

# **Dr. Joseph Chemplavil –**

## **An Analog Life Transformed For A Digital Age –**

### **In his daughter's voice**

The civilized man has a fine Geneva watch, but he fails of the skill to tell the hour by the sun (Emerson: Self Reliance pg. 92). This statement reminds me of that which I admire most in my father and again I can see how culture can play an integral role both as spontaneous order and as a means to achieving self reliance.

My father was raised in a small town in southern India where he lived on a small farm. He tells stories of how he walked two miles to school everyday, came home and helped take care of the farm and the animals, and studied until midnight almost every night by the light of an oil lamp because a simple thing, like electricity was not to be taken for granted. The only real “entertainment”, or should I say break from work and school, was a small transistor radio he had in his room that got reception for about 2 hours a day in the evening.

He put himself through medical school and, being the oldest, helped his 7 brothers and sisters get through school as well, while taking care of the family business. His property, like the New Zealander, was the farm animals that he cared for and the trees he cultivated that bore fruit for him sell at the market.

Our Indian culture is such that education is the most important part of a young adult's life. It is the road to success, the road to prestige and status, the road to financial stability, and most importantly the road to self-improvement. This ideal was ingrained from day one.

After graduating from medical school in India, he came to this country knowing only one or two distant relatives and practically penniless speaking broken English in hopes of practicing medicine. He struggled for another 6 years continuing his education, focusing on his specialization, trying to assimilate by learning English, and fitting into this new society.

He is truly an example of the perfect balance between the civilized and progressive American and the aborigine that Emerson speaks of. Literally, he came from a small village in a foreign land where most of his work entailed hard labor, and moved to what must have seemed like a different planet to a small town farm boy, in the pursuit to create a niche in our vast and complicated economy for the unique service he provides.

He is an example of a civilized man who built a coach, but did not lose the use of his feet. All the success he has enjoyed can be attributed to his entrepreneurial spirit that was fostered during his childhood and education in India. The opportunities to turn his spirit into action came with his move to the United States and American society. Despite all this success and adaptation to a new culture and society, he never forgets the principles he was raised with and where he began his struggles to realize this dream. He gives new

meaning to the term working your way up from the bottom because he has firsthand experience of what the bottom truly is.

Not only did my father come to this country with a huge automatic disadvantage, the language barrier, but he also came with lofty goals. The dream was not to come to this country and practice medicine as everyone else did. He wanted to develop a level of patient care that could not be copied anywhere else in this market already saturated with medical professionals. He refers to it, and he has the rights to this logo, “Customized Common sense Care”. He truly makes an effort to connect with his patients on a personal level and tries to keep honesty, intelligence, and dependability part of every patient relationship. If his patients choose to share other aspects of their lives, aside from their medical issues, that may have influence on their well being, he is not afraid to give strong opinions based on his principles.

Man is timid and apologetic; he is no longer upright; he dares not say, “I think”, “I am”, but quotes some other sage (Emerson: Self Reliance pg. 85). Such is not the case with my father. As I mentioned earlier, his beliefs are deeply rooted in his culture, but he customizes these principles to his patient’s experiences and really tries to relate to their individual situations and give them common sense solutions to their problems.

He is in no way afraid to say how he feels if asked for his opinion because the best thing one can do is tell the truth whether it be in his profession or personal life. Based on his practices, I would say nothing is sacred but the integrity of his mind (Emerson: Self

Reliance pg. 79). I feel this is a direct result of the processes we should expect our government to intervene and what functions of our economy we should entrust to spontaneous order.

Hayek says “society” is the new deity to which we complain and clamor for redress (Hayek: Social Justice Pg. 129). This may well be the case strong ties he still holds to his culture. Perhaps his philosophy of patient care might even be classified as an intellectual property right as he could be one of the pioneers of transforming the scarcely used theory of customized care for each individual patient as opposed to applying the same methods and evaluations to every patient regardless of each unique situation, into common practice. (Rothbard: Justice and Property Rights Pg. 103)

Hayek warns that so long as the belief in “social justice” governs political action, this process must progressively approach nearer and nearer to a totalitarian system (Hayek: Social or Distributive Justice Pg. 128). From this reading, I truly gained a new perspective on which and perhaps that fosters increased dependence on our government for compensation for what our free market didn’t feel like providing under a particular condition that someone might have predicted incorrectly.

From my personal experience, and I mentioned the relevance of culture not only in my family but in many other Indian immigrant’s families, coming to this country was a gamble. As trivial as it may sound, hard work and perseverance, and probably a high regard for the value of education, is usually the formula for success.

It does seem to be the culture of American society to seek government help, or “social justice” as Hayek calls it, whenever things do not pan out as calculated by some seemingly exact formula, but the cultural values that were instilled in my father did not include such philosophies of seeking compensation for misfortune. He had little or no advantages when he started out in this country and was truly ready to sink and keep trying or swim-not sink and complain that he traveled halfway around the world to live and work in a foreign country but instead failed miserably. Somehow he became successful and overcame these disadvantages by having faith and great determination. (and yes probably some plain old good fortune)

The term social justice appeals to the conscience of the public to concern themselves with unfortunate members of society as members of the same society. Gradually, this concept lent itself to the theory that ‘society’ is somehow responsible for the material position of all its members. (Hayek: Social or Dist. Justice pg. 137). I do not think, nor would my father based on his cultural values, society was necessarily responsible for my father’s career as physician in barrier or even if he was the most intelligent physician that ever practiced, but had not a single patient come to him for care because of his personality or personal style of practicing medicine.

Hayek explains that the term justice should come into play when the treatment of a person or persons by intentional actions of another affects their well being (Hayek: Social Justice pg. 130). Since the market does not intentionally harm or affect the well being of

individuals, the consequences of playing a role in our free economy cannot be considered just or unjust.

It is true that good things happen to bad people and vice versa just out of sheer misfortune and that sometimes this has to be accepted without further consideration or accommodation by a central authority; I agree with this philosophy. However, I think it is safe to say that in most cases, good things happen to good people when valiant efforts are made to thrive in our economy and shouldn't that be our goal? I'd say that is true with the majority of people the United States.

I am not only speaking of people who make careers out of creating social justice for all, but also people who thrive in through free enterprise and business who feel they should give back to their communities. One last time, I attempt to use the example of culture to explain this theory. After the Gulf War, my father offered free medical care to Gulf War Veterans. These veterans might not have represented the members of society that were suffering from severe deprivation, but they may have needed assistance, or a helping hand, nonetheless. My father, as someone who was able to get almost everything he strived for out of our free market economy, also gave back to society. I am sure there are plenty of people that behave benevolently because they feel they have been blessed with good fortune. If more people had that innate goodness, I do not think we would be as dependent on our government for solutions to socioeconomic problems.

**Adapted from excerpts of the MBA thesis of Dr. Chemplavil's daughter, 2002**