

DISEMBODIED VOICES

II

J.B. Drori

Comments from readers of our blogs are both encouraging and informative. Encouraging, because that's how we know we're 'not speaking to the wilderness'. Informative, because comments invariably lead to a clarification of a point, development of an idea, or an exploration of an alternative precept.

In response to my previous blog on DISEMBODIED VOICES, one reader opined that people have actually become virtual beings not just turning into ones, as was posed by my question.

I hope he's not right.

For if he is, it means that too many of us have already become hardened in the heat and friction of the cyber 'oven' and are indifferent to the welfare of their fellow humans.

It's true that the ubiquitous good manners and courtesy of old are now infrequently witnessed. Short tempers, rude responses, and rejections of our requests in flat metronomic cadence occur ever more often on the telephone, and increasingly so in person. If this attitude deepens and spreads and it becomes the norm, and we all become inured to this behavior, the community would assume a savage quality that ultimately would resist reversal, spawning intolerable conditions for an enlightened society.

Another reader, in commenting on my blog, OUR DAILY MASKS – PART TWO, observed that it is impossible for anybody to ever fully know himself, contrary to Socrates' adage of 'Know thyself.'

This reader believes that for self-preservation the mind protects itself from fully understanding the truth about oneself.

I have not ever come across such a notion. To my knowledge, no hypothesis or rational analysis of such an idea has ever been put forward. Everything that's been written and taught about the mind, psychological structure and functions, human behavior and conditioning, have pointed to the opposite conclusion. Self knowledge promotes self awareness and ego strength.

Neither Socrates nor anyone else ever suggested that knowing ‘everything there is to know’ about the self is feasible. No more than it is possible to know everything about computer science, mathematics or physics. Indeed, it is now postulated, based on indirect observations and measurements, that only about 5% of all matter and energy in the universe is actually known. The rest, about 95%, termed Dark Matter and Dark Energy, remains totally unknown.

It should be emphasized that knowing one’s core values, the basic tenets of the meaning of life, far from exceeds normal human capacity for learning.