

Making friends with enemies

M A KASHEM

THE other day I found a gem in dust. Just out of as usual curiosity I took an old book from a store in Nilket, Dhaka. The book is titled Making Friends of Enemies deals with one of the Jesus Christ's most famous sermon – "Love your enemies."

The book deals with a forgotten teaching that may play a vital role in resolving a lot of contemporary problems. If we can redesign and reshape our saying, doing and showing in the light of that teaching, we will be able to handle many of our present day crises in a better way.

Twice in the gospels Jesus is quoted on this remarkable teaching:

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and to him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your coat as well. Give to everyone who begs from you; and of him who takes away your goods, do not ask them again. As you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

Perhaps it is one of the most celebrated teachings of Jesus Christ. But when it comes to practice critics often raise questions that include the following: Is it realistic? Can a flesh and blood follow it in real life?

Even though such questions often undermine its highly regarded spiritual values more or less, its strength as a sacred

guideline remains intact.

Anyway according to the interpretation of the book what Jesus does is love. And the author Jim Forest points out that love is linked with reconciliation, but reconciliation is a word rarely used and often misunderstood. For some it means making a private peace with what is wrong in the world, accepting the status quo, smoothing over differences, and being friendly at all costs.

I can't resist myself quoting Jim Forest as he writes: Reconciliation means the restoration of community that has broken and seems beyond repair. It is the healing of our deepest wounds. By reckoning to Martin Luther king's famous speech 'I have a dream' he interprets his own view this way:

Reconciliation is not only a word describing what will be, but also a reality that already exists. Even now, in all our fractured and broken relationships, we are profoundly interconnected and interdependent. None of us could live without the help of countless others. Everything we have, not only material things, but our words, our ideas, our skills, our faith, the music and stories which give courage and understanding and which delight the heart-everything we have has been given to us by others.

The author quotes Thomas Merton who said, 'We are already one, but imagine that we are not. What we have to recover is our original unity.'

I feel that we need this sense of unity to overcome so many hurdles of our everyday life. By trying to make friend-

ship with our enemies, we could materialize part of its essence. At the same time in our national life it has become a need of the hour. If we want to avoid a civil war, if we really believe that a very fruitful dialogue is essential to get out of the current political impasse or if we want to deal with some of our chronic socio-economic problems more efficiently in a peaceful way we need to evaluate the inherent meaning of the sermon.

In this context management guru Peter Drucker was right in saying that 'the most important thing in communication is hearing what isn't said.'

But the question remains unanswered: How can we make it happen? How can we turn a foe into a friend? In the age of internet it is easy to find a huge amount of tips on the topic. But making practical progress is rather difficult if not impossible. However, if we follow a diagnostic approach to detect accurately the problem first and then go for solution part by part it may appear in an easier form.

To shed another light on the issue I would like to remember Abraham Lincoln who said: I destroy my enemies by making them my friends.

I think we will be benefited if we can relate the inherent meaning of such words as well as the biblical teachings with our attempts to solve much of our mundane everyday problems. Our attitude regarding our enemy has to be changed at least in a time when we targeted fruitful dialogue as a panacea for so many social ills. Our search, to find a peace-

ful way to avoid conflicts, may take a new shape if we reset our as usual mood of action, attitude etc with the light of such out of the box thinking.

In the international scene the good news is that 'making friends with the enemy approach' is working. There is no cold war. Most recently the US and Russia are working together to end Syrian civil war. Even when a war like situation prevails sensible diplomats always keep the dialogue as a preferable option on the table. In Bangladesh also we have seen it in the past that our top leaders sat together to reach a consensus about the peaceful means of fair election as well as power sharing.

Amidst all the troubles our quest for a meaningful dialogue is very much alive and its demand is getting stronger day by day. It is a good sign or the first step to reach the long awaited destination.

