

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind

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Smoking Tobacco Kills

Smoking tobacco has become very usual around the world and there are not many people who realize that it really is a problem and can cause serious health issues for both the smokers and the people around them. According to the statistics from World Health Organization (WHO), there are around one billion smokers around the world. And, even more unfortunate facts is that 80 percent of them belong to lower and middle classes of the society. They are the people who hardly can afford smoking tobacco and can neither avail health facilities if they get sick because of it.

Moreover, WHO reveals that around 100 million people died in 20th century because of tobacco and there are fears that around one billion people may die in 21st century if the current trends are maintained in smoking. Smoking tobacco is one of the main causes of lung and mouth cancers and is also responsible for different sorts of infections related to respiratory and digestive system. Statistics show that if there are no urgent measures taken, the annual death toll from tobacco consumption can rise to more than eight million people by 2030, which is really very high and alarming, but not realized so by many countries and authorities.

One of the main causes of high consumption of tobacco is its easy availability. In most of the countries tobacco or cigarettes that contain tobacco can be found in almost all the streets and at very cheap price. Moreover, there are no restrictions of age group as well; even children can buy them and then consume them without any difficulty.

One of the main reasons of such convenient availability is undoubtedly the illicit tobacco trade. Weaker governments are not able to control the influx of different sorts of tobacco because of the pressures exerted by the giants producers; neither they are able to have strong tax policies regarding their trade.

This year's World No Tobacco Day, celebrated on May 31st, also highlighted the need to eliminate the world's illicit tobacco trade. WHO, on the day, emphasized that the ban on illicit tobacco trade will not only save millions of lives but, at the same time, can generate billions of dollars in bonus for governments.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, in his remarks on the day, said, "On this World No Tobacco Day, I call for boosting the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control to eradicate the illicit trade in cheaper tobacco products which tend to lure younger and poorer groups into addiction while depleting the ability of States to charge taxes that could support health services... By striking at the criminal gangs and tobacco companies that engage in this reprehensible trade, we will advance public health and sustainable development."

Afghanistan is also one of the countries where tobacco consumption is very high and there are no tangible measures to curb the situation. Afghanistan's Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), observing World No Tobacco Day on Sunday, highlighted that the proliferation of smuggled tobacco and easy access to it are the basic reasons that smoking has become so inexpensive and widespread in Afghanistan. Even children have become the victims and are now suffering from smoking addiction.

According to a study by MoPH, about 23 percent of students between the ages of 13 to 15 smoke in Afghanistan. If this is the condition of school going children what can be expected from the children who do not go to school and are child laborers. Definitely, their percentage must be very high as the places where they work are very vulnerable! Moreover, the parents do not deal with this issue seriously. As some of them, themselves, smoke and do not consider it a threat, therefore, they do not make their children abstain it either.

It is really important that the government deals with this situation seriously. Government must ensure measures to discourage the illicit trade of tobacco. Heightening the tax rates on tobacco can be very much helpful in this regard. Ministry of Finance (MoF) has said, "In order to decrease use of cigarettes, the government has increased the tax to 20 percent on cigarettes and 10 percent on other tobacco products like snuff... If the government requires, we can increase the tax even more."

In addition to increase in tax on tobacco, it is also essential that the government must have a particular strategy to deal with the situation. It should make sure that it adheres to the WHO's Protocol to Eliminate the Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products, which requires a wide range of measures related to the tobacco supply chain, with the licensing of imports, exports and production of tobacco products; the formation of tracking and tracing systems and the imposition of penal sanctions on those responsible for illicit trade. It would also criminalize illicit production and cross border smuggling.

Smoking tobacco can, undoubtedly, give rise to serious health conditions and the tobacco industry will keep on increasing its productions and find out ways of finding new consumers. Its producers would not even hesitate to target young children and would make sure that their trade must never diminish. It is, therefore, responsibility of the government and the aware sections of the society to emphasize on the vices of this evil and carve out measures to control it.



Put a Check on Unchecked Corruption

By Asmatyari

A great disparity of deeds exists among Supreme Being and nonliving things—the former enjoys great deal of independence, capable of executing every undertaking at will while the later handicapped and handy to discharge the assigned duty, only. It principally is one of the reason human being entitled a supreme creature abounding with discretionary power of carrying out noble deeds that could bejewel the world with every element of justice, equality, fidelity, reliability and tranquility. Hence, man is begotten to practice and promote common good.

