

AMAR'S DEEPTHINK

gr8!dea : 15 May 2021

Ambulance Sirens; Heralding Despair or Hope ?

In a world reeling under the Corona Pandemic, if there is one melancholic sound that people across the globe are fed up of hearing, it's the screaming whine of ambulance sirens piercing through the ambience of our towns and cities. Its kind of uncanny that this particular sound is almost the same, world over. While each country, even regions within countries, have their own unique set of acoustics – in the form of speech, accents, songs, dialects, music and miscellaneous societal sounds - the woeful wail of ambulance sirens is almost universal; a long, shrieking whine followed by a series of short, piercing bleeps.

Is it a happy, cheerful sound that imbues the atmosphere with positive energy ? Or, is it a worrying sound, the harbinger of stress, tension, fear, dread, gloom ? Does it herald hope or despair ?

At this point in time, the last thing that the corona-saddened populations of the world need is such stress-inducing sounds which feed into and further accentuate the gargantuan cloud of negative energy already hanging ominously over mother earth. In fact, what we desperately need are happy sounds, sounds of cheer and mirth, of vibrancy and positivity, sounds that de-stress, sounds of hope, sounds that dissipate the prevailing negative energy and replace it instead with huge bursts of positive energy.

It's also a moot point that today, when most roads are nearly empty - with extensive lockdowns and curfews there is hardly any traffic on them - why does an ambulance need to sound its siren on such a road in the first place ? The rationale to blow the siren is understood when the ambulance is screaming "get out of the way, I have an emergency on board" in heavy traffic. But is the siren justified on an empty road devoid of any traffic ?

Not only this, its downright 'Noise Pollution' too, especially when the siren is sounded at full blast and can be heard miles away, much beyond the 100 metre zone needed to warn traffic nearby. Traffic police needs to take note of such blatant misuse of the siren facility provided to ambulances.

Lastly, this piercing wail reaches the ears of thousands of people in their homes, offices, on the road, in hospitals, schools and everywhere else. Why, even the person in the ambulance, the one being evacuated, constantly hears it all through his / her trip. What is the psychological, emotional and mood effect on thousands of these people who have nothing to do at all with that particular shrieking ambulance as it passes nearby ? Instantaneously, their calmness, peacefulness, happiness is

shattered and replaced with worry, apprehension, fear, sadness, despair and despondency. Isn't such unwanted pessimism totally unnecessary and entirely avoidable ?

So I call upon all music makers, sound junkies and instrument buffs; the acoustic geniuses of the world to come up with better, happier sounds for an ambulance siren ? Let the happiness begin right from the very moment an ambulance arrives at any doorstep, with a merry jingle and a happy note of love, cheer, positivism and optimism.

Amen. In a world reeling under the Corona Pandemic, if there is one melancholic sound that people across the globe are fed up of hearing, it's the screaming whine of ambulance sirens piercing through the ambience of our towns and cities. Its kind of uncanny that this particular sound is almost the same, world over. While each country, even regions within countries, have their own unique set of acoustics – in the form of speech, accents, songs, dialects, music and miscellaneous societal sounds - the woeful wail of ambulance sirens is almost universal; a long, shrieking whine followed by a series of short, piercing beeps.



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