

Chapter 22

Ubuntu Philosophy: ‘I Am Because We Are’ – A Road to ‘Individualism’ to Global Solidarity

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ABSTRACT

This chapter is guided by, informed by, and deals with the Indigenous African faith Ubuntu, which is translated as “I am because we are.” When we are nearing the new normal, we feel that the sense of individualism, consumerism, Eurocentric “self,” and “making self” should be replaced by a common principle of solidarity. In the new value, “I” will be merged into “we”—and “ours.” The whole study evolved with three simple questions: What is Ubuntu is? And Why and how can Ubuntu be a vector and vantage for the new normal? Tracing back to 1846, this discussion concludes that Ubuntu is a more appropriate way of establishing a just, harmonized, and rights-based society.

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I am not Jewish, and I am not Catholic, I am not Muslim; I do not know what I am. I am a part of peace as I know I belong to the community (a Rakhain Indigenous healer of Bangladesh).

...for we cannot very well state any problem until we know whose problem it is C. Wright Mills, The Sociological Imagination...

BACKGROUND

Since 1927, Albert Victor Murray saw the school in an African bush. He says, Ubuntu is “binding together of the tribe occupying the same land, the sense of a deathless society of which the chief is the living emblem, the feeling of common humanity, Ubuntu, which recognizes in every man in the community a man and a brother (Murry, 1967,p.39/1929).” Ubuntu appeared in the text in 1846 (Gade, 2011) and evolved as a unique philosophy beyond the African region. As a traditional African concept, Ubuntu was deemed to be one of the founding values of the new republic of South Africa and connected to the African Reformation vision (Mandela, 1995). A rough translation of Ubuntu’s principle is “humanity to others.” Another translation might be: “faith in a universal sharing bond that links all humanity.” In South Africa, it is synonymous with humanitarian philosophy, ethics, or ideology. Commonly established as Ubuntuism--proliferated in the process of Africanization (transition to majority rule) in the 1960s and 1990s (Mangina, 2016; Mandela, 1995). Ubuntuism become popular outside South Africa because Nelson Mandela led the transition to democracy in South Africa in 1994, mainly through Rev. Desmond Tutu Ubuntu (2012). In the meaning of Ubuntu, an individual’s existence is merged in ‘we’—based on a proper self-assurance that he or she belongs to a higher position. Tutu’s assertion gives a reduction when others are insulting or belittling others when they are mistreated (Tutu, 1999). Not only as a community approach or an ethical code, but Ubuntu also established itself as an academic discourse and discursive practice in international diplomacy to local primary education. Such as it is central to a nation’s decisive level (Mandela, 1995), an ethical concern in academic research (Mangena, 2016; Waghid, 2018), as political (Chimakonam&Nweke, 2018; Chimakonam, 2016), social (Qobo& Nyathi, 2016), educational (Mangina, 2016; Gade, 2012), environmental (Chibvongodze, 2016) diplomatic guidelines (Edozie, 2017; Parmar&Ledwidge, 2017). UN Secretary-General AntónioGuterres said that this Covid pandemic is an x-ray that shows almost all states’ skulls? True. Nevertheless, by May 11, 2021, the death toll raised at 3,317,043¹ dropped dead. And when states are in the sentiment of vaccinationism. Can some claim, “*I am secured*” an anthropologist, scientist, politician? Ora scientist or security guard? What is the safeguard and the life-bouy? Of course, we are not expecting a divine intervention? Needless to mention the rapid travelling history of C-19 from to the world.

Worldwide catastrophes such as the COVID-19 pandemics incredibly uncommon in the collective memory:... Already scientists predict another pandemic within a decade (The Gardin, 2020). Perhaps, this is a time to rethink our old and the future.

Trinity professor sally Davies aptly says,

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