

Locked In? Look Within!

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Abstract:

The present global lockdown over Coronavirus has brought life to a virtual standstill. Although such stagnation is deteriorative economically and politically, it might just be very progressive psychologically, because it offers an individual an opportunity to stop looking all around and start looking within. There are three aspects of looking within: Introspection, because it makes the individual self-aware and offers him or her the opportunity to come out of the stagnation with more energy. Familial ties, because therein lies his or her true emotionality – true strengths and weaknesses. This helps the individual to acquire a broader perspective, and place himself or herself in the world where he or she exists. Creativity, the interplay of introspection and social ties enables the individual to work out solution to his or her immediate problems in a creative manner. This boosts creativity and esthetic sense in the individual. This research paper tries to discuss all the three ideas associated with a lockdown.

Key Words: Looking Inwards, Real Social Life, The Resultant Creativity

Introduction

Much as the global lockdown over Coronavirus has disappointed the upwardly mobile class, it is in fact a blessing in disguise - at least psychologically, if not physically. The benefits of such an interval in a usually hectic life is threefold. First, it allows an individual to introspect. That is to say, it affords us the much-needed time to look backwards and see where we had been right and where we had been wrong until now. Second, it allows us to become social in the real sense. Although we have

always been in touch with our loved ones and friends through social media, the real joy of being together without the mediation of any gadget was something which we missed direly. This is something that one only realizes when one stops to think. Stopping to think was something which we simply couldn't afford until Coronavirus stopped us short of work. Third, it gives us a chance to become more creative, to look at life in terms of its esthetics rather than its productivity. This research essay delves in all the three blessings-in-disguise of this global

lockdown.

1. Looking Inward:

To introspect is to be aware of ourselves. The hectic life of today snatches away from us our self-awareness. Such a life makes us aware of the current affairs, politics, economics, corporate world, take-overs, diseases, fitness regimens, trends, and what not – but never does it allow us to become aware of our own selves. The benefits of introspection can never be overestimated.

The difference in human and non-human mindreading lies in the human ability to introspect, which is presumably lacking in non-human great apes. Defending an introspection-based ST account of human mindreading, recent findings in cognitive neuroscience strongly suggest that the attribution of mental states to self and others is indeed intertwined anatomically and functionally, both at an 'experiential' level and a more 'cognitive' level of neuronal functioning. (Focquaert et al, 2008).

Introspection is something that makes us human. It not only makes us more intelligent, it also gives us the ability to experience the immediate reality. A mechanical life that earns us just money without the day-to-day pleasant experiences is what we lived before the lockdown. With introspection, you realize that there is a whole cosmos in your heart

as well. There are avenues to explore, feelings to relate to, tastes to become aware of, ideas to put into practice, all of these are the realizations of silent hours of introspection.

2. Real Social Life:

Social life is bliss. A family and society offer security to an individual struggling to make a living in this cut-throat world. Nature has already ordained you professionals in your society. You have caring protection of a nurse in your mother, experienced guidance of a counselor in your father, understanding confidantes in your siblings, and varied thought-provokers in your cousins. A healthy relationship with your family and society empowers you to deal with the challenges of the world. The stories that you hear in your childhood, the games that you play in your teenage, the ideas that you exchange in your adulthood, are all afforded by the family and the society. In fact, without the support of the family, you wouldn't have been able to either complete your studies or become a working professional. Besides all the emotional support, the freedom to travel and see the world in the security of the family, the changing terrain of the earth while visiting distant relatives, the introduction to different ethos and cultures you come across when you visit them, are also the benefits of a healthy social life. This, you realize only when life comes to a standstill because of such pandemics as Covid-19. When was the

last time we had a good time with our family together for days on end? Probably during childhood. Time flies. You become adult, you become a professional, you become busy, and your family-life becomes non-existent. Not only does a busy life make you lonely, it even gives rise to depression in an individual. “Those who are lonely are often depressed, partly because the same genes influence loneliness and depression”(Matthews et al, 2016). Competition in the daily life of a professional also gives rise to aggression. When goals aren't met, when expectations are broken, when returns are less, aggression is the natural response in any human being. Only a healthy family life can preempt such an aggression in an individual. It is a loving family that gives the individual cooperation and support rather than competition.

3. The Resultant Creativity:

Creativity is the satisfaction you derive from leaving a good work of your own for posterity. It is the direct result of introspection and a healthy social life. That is to say, the result of positive interior as well as exterior cosmoses. We have already discussed about multiculturalism in a healthy social life. “Multicultural living experience may allow people to recognize that the same form, or surface behavior, has different functions and implications” (Leung et al., 2008). Good experiences within and without give rise to good taste which results in the development of the esthetic sense in an

individual. Esthetic sense is the ability to derive pleasure from things of beauty, and to think about beautiful things, and to put your beautiful thoughts into practice – be it in the form of works of art, well-thought work of charity, written pieces of literature, or even interesting day-to-day conversation. Any creative work needs to be beautiful in order to be accepted in the society. Esthetics is also a social phenomenon. One thing that is regarded as beautiful in one culture, may not be regarded as beautiful in another culture. Multiculturalism offers us the ability to make our creativity more and more universally accepted. Having had the multicultural experience in the past, and introspecting upon its minute details in the times of this lockdown, gives us the perspective on how to make our thinking, action, or piece of work more acceptable to those cultures. You come to realize why something was normal in your family, and why it was looked down upon in the family of a distant cousin. You get the idea about the thought process that went behind making the particular behavior acceptable in one culture and unacceptable in the other. This kind of introspection gives you the opportunity to think about a new pattern of behavior that is probably acceptable across all cultures. Your thinking expands and your acceptability expands too. This automatically results in your creativity being acceptable to a wider audience. This lockdown, therefore, offers us the best opportunity to fine tune our

creativity as well.

Conclusion

We have seen how the lockdown is useful for introspection and family life. We have also seen how proper use of both these opportunities has the potential to sharpen our creativity. Lockdown is certainly not as rosy as this essay suggests. It has its own bitter experiences as well. In fact, to an unprepared mind, all its experiences are bitter. Looking at the hoarding that is taking place, the beatings at the hands of the police, the unavailability of certain goods in the market which aren't considered essential goods, the longing to go on a social visit or a long drive with your loved ones, every such thing adds up to make this lockdown a bitter experience. The only solution that is possible right now is to look within. Once you have somehow trained yourself to expect less from without, and more from within, the worlds – or cosmoses – discussed above will become visible to you. You will find the best friend in yourself through introspection. You will become grateful for the past experiences that you had with your society in your wonder-years. You will want to open up in front of your family more and more—an ability that was inborn in you but the hectic life that you had been pursuing had snatched it away from you. You will come to realize that your parents, siblings, children, and – most importantly – your spouse, had never been the nuisance or disturbance your hectic life had projected

them to be. Your world will become full of lively human beings rather than being full of lifeless gadgets. Even the use of gadgets will possess a more human aspect than it previously did. Your thinking, your speech, your actions and your work will become more creative. Your thinking will become more positive, your actions more fruitful, your work more beautiful. You will be alone but not lonely. Your actions will become strong but not laborious. Your work will become attractive and life-changing for others. With just a little bit of perseverance, you will be a changed person. A person who will be able to bounce back to his or her productive best when this lockdown is over. All this will happen only when you make the most of these days by looking within. So, until the outside world beckons you for more strife, stay home, and look at the inside world, and experience the positives of it. You won't repent, and you will come out of it with renewed energy.

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