

THINK TANK
BY LAB45

When everyone is a Buddha

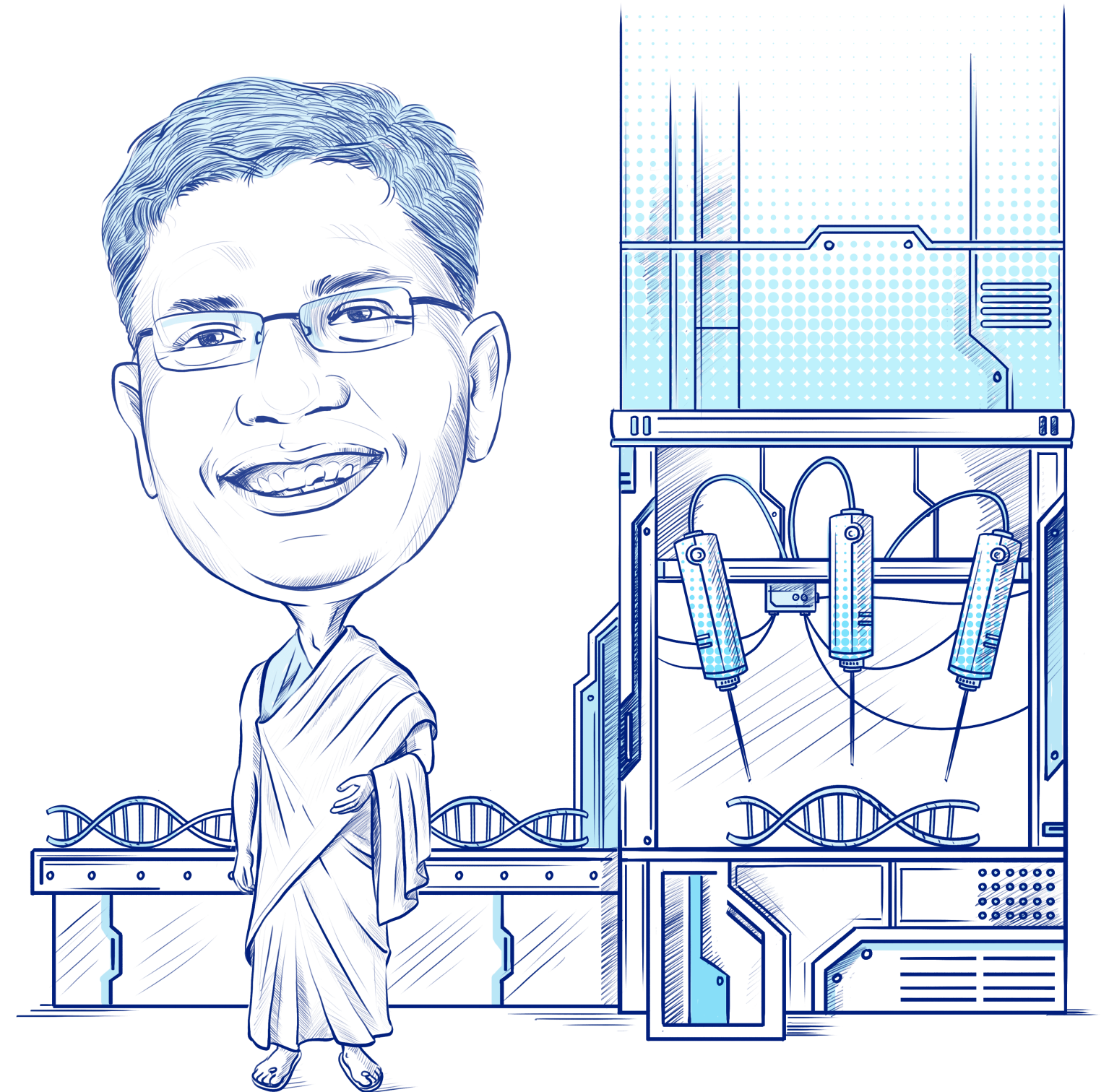
**Break
the box**

Siddhant Raizada explores Potential impact of genetic engineering on human behavior and society.

