Create Wellbeing not just Wealth

BY SADHGURU

What we need in the world is not just wealth creation. We need to create wellbeing. Wealth is just one of the tools towards human wellbeing, not the whole of it. But right now people are pursuing it like religion. We have turned money into God and we are pursuing it relentlessly. Money is just a means; it is not an end by itself. We created it for our convenience, but in pursuit of wealth creation we are destroying the very planet on which we live. Whether you make a safety pin or you build a computer or a car or some great machine, whatever you do, you are digging it out of the planet. We must decide how much to dig. We must also think of how much Mother Earth can take.

If we are not sensible about this we may completely destroy the planet with our ideas of wealth creation, which we are doing today in many ways. Instead of thinking of wealth creation if we think of creating human wellbeing we would just do whatever is needed and to the extent it is needed.

We must first understand what our idea of wealth is. Is it just about more buildings, more machines, more cars - more of everything? More and more is death, isn’t it? In the most affluent societies in the world - for example in the United States of America - 43 per cent of the population is on antidepressants on a regular basis. If you just withdraw one particular medication from the market almost half the nation will go crazy. That is not wellbeing. Generally, an American citizen has everything that anybody would dream of. There is wealth, but no wellbeing; what are you going to do with this wealth?

If I go to the West and ask them, ‘Why don’t you meditate?’ the common statement everywhere is ‘Oh! But we’ve got to pay bills.’

I said, ‘Why do you guys generate so many bills? If your whole life is about paying bills, why generate those damn bills? You can curtail yourself and live more comfortably, isn’t it? To pay all those bills you are just working endlessly. What is the point?’

‘No, the whole society is doing it.’

It doesn’t matter; they are driven by somebody else. If you have any sense, you must drive yourself to the extent that you are comfortable. There maybe somebody who can do a thousand things in a day without suffering or being stressed. Maybe you can do only three things in a day; it’s okay. You don’t try to do what somebody else does. This is the biggest problem; we are trying to do things like somebody else.

When it comes to outside situations, no two human beings have come with the same level of capability. Your neighbour may have a 100-bedroom house; maybe he likes to live in a hotel. For yourself, you must decide how much; you don’t do things like him. Trying to do things like somebody else is the wrong way to approach life. We need to decide how much of what we should do in our lives - how much outside activity or inner wellbeing or social wellbeing would keep our life balanced without ruining us and the atmosphere around us. But unfortunately that intelligence is missing. It is insane the way we are going because that kind of lifestyle is just not sustainable. It can only crash and we will have to learn the lesson the hard way. Today we are almost 7 billion people. This is the largest human population ever and in nurturing this kind of population many other species on the planet have become extinct. The projected population in 2050 is 9.5 billion people. Can you imagine the world with 9.5 billion people in just another four decades?

Either we correct this ourselves or nature will do the correction. If nature does the correction, it is going to be very cruel. The choice that we have is to either live sensibly or senselessly. The choice is not about wealth and poverty. The choice is between expressing our needs and finding fulfilment in a sensible way or in a blatant manner.

(Sadhguru, a yogi, is a visionary, humanitarian and a spiritual leader. An author, poet, and internationally-renowned speaker, Sadhguru’s wit and piercing logic provoke and widen our perception of life. www.ishafoundation.org)