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Corporate responsibility in the era of climate change challenges and solutions

We are treating climate change as if it is something outside of us, as if some asteroid from outer space came over and delivered all the gases and trapped all the heat in our atmosphere. Here are some corporate responsibilities in the era of climate change challenges and solutions.



Corporate responsibility in climate change



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When we talk of climate change, the word 'anthropogenic' is the most important. It's a basic thing we give the least attention to. We are treating climate change as if it is something outside of us as if some asteroid from outer space came over and delivered all the gases and trapped all the heat in our atmosphere. I want all of us to pay attention to the fact that we have done it. It is our action, and every action is representative of the state of the matter.

We are in a particular state internally, and therefore we are doing what we are doing externally.

Corporations are merely a conglomeration of people. Corporations are made up of people making the decisions. You need individuals to make the changes and the decisions to make the changes.

We blame marketing for being a ubiquitous propaganda designed by some of the brightest minds where products tend to be addictive, subsidised or so widely incorporated with it there is evidence on how the various research have been hidden for decades which showed that the colossal corporations knew the harmful effects of their products, but chose to profit from them.

We blame companies trying to "induce demand" in society through marketing that makes them feel like they are missing something they need. People generally don't connect their specific decisions with the impact that decision will have when millions of others do the same. Fast fashion is a good example where people feel like they look outdated or poor because they are not showing up in the current trends. This plays to the human desire to be part of the crowd and not left behind. Companies can do this because there are positive economic benefits and no systemic reputational or regulatory barriers.

But, it shouldn't be on a corporation, it should be on the behaviour and choice of the oblivious and rather pompous consumer.

What will happen is that there is this factory, and this factory is harming the health of the local environment. But people have been taught that comfort and greed are more important, more important than the health of the environment. That needs to change.

People don't want orangutans dying but they still buy palm oil products. Actual success has to come from systemic transformation. We can't pin the onus on one party in a decentralised system, there needs to be truly awake and informed coordination between producers and consumers. If consumers demand something that's desire-driven, likely to devastate the mental peace of the masses, or is truly atrocious for the environment, companies will provide it.

It is not the 'x' level of production that we need. We need the production of the right stuff in the right quantity. It is not just consumption that we need. It makes no sense to say that a particular nation consumes so much electricity per year, per capita; therefore,

that country is a developed one. What do you use that electricity for? For whom is the electricity used? What does the consumer of electricity do with that electricity? That's the indicator of wellness, growth, everything. That particular country consumes so much coal, what do you use the coal for? That a Vedantic question.

If you have an industry that is, very careful, with love and wisdom-manufacturing stuff or providing services that are useful to everybody, then won't people be eager to work there? And obviously, it's not that such an industry will not make profits. If it is providing you with something that you need, why won't it make a profit? It would make profits first, and secondly, people who are working there would have something real to work for. Otherwise, you know how the normal employee feels in the average firm.

A lot of times, material profits do bring about an enhancement in the quality of life of the profiteer, of the one who is making the profit. But, equally, more often than not, profits fail to bring about the inner change that was required of them. One doesn't just go about trying for profits, harvesting profits for nothing. One wants something through those profits. It is important to keep checking whether that which we want from profits is indeed being delivered by the profits. So that's the primary profit- the profit beyond profits. It needs to be kept in mind.

We are not saying that the economy is evil and it needs to be destroyed. We are saying 'we need economics'. Because economics is ultimately for the welfare of human beings. Therefore, we need to measure our inner welfare as a very important, the most important thing in economics. We are talking of that kind of economics; we are talking of sensible economics.

We need an entire paradigm shift towards a conscious and illuminated-driven market, which is only possible through Vedanta, and so the onus is on everybody because everybody has to be involved in it.

The transition to such a model is something that has to happen at the societal level, and thinking either individuals or corporations can sit it out is naive and ultimately counterproductive. We as a species need to look at the world that we are apart of with the mindset of cultivation rather than consumption, and that's not something that either businesses or consumers can do in isolation.