The current developments in the genetic engineering field suggest that we will soon have the capability to modify human behavior. This article explores the potential impact on society if humans adopt this technology en-masse.

It is all in the genes

Genes can influence behavior through various mechanisms. Some genes directly affect specific traits or behaviors, such as eye color or certain inherited disorders. Other genes may indirectly influence the structure and function of the brain, neurotransmitter systems, or other biological processes involved in behavior. Twin and family studies have provided evidence for the heritability of certain behaviors. For example, studies comparing the behavior of identical twins (who share 100% of their genes) and fraternal



twins (who share about 50% of their genes) have shown that some behaviors, such as intelligence or personality traits, have a higher concordance rate among identical twins compared to fraternal twins. This suggests a genetic influence on human behavior.

CRISPR (Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats) is a revolutionary gene-editing technology that enables scientists to make precise modifications to the DNA of living organisms, including humans. Today the focus of CRISPR research in the medical field is primarily directed toward addressing genetic disorders and diseases where there is a clearer understanding of the genetic basis and potential therapeutic benefits. But it doesn't rule out the possibility of its usage to modify genes that trigger "negative" emotions like anger, violence, greed, etc.

Let us, for a moment, not get into the ethical issues around this tech. But explore the what if. What will happen to the world if this technology goes mainstream?

While genetics and thought played an important role in our evolution, what attribute will play an equivalent role in AI of the future?

It has been **tried before**

It reminds me of a story in ancient Hindu texts. According to the text, when God first created the universe. It was perfect in every way. There was no greed, ego, or jealousy; there were no "negative" emotions. There was positivity all around. Everyone was calm, patient, and compassionate. But this had unintended consequences.

In the absence of "negative" human emotions, everyone became "realized" quickly. There was no struggle, no divergent view, as no one saw any reason to disagree. As a result, most became renunciates without a desire to procreate or acquire possessions. This brought the chain of cause & effect to a halt, with no evolution.

The Gods realized the flaw in the design. They realized that friction is essential to forward movement. There is a need for "bad" to appreciate the "good." Hence to rectify it, an opposing force was created. The universe and its beings evolve through the interplay of these opposing forces.

Returning to our topic, the story argues that imperfections are essential for human growth. Our

weaknesses not only help us appreciate "perfect" attributes but also make us more accepting of the shortcomings of others. We also need the presence of bad to appreciate the presence of good. Without the Joker, who will understand Batman?

Compassion **replaces Consumption**

But there is an economic impact too. One of the basic principles of the economy is demand and supply. When one aspires for something they don't have, it creates demand. Supply is created when a counterparty is willing to fulfill the need for a financial incentive.

In today's world, the demand is created by both negative and positive emotions. Envy or pride makes us buy a bigger house, a better car, or a costlier watch. The entire stock market is driven by greed. It channels this greed to create a capital market for companies. This capital helps to fund innovation and create better products & services.



**“Anybody can become angry
- that is easy, but to be angry
with the right person and to
the right degree and at the
right time and for the right
purpose, and in the right way -
that is not within everybody’s
power and is not easy.”
- Aristotle**

In a new world order, people may go for utility over vanity. We may see lesser demand for luxury items but more for utility items. The thought of what is good for others may be a strong purchase driver. For example, there may be more demand for eco-friendly products. We may see less demand for products that exploit humans & animals. This will create a new economic model driven by compassion, not Consumption.

Art may be the biggest victim of this behavioral shift. Most incredible works of art, like the Great Pyramids, the Colosseum, etc., have been funded by wealthy

individuals driven by base human emotions, not divinity. If the rich guys act & think like Buddha, they might prefer to build a bigger, more comfortable school but not embellish it like the Sistine Chapel. Creation will be more practical than beautiful.

Anger is good

Negative emotions have also led to positive outcomes. If Gandhi hadn’t felt humiliated & angry being thrown out of the railway coach, he wouldn’t have fought for freedom from the Brits. Many great companies were created when their founders faced rejection & humiliation. Hence it is not the elimination of these emotions that matters but the channelization.



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Wipro Limited

Doddakannelli, Sarjapur Road
Bengaluru – 560 035, India
Tel: +91 (80) 2844 0011
Fax: +91 (80) 2844 0256
wipro.com

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