By and large we can hope that a national reconciliation will be made one way or another

For that every one of us has to act in collaboration with our existing friends and partners home and abroad. And the real progress will be made if we can turn our foes into friends. Thus we can redouble our strength and halve our weaknesses and threats.

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Oscillations and resonance in nature

QUAMRUL HAIDER

IT is said that Tansen, the legendary composer of Indian classical music and one of the nine jewels of the Mughal Kingw Akbar, shattered most of the glasses in the court with the recital of Deepak raga. On July 1, 1949, the Tacoma Narrows Bridge in Washington, USA started to sway vertically and subsequently collapsed. The high tide in the Bay of Fundy in Canada averages 11 meters. What is the feature common to all these phenomena? It is physics in action, resonance oscillation in particular.

When an object is displaced from its equilibrium position and released, it oscillates back and forth about the equilibrium position. One of the most recognizable characteristics of oscillatory motion is that the motion repeats itself at regular time interval called period. As the motion is repetitive, we call it "periodic motion." The other characteristic of such motions is frequency (inverse of the period) – the number of oscillations per second.

Most of the things in nature oscillate (vibrate) at a characteristic (natural) frequency or frequencies. Some familiar examples are the motions of the pendulum of a clock and playground swing, up and down motion of small boats, ocean waves, and motion of the string or reeds on musical instruments. A healthy heart beats in periodic motion.

In all oscillatory motions, energy is dissipated because of

the presence of some kind of damping force. The amplitude (maximum displacement from the equilibrium position during a single period of oscillation) of a damped oscillator will decrease and motion will ultimately die. To maintain the oscillations, energy has to be fed into the system.

We then say that the motion is forced or driven. Children on swings pumping their feet or pendulum in clocks driven by coiled springs are examples of forced oscillation.

When an oscillator is driven at a frequency corresponding to a particular natural frequency, the oscillation is said to be in resonance. Energy is most efficiently supplied to an oscillator when the external driver acts at the resonance frequency.

Resonance phenomena play an important role in many practical situations. As an example, a child pumping a swing at the frequency equal to the natural frequency of the swing

will attain maximum height. Similarly, people trying to push a car stuck in snow or mud are most successful when they allow the car to rock back and forth and time their pushes appropriately.



65-80 kilometers per hour wind. In layman's terms, the wind induced resonance and produced vertical vibrations of the span with peak-to-peak motions of 1.5 meter. About an hour after the bridge started oscillating, the violent large-amplitude

Tansen could shatter glasses because when the frequency of sound from a singer's voice matches the natural frequency of a glass, there will be resonance with maximum transfer of energy to the glass. This transfer of energy can cause vibrations large enough to shatter a glass.

The power of resonance is not confined to shattering glasses only. A spectacular example of resonance oscillation is the collapse of the Tacoma Bridge caused by

motion led to its collapse into the waters of Puget Sound.

This is one of the reasons why soldiers crossing bridges do not walk in unison. They break step so that the frequency of their footsteps does not match the natural frequency of the bridge. Otherwise, they may set the bridge vibrating at resonance and perhaps cause its ultimate destruction.

Another interesting example of resonance can be witnessed in the enormous tides in Canada's Bay of Fundy in Nova Scotia. The time between successive high tides at the head of the bay is about 12.4 hours and the normal tidal surge averages 0.3 meter. But the period of oscillation of water waves as it sloshes back and forth in the bay is about 13 hours. Since the two periods, and hence the frequencies are nearly equal, large resonant amplitude occurs giving rise to 11-meter high tides.

In all these examples, there are both dissipative forces that reduce vibrations and external forces that supply energy. If there is a balance of these two energies, the amplitude of the motion will remain constant. If energy enters the system faster than it is dissipated, there will be disaster, as with glasses and Tacoma Narrows Bridge. If the energy does not enter the system at very nearly the right frequency, little or no vibrations occur, since the energy supplied is immediately dissipated.

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AVIAN RIDDLE

THREATENED



This new fossil, found in a Middle/Late Jurassic formation in China and named Aurornis xui, may be the earliest bird yet discovered; others argue it is a birdlike dinosaur.

