

Are We, Humans, Really Civilize?

(Or, are we for the birds?)

By Philip S. Chua, M.D.*

I was driving to work one early morning a few years ago in Munster, Indiana, when I noticed a flock of Canada geese flying against a beautiful backdrop of a golden orange rising sun that was eagerly peering over the clear horizon. The picturesque scene became even more poignant when I observed that the geese were flying in a perfect reversed V-formation. One seemed to be the leader of the pack, at the very apex, and the rest, in an orderly fashion followed in a reversed V-formation. At one point, another goose flew ahead and assumed the “leadership” at the apex of the V. When the “leader” got tired, another flew to the apex, the former “leader” went behind the flank. They seemed to each take turn. Everything was smooth and easy flying, and quite orderly.

The reason came back to me as I recalled a book I once read. Birds, in general, have the instinct to know that the wind they fly against offers most aerodynamic resistance if they fly alone or on a straight frontal line. Flying in a reversed V-formation, with the apex cutting through the headwind, makes it a lot easier for the others behind to fly. The “leader” at the apex gets the most wind resistance, and less and lesser for those behind, who are covered by the birds in front of them. And all of this appears to take place in an organized fashion, with no hesitation, no delays, no bickering, no pushing, no wrangling, as if each bird knew precisely its individual role and was graciously compliant.

How I wish we, humans, self-proclaimed the most civilized and most intelligent of all creatures on the planet earth, would be as “civilized, compassionate, considerate, and orderly” as these birds. Imagine how wonderful it would be if we, brothers and sisters of the world, would stop fighting, hurting, destroying and killing each other, and instead, understand, accept, help and protect each other like these flying creatures of God.

Obviously, the transformation will not be easy, as the history of man has so far shown us. But human beings better start soon, even a little bit each year or each decade, before we unwittingly blow each other up, together with Mother Earth, into shameful particles, bits and pieces, of historical ashes in the galaxy. The only legacy our species would leave behind then would be our Homo Sapiens stupidity.

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