

# YEARNING FOR CHANGE

BY YARON BARZILAY



**T**here are many in the world today who are yearning for change. They want to see the world change, to become capable of addressing the current burning issues; capable not only of spotting the problems, but also to offer valid solutions and, above all, to materialize them.

It really doesn't take much to list the main issues the world at large is facing today, and those which we may face very shortly. There might be even greater problems which are as yet not so visible, but might be the root for what is more easily seen. Among them we may suggest ignorance and materialism for example.

Global organizations, such as the United Nations with its various dedicated committees, sometimes seem to serve a different agenda than that which they were originally created for, or are simply unable to agree on the necessary direct action. Issues such as the water crises, global warming, the growing number of devastating arms and poverty, to name but a few, are left with no answer at all. We are destroying the world with our own hands, while those who have the power often seem to cynically deny these matters.

There are, of course, numerous individuals and organizations that are doing wonderful dedicated work to address these problems, though it often seems that their efforts are not enough to root them out as we continue to face the same issues, sometimes with even greater gravity.

We cannot fall to despair as we simply do not have the privilege to do so. Nor would it be very philosophical to lose hope and faith in the human capacity to grow and overcome challenges. The love of wisdom underlines an everlasting possibility to move forward and upward. Hope forever remains in Pandora's Box, always within man's reach. But hope alone will not redeem the world if humanity remains idle, unwilling to change.

Perhaps the attempt to change the world by forming new frameworks, new global organizations that might agree and act in the right direction, is not sufficient. It is needed, no doubt. But is it enough? Can we really change the world for the better by relying on new agreements to be signed and followed while man himself, who is the very cause of most of the world's troubles, remains the same? Can we really agree to act together as one and implement even the most obvious needful steps? In

today's global world, can a real solution be applied only in parts of the world, while others resist?

Are we to wait until a real calamity hits, a catastrophe, at such a scale that we will not have any choice but to act? Or maybe we shall finally unite to confront some ill seeking aliens, as often suggested by Hollywood screen writers. Well, such action would result from having greatly suffered; not from our intelligence, our ability to foresee and guide. Yet the urgency to act is actual and real.

It is quite clear that Gandhi's words about being the change we wish to see in the world truly resonates with a solid truth. We cannot demand the world to change, without ourselves becoming the change we seek. Rather than focusing exclusively on external global solutions, we must also pay attention to our own individual ability to change, perhaps giving it even greater importance, because again, what's the use of having a perfect system in place, if the man that runs it remains the same?

It goes without saying that by "to be the change" we mean: for the better...of course, if we want to change the world, unless we are extremely fanatic, it is for the better. Yet, it is important to clarify this for ourselves, because a change just for the sake of change, can lead us to a much worse situation. We must find a direction, forward and upward, and through us, the world around us. In the words of Prof. Jorge Ángel Livraga, the founder of New Acropolis, we seek a new and better world, by new and better human beings.

Can we imagine ourselves better? Not more of the same, with some additional gadgets, technology and stricter laws. But better - with new virtues and abilities, higher awareness, closer to the archetypes of Justice, Truth, Beauty and Goodness, as spoken of by Plato and many other respected philosophers. Are we able to imagine ourselves with the virtues we are yet to awaken? Do we have faith in ourselves, in our common destiny as humanity? Is how we see ourselves today, all we are capable of being? Not to have, but to be...

Can't we imagine ourselves better? If we can, we already perceive what we are to become and, therefore, are linked to it. Our task then, is to walk the path towards it, to act everyday in the light of what we already know to be right deep within, and invite anyone who is willing to listen, anyone who shares in this yearning for change in himself, and in the world.

This is not an instant solution, if such a solution exists at all, nor is it easy...but it is a valid solution - maybe the only valid direction to take. It seems that wherever man is, there is a complexity, nothing is really so simple. But there is always reason for hope because essentially Man, as all the ancient traditions explain, is much more than flesh and bones that simply disappear into the void; Man, they say, is also a spiritual being, a transient stage towards unimaginable glory, a bridge between heaven and earth, spirit and matter.

Philosophy, as a way of life, has a wonderful and precious contribution to make. It brings us closer to the eternal archetypes of life and thus makes us more alive. It helps us to perceive in our own capacity, that life has a direction and a purpose... it moves and evolves. One may call it *Dharma*, another might call it destiny, a meaning, or a path. Philosophy shows us the way which we must follow, the change we wish for. It helps us discover that we always carry with us hope in the box, much more important than all the evils we might be carrying. It is a light that clears all shadows. It is for us to be that hope for the world. To be a philosopher is to be an idealist, a man of virtue.

Some may argue that philosophy is un-practical. Others say that it is the only practical solution. It is definitely a wonderful adventure – one that stands for the banner of change – to change ourselves for the new, and the better...to look upwards for change, as profound change always comes from above. ★★★

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Yaron Barzilay is the National Director of New Acropolis Cultural Organization (Mumbai, India.)

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