Fossil muddies the origin of birds

A birdlike fossil that dates to roughly 155 million years ago is ruffling the feathers of some paleontologists. At issue is whether the fossil is a dinosaur, an early bird or something in between.

"This new animal is the most primitive bird in the world," says paleontologist Pascal Godefroit of the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences. He and an international team of colleagues describe the new specimen May 29 in Nature. The fossil comes from northeastern China's Taojishan formation and is named Aurornis xui.

Not everyone agrees with Godefroit's interpretation. "This is very birdlike, but it is not yet a bird," says paleontologist Luis

Chiappe of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County.

If Aurornis is in fact a bird, the specimen may have implications for scientists' view of Archaeopteryx, the most famous birdlike dinosaur (or dinosaur-like bird). A controversial 2011 paper argued that Archaeopteryx and two other specimens were feathered dinosaurs, not birds. But Godefroit's team proposes that Archaeopteryx is evolutionarily younger than the newly discovered Aurornis. So if Aurornis is on the bird lineage, as Godefroit argues, then Archaeopteryx should be, too.

There isn't any well-preserved plumage on the new specimen, but Godefroit says that the shapes of bones in the fossil's pelvic region are part of what make him think the animal was a bird.

Climate change

Lony Azadi, from Banani

Weather and climate are not the same. Weather is how hot, cold or wet a place is at a particular time. Climate is the average weather of an area over time. Several things decide the climate of an area, including how far it is from the Equator, how far from the sea, its height above sea level and its wind systems. The position of a place on an area of land and the size of that land area also affects the climate. Scientists divide the world into different climate regions: polar and tundra, temperate, tropical, desert and mountain.

The world's climate have changed naturally throughout history. For example, much of Europe and parts of Africa were covered by ice for 100,000 years during the last Ice Age, which ended 10,000 years ago. In recent times, scientists have become concerned that human activities, such as burning fossil fuels, are producing greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, and these are causing global warming.



BEETLE BAILY

by Mort Walker



ACROSS
1 Lehar's "Merry" one
6 "Non-sense!"
11 In one's dotage
12 Keyless
14 Squirm
15 Multitask, maybe
16 Before
17 Clio
19 Anti-
20 Dutch export
22 Custom-izable computer character
23 Diver
24 Dough-
26 Tell the tale
28 Scale member
30 Witness
31 Curve cutter
35 Diamond corners

39 Photog's choice
40 Fish eggs
42 Tick
43 Singer
44 DiFranco
46 "Ivanhoe" author
47 "— on parole
49 Seek a bargain
51 Ape
52 Kitchen gadget
53 Having great scope
54 Monica of tennis

DOWN
1 Eccentric
2 Ready to roll
3 Under-stand
4 —
5 Unwanted plants
6 Sleep-wear
7 Dazzle
8 Use unduly
9 Wool variety
10 Billfold
11 Saccha-rine
13 Sill
18 Hr.
21 Indispens-ables
23 Wonder-ful
25 "Mayday!"
27 Civil War soldier
29 Theft
31 Dieters' targets
32 Film director whose father was a painter
33 Baffler
34 Wine and dine, maybe
36 Elegantly main-tained
37 Bk. after Prov.
38 Vacation-er at Vail, probably
41 Group character
44 Metal refuse
45 Record-ing
48 Martini ingredi-ent
50 Solidify

Solution time: 27 mins.

N	A	T	A	L	O	R	B	F	A	B		
A	R	I	S	E	B	E	E	I	D	O		
G	E	N	T	I	E	J	I	N	G	L	E	S
P	A	L	G	A	R	D	E	N	R	E	P	S
I	D	E	M	S	E	C	A	T	T	A	B	T
G	O	S	E	E	K	A	H	A	D	O	E	S
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S	H	Y	D	O	S	L	A	S	T	S		

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