

ZULF'S NOTE ON ACHIEVABILITY OF GLOBAL LIFE SATISFACTION BY MY EFFORTS

ZULFIKAR MOINUDDIN AHMED

Martin Seligman, the father of positive psychology impressed me with his erudition and his commitment to a better world. He's a Princeton man as well, and I do have a soft spot for Princeton people. I feel closer to my death now at 48 than I used to, and I prepare for my final acts. Gautam Buddha is a constant inspiration, and he sought answers to end of suffering. He gave ways to reach nirvana. Now nirvana perhaps a state that is quite extraordinary. I have slightly less ambitious goals. I would like to improve Global Life Satisfaction for 8 billion. The problems are similar, the one I consider and the one Buddha considered. He examined the world and found suffering; I have done the same. He was overcome with passions that led him to abandon all his material possessions; I have done the same in 2008. But unlike him, my path leads to a different approach, and that is improvement of Global Life Satisfaction by *psychology-technology entrepreneurial venture*. So a couple of years ago I registered with IncFile a company Thyself Inc. to address originally self-understanding.

As I say elsewhere, I am not Gautam Buddha. I am Zulfikar Moinuddin Ahmed. I address similar problems to Buddha, however, and have many issues on which we will converge; but inevitably there will be other issues in which we will be radically different. Our goals are the same. We would like suffering to decrease for our Beloved People the Human Race.

1. BUDDHA WAS A GREAT MAN

In the modern times people do not respect Buddha enough. He was a true genuine natural king. He happened to have been of royal birth, and he gave up all his possessions to seek answers to fundamental questions and became a mendicant. In order to put things in proper context, I would say the entire play Hamlet was on the subtle conflicts that one has to overcome to become a King from a Prince. Hamlet, who asked whether it is nobler to *either* suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune presumably meekly *or* take up arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them, was paralysed for Buddha did both quite naturally and quite differently than Hamlet might have.

The greatness of Buddha is not so apparent from the West at a distance, but the concepts and ideas and images that were his legacy infuses Bengali language and culture deeply and all Indian languages and literature. Some six centuries before Christ, the lands affected by Buddha were in contemplation of the deepest experiences of the inner heart of human beings, when England was still quite hunting and gathering and considering tribal strife. Many of the concepts of spirituality introduced by Buddha for the first time in human history were able to bring peace

Date: July 5, 2021.

to entire subcontinent. One has to put this in comparison to Europe where since Fall of Rome there was no end to strife and bloodshed all the way to Second World War. The issue is not just about culture and bad and good, but the genius of Buddha in literally *inventing* concepts that would bring peace and turn attention inward is underappreciated today. One has to give credit to great genius wherever we find them. I do not believe West has ever produced a spiritual genius who is equal to Buddha at all in its entire history. Western Theologians were concerned about different issues than Buddha.

2. CHRISTIANITY WAS SOPHISTICATED

Christianity is spiritually sophisticated in West, but Jesus Christ was a brown boy from Bethlehem, and spirituality of Christians slowly spread from East to Roman Empire eventually around 800-900 AD Western Monarchs adopted Christianity for the European peoples. Sophistication in spirituality is not exactly a Western innovation.

Now having said that I am profoundly impressed by Romantic Moderns in the West, especially Rainer Maria Rilke and consider him to be a Great Prophet. His individual spiritual genius is just astronomical, and to be quite honest, he was an anomaly in the West. West does not like spirituality all that much. West likes activity, wealth, power, ostentation, movement, the control of the external world, invention, etc. These things have some value, I will admit.

3. OUR STEPS TO LIFTING LIFE SATISFACTION FOR EIGHT BILLION

The established method in technology is at the polar opposite of our approach. There product ideas are tested with fast experiments to determine viability of product ideas.

We take a much grander and slower approach. We are much more classical. We do not rely on customer acceptance on being right or wrong. Instead we use much more scientific approaches of establishing that human nature has universality, and then we infer from psychological studies that life satisfaction can be improved for all eight billion people, regardless of their configuration.

Let us pause to understand how this is so. Marie-Rose Degg has the following model, roughly for life satisfaction.

$$(1) \quad LS = 0.08x_{Interpersonal} + 0.24x_{Intellectual} + 0.36x_{EmotionalSpiritual} + 0.33x_{Restraint}$$

She estimated the coefficients with $N = 420$ samples. Our method is to note the strength of coefficients and inferring that we can improve anyone's life satisfaction by improving Emotional-Spiritual or Restraint character virtues *universally and for everyone*.

We are thus not interested as much as most technology startups on experimentation. What will experimentation show us? It will show us that a particular method of attracting small groups of people lead to a life satisfaction improvement program giving success. We don't care about this. That's not interesting to us because our goal is life satisfaction improvement for eight billion people.

Therefore our focus ought to be on ensuring the hardware infrastructure is feasible to serve all eight billion people without failures of taking too long or breaking down when all eight billion are being served.

We can't afford to do that by Amazon EC2. One option here is a 1000-2000+ node hardware cluster in a San Francisco warehouse with sufficient T1 lines to serve 8 billion in an efficient manner and a lightweight application whose focus is the substance of what the individual can actually accomplish to improve his or her life satisfaction via character strengths.

Our goal is existentially interesting, to improve life satisfaction for the human race. We do not need market testing and proof and other rubbish. We need to produce a solution that is a service to the human race. Then we will find some compensation along the way and that's a minor issue.

4. QUANTITATIVE EASE OF LIFE SATISFACTION ACCOMPANIES REAL DIFFICULTIES

The true difficulty of improving life satisfaction for eight billion exist. Let us assume that we have solved delivery of some Meteor apps that target weak spots on the 24 variables of character strengths. Let's say we deliver to everyone, it's popular, and people are using and paying for it.

With the above situation in place, we face first real challenges of this problem. They are significant.

First, the 24 variables have a strong evolutionary genetic component, and that means that stretching them requires real effort for anyone. In other words, from a technical point of view I expect a large deviation principle to hold and

$$P(\|x - \bar{x}\|_2 > \varepsilon) \leq Ce^{-a\|x - \bar{x}\|_2^2}$$

ought to hold. We thus have some natural barriers to how much we can move some of these values.

Second, the Ancients had produced a virtue theory based on habituation and emulation, and we have to be very careful that we are actually giving subtle and good paths that will actually lead to higher virtues and not produce a frustrating waste of time and effort for people.

Third, people are rather skeptical about claims of people who are not close to them and some of the arena we will touch are intimate and private. In this case the natural response of people is to dismiss organised commercial efforts as untrustworthy. We need people to trust us enough to overcome inertia and laziness.

These will require some experience by very good people to handle in a massive scale, people who are both totally committed to raising life satisfaction and extraordinarily skilled in managing massive statistical situation.

Success is guaranteed in the long run, but the challenges are not easy or standard.