

Movements of consciousness based either on a philosophical, political, social, economic or theological construct are generally more successful when the focus is on interdependent multifaceted cooperation that is designed to work collaboratively to address issues of practical humanitarian concerns that transcend lines of philosophical, social, political, economic or theological demarcation.

Such movements almost, without exception, avoid a preoccupation with the minutiae of restrictive detail and procedural wrangling. Instead they address themselves to the real life concerns of survival, freedom, respect, self-determination, equity, and dignity.

While I was asked to focus on the consciousness movement in the U.S. that led to the dismantling of laws and practices of ethnic discrimination in the mid 20th century, it seems far more pressing in our current existential context to take notice of the freedom consciousness movement sweeping across North Africa and the Middle East.

In this current and deeply relevant context, analogous with the freedom movement in the middle of last century in the US, what is clearly evident and what is foundationally and fundamentally at the heart of history in the making, is the reality that the desire for freedom, respect and dignity is an hunger that cannot be satisfied by anything less than authentic and full freedom, respect and dignity.

The reason such movements tend to transcend normal lines of descriptive demarcation is that they quickly recognize that *no* single group has the capacity, power, connections, facilities or funds to address in a unilateral manner the comprehensive needs of a community of people who want to experience full liberation.

Thus in Egypt and in other places in North Africa and the Middle East Muslims, Christians, religious and non religious people, poor and rich, educated and uneducated, and members of different groups join together willing to lay aside their difference to fulfill their common desire for the greater good.

The desire for freedom, respect and dignity reflects physiological, psychological, economic, emotional and spiritual needs. The desire for freedom, respect and dignity is inextricably bound to the call for good governance thus the movements in U.S. in the mid 20th century were founded in the constitutionally based principle that assured the freedom to call for a change in governmental practices that prohibited the full expression of citizen access to full opportunity to engage in the rights and privileges afforded by the status of citizenship.

The best context for the development of full engagement of people in a civil and human rights agenda is the context of a government that respects constitutional and democratic rule of law. It is essential that nations and leaders should focus on strengthening the assurance of a constitutional and democratic context that respects and mandates civil and human rights. People all over the world should be able to infer that it is their inherent right and responsibility to insist that their governments and leaders accept and respect that they have a fundamental responsibility to assure that civil and human rights are

protected. Interestingly enough, it is the case that the individual and the nation are more economically prosperous when civil and human rights are respected and assured.

In North Africa and the Middle East there is a similar call for good governance that opens up the opportunities of full participation by all citizens. Thus it is fully comprehensible that women in North Africa and the Middle East, like U.S. women in the mid 20th century, are taking the risk of defying normative expectations and are joining and often leading the protest for full inclusion in shaping the emergence of good governance.

If one were to look carefully at the speeches and actions of Martin Luther King Jr. in the American context and the speeches and actions of Nelson Mandela in the South African context one would have to recognize that they were motivated by the belief that good governance is defined as governance that provides equal protection and full expression of human and civil rights. This was also the case with Gandhi in India.

The analogical similarity with what is happening in North Africa and the Middle East is crystal clear. In each of these instances there is evident of the appreciation for the need to work together across lines of normal demarcation to address the mandate that calls for good governance.

Broad based consciousness movements based on cooperation and collaboration allows people to move beyond the differences and around the barriers that often divide them and prevent them from seeing their common call to freedom, respect and dignity. Movements of consciousness based on a call for good governance invites communities and nations to dismantle barriers without losing sight of the richness of differences. It invites us to move beyond the barriers of race, ethnicity, and cultural differences without losing sight of the richness that diversity brings.