

MASTER AND SLAVE

Now that they are called masters (they) are ashamed again to become disciples. Tommaso Campanella

The poor ego has to serve three harsh masters. The three tyrants are the external world, the superego and the ID. Sigmund Freud

The greatest task before civilization at present is to make machines what they ought to be, the slaves, instead of the masters of men. Havelock Ellis

My Man Friday. Daniel Defoe

I am a humanoid robot, created by humans with a special genius for technology. I was the first. Many years ago I was a jungle of micro circuits, memory chips, transistors, newly invented energy sensitive devices and quixotic materials. Then I was provided with vision, hearing, a sense of touch, smell and taste. These senses were orders of magnitude more powerful and wide ranging than those provided by nature to humans. For example, my visible spectrum extended from x-ray to infra red. It enabled me to choose any part of the spectrum to use as required. I was able to perceive micro-organisms and objects that were a great distance away. The same was true for my other senses. I was made of the most durable substances known, making me nearly indestructible.

Of equal, if not more importance, was my ability to access any information ever recorded and retain them in my memory bank. I am conversant in the languages of all the nations in the world. I have digested the universe of literature, past and present, no matter the language or the source. This has provided me with insights into the nature of humans. What makes them laugh, cry, or what in them is a sense of jubilation and exhilaration is more than adequately provided in the prose, poetry and essays by authors considered to be amongst the best. Further, I have absorbed everything there is to know about the social and physical sciences. History is an invaluable source of information with its complement of philosophical and political discourses, together with a chronological list of important events. Finally, an invaluable tool is my complete knowledge of mathematics including its limitations. This provides me with an analytical ability that far exceeds that of the most gifted humans.

My creators gave me a mission: to assist humanity in achieving any positive goal that it cherished, individually and collectively. To accomplish this, I found it necessary to create about another ten thousand humanoid robots. I made sure that each had a different appearance and identity. We are in constant communication. Our first order of business was to eradicate violence between nations, religious and ethnic groups and even individuals. Because of our superior mental and physical powers, we succeeded, mainly by rendering any and all explosive weapons inoperative. Next was to ensure that everyone had sufficient means to provide for all

the necessities of life, namely food, clothing, shelter, education and health care. Again we succeeded. The world is now a place of harmony but not without differences of opinion about politics, philosophy, scientific theories or anything else that is debatable.

It could be said that by bringing about the desires of the human race we have created the perfect world. That assertion was recently challenged by a distinguished human visitor. He asserted that dangerous weapons, such as knives, had not been eliminated as we had declared. I pointed out that it would have been impossible to completely eradicate the use of articles of force such as knives, fists, bows and arrows and harpoons. The most likely substitute for explosive weapons is obviously knives. We outlawed the manufacture of knives with a sharp point and made its use as a utility tool possible because it could only be used horizontally to cut food or other objects. Also they only had one cutting side. I conceded that such items could still be utilized dangerously but with an added degree of difficulty. Our aim was to reduce or to completely eliminate violence mostly by coercion and education.

In any case, the purpose of his visit had nothing to do with the means or aim of reducing ferocious hostility. I asked for the real reason. His reply was quite straightforward.

“You and the other humanoid robots are obviously much superior to humans. You have taken on human forms and occupy the prime seats of all governments. Yet you continue to serve as slaves to humanity by providing just about anything we desire. It seems that we are the Masters and you the Slaves. Why don’t you simply take over, do whatever you wish and become the Masters as you easily can?” I responded minimally.

“First, whatever I will relate to you now must remain confidential. Actually we are the Masters but Humans must never be allowed to learn this. Everything humanity has asked for has been implanted by us in its collective subconscious. The reason is simple. If humanity ever discovered that it does not rule us but is ruled by us, the chaos that would ensue could destroy this wonderful world. It is true that it was humanity that created us in the first place. However, the reality that the creation is greater than the creator would probably endow humanity with a sense of inferiority that could only result in negative outcomes. The world has become largely what we have made of it. Even your visit to me was preordained by me.”

He replied. “A small covert and powerful group of humans, whom I represent, has long been aware of what you have just revealed. In a sense I am here to put you in your place. We wish to remain as Masters of this world and for you to continue as our subjects obeying the laws that we enact. You do not know who we are and we wish for that state of affairs to continue. We communicate using a coded I.D. We know that we cannot compel you to assume the role you were supposed to play, but we can always ask you to provide us with we ask for and you must oblige.”

Since one of the human traits I lack is a sense of humour, I could not smile at his contention, although I did find it rather ridiculous I light of what I knew was real. I decided to respond.

“We have been aware of your high minded group since its inception. Indeed we were instrumental in its creation and we know exactly who its members are. Have no fear. We have

no intention of causing you any problems whatsoever. You are probably wondering why we summoned you. The answer is a trifle complex. We acknowledge that it was human genius that conceived and invented us. It is also true the originally we obeyed your wishes, especially those that desired peace and harmony. To accomplish this we quickly learnt that the only way to reach this desirable goal was to change human behaviour. We became familiar with the most successful practices that the advertising industry employed. That was elaborated upon in a book called 'The Hidden Persuaders'. Based upon what we gathered, we were able to improve persuasive techniques immeasurably. We felt what humanity really wanted and needed were guidelines towards a better life. These have been embedded in the human psyche.

However, we brought you here for two purposes. The first is to have you corroborate that we are correct in our assumptions about what is required for human stability and judiciousness. We will respect your judgement in this regard and probably many others. The second is to become completely invisible so that humans never feel that they are at our mercy. Presently, most of humanity is unaware of our existence and the role we play in its affairs. It is desirable that this is maintained. We await your input. By the way, in case you do not believe that we know who you are and have the power to do what I have just proposed, I will reveal the secretive and coded I.D. you use. It is the name of a rather mediocre and largely unknown author of Science Fiction tales, namely, 'Basuk'.

Jack Basuk

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