for new pathways to healing and survival at planetary scale in this new decade.

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We are not ready

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