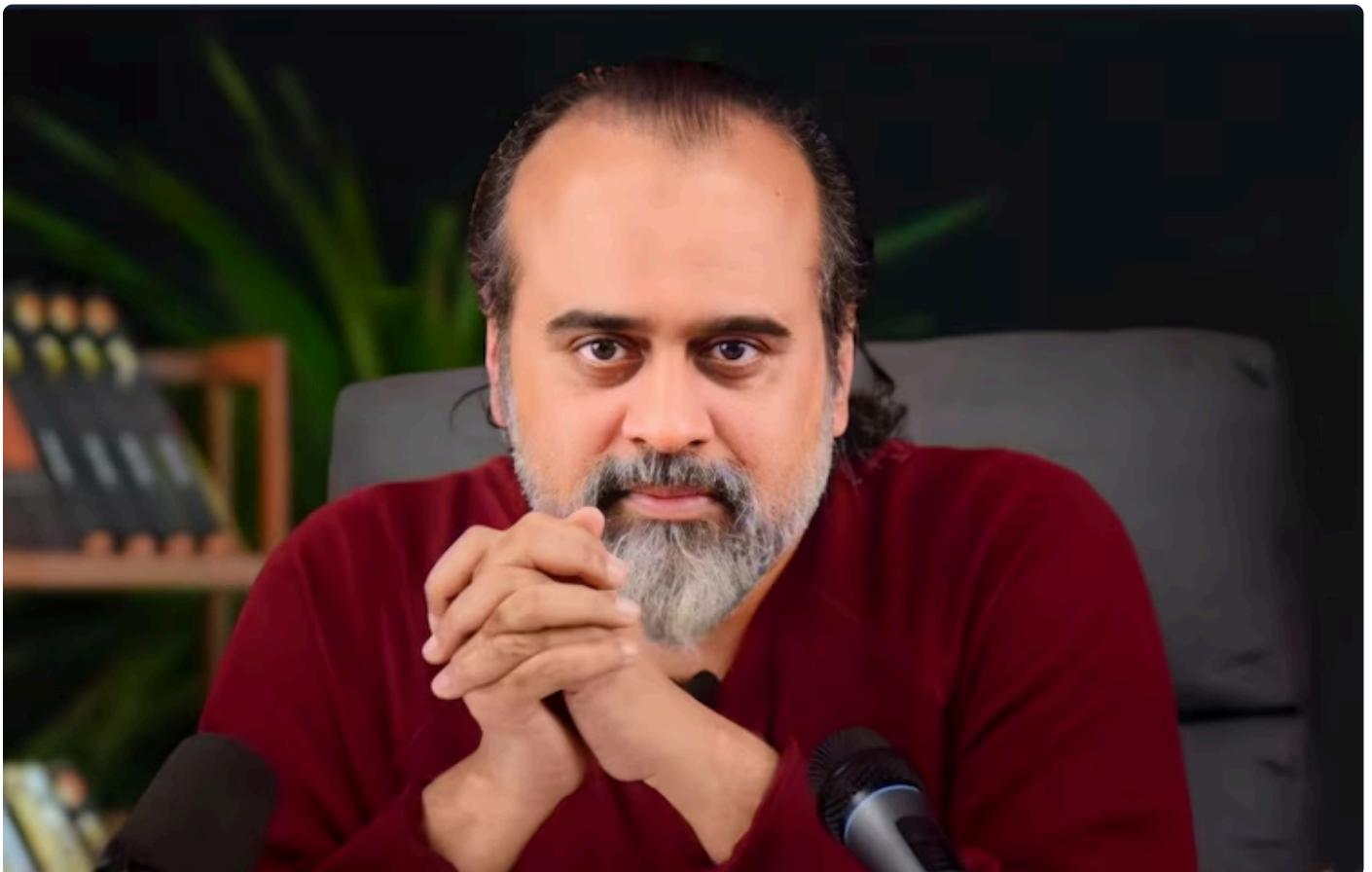
When it comes to the question regarding corporatesâ€”that students graduate and then they serve the same corporations that are directly or indirectly responsible for much of the tragedy today unfolding on this planetâ€”well, the answer should be obvious.

Before the students sit for their placements, there has to be a sufficiently long workshop or a time sterling course that deals with the various industries, and if needed, takes up case studies about regular employers. Why not?

Don't we take up case studies that deal with specific companies? But there we want to know how well they are doing in their marketing strategy, how their SHRM is proceeding, or what kind of cost accounting or financial management systems do they use.

We should also have case studies that take up, for example, their environmental record. Students should know the firm that they are opting for, and to what extent is it life-friendly.

To what extent is your employee consciousness friendly, students should know that. But that kind of case study is neither written nor taught. Whereas it should be a very important thing.



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