Every deed we undertake on account of greater interest is deemed a divine service that earns us virtue and fortifies our faith. If one tends to cut down or exploits the amount of time, authority and resources at his dispense for some heinous purposes is deemed an evil practice and unforgivable deed. This is an act of corruption and equally condemnable deed. This evil practice give birth to thousands of harms, crucifies justice, equality, peace and order turning the society a breeding ground of viciousness and initialize the cycle of evil.

To justify this very position I would draw your attention to this prominent tale from moral story. Once there lived a king who was so cruel and unjust –his subjects yearned for his death or dethronement. However, one day he surprised them all by announcing that he had decided to turn over a new leaf. "No more cruelty, no more injustice," he promised, and he was as good as his word. He became known as the 'Gentle Monarch'. Months after his conversion one of his ministers mustered up courage to ask him what had brought about his change of heart.

The king answered, "As I was moving through my forests I caught sight of a fox being chased by a hound. The fox escaped into his hole but not before the hound had bitten its leg and had lamed it for life. Later I rode into a village and saw the same hound there. It was barking at a man. Even as I watched, the man picked up a huge stone and flung it at the dog, breaking its leg. The man had not gone far when he was kicked by a horse. His knee was crushed and he fell to the ground, disabled for life. The horse began to run but it fell into a hole and broke its leg. Reflecting on all that had happened, I thought: 'Evil begets evil. If I continue in my evil ways, I will surely be overtaken by evil'. So I decided to change". The minister went away convinced that the time was ripe to overthrow the king and seize the throne. Immersed in thought, he did not see the stairs in front of him and fell, breaking his neck. The story depicts the real flaws of our society that have rendered us dysfunctional on an account of continued chain of evils in the form of illegitimate practices. It is undeniable truth that corruption is the biggest challenges for the national unity government –it should identify corrupt officials and bring them to justice –but prior to this they must disband themselves. Subsequent to installation of the cabinet,

an end to prevalent corruption rendered one of the foremost challenges to the serving government. The National Unity Government (NUG) must get started by ridding all public departments out of these calamities by launching close investigation to all cases of corruption brought forth to corresponding government institutions. An exemplary punishment should be extended to those who are convicted of misuse of their authority and public resources.

We have to admit the core reason behind the failure to strengthen the backbone of Afghan economy is the severe security problems and deep-rooted corruption. It is anticipated the government will work out a plan to eradicate this great menace. As the problem of security and corruption persist, there seems to be a declining chance of betterment, and people will still have to wait for actual prosperity.

This is a grave state of worsening affair that presses hard the already wrecked economy of Afghanistan and utter negligence of government to tackle the peril of corruption. This is an undeniable fact either government is unwilling or hapless before powerful power abusers –despite the fact, president has been showing interest in lodging cases against power abusers. President Ghani had earlier avowed to re-open the inquiry into the theft from the bank, fulfilling a campaign promise to make fighting corruption a priority.

Following that he has issued a presidential decree to prosecute the case but the concerned officials had done nothing till date –the case till date lies on pending. Following the ministry of defense fuel corruption President Ashraf Ghani suspended six top officials from the Ministry of Urban Development Affairs on charges of corruption, earlier. The investigation is handed over to the Attorney General's office. The allegations leveled against the ministry officials include taking bribes in exchange for signatures on new housing projects, doling out apartments to high ranking government officials and their relatives and constructing sub-standard apartments in order to pocket ministry funds. Despite these measures the corrupt officials enjoys misappropriating their positions, provided the system of general amnesty to potential power abuser are chained fast to the ground, given number of influential personalities involved in money embezzlement from public offices, heinous crime against citizens and power misuse were given amnesty without being subjected to strict measures entailing answerability. This attitude of government had discouraged new investments with remnants intended to downsizing and withdrawing a dire omen for progress of country needs immediate reversal by practical measures. This implies that the expanding role of government in development has placed some officials in a monopolistic position and has enhanced the opportunities for unlimited administrative misappropriation.

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Transformation in Life

By Dilawar Sherzai

A quotation by famous philosophe Jean Paul Sartre says, "Life begins on the other side of despair." What he meant from this axiom is a long discussion that starts with the discussions on details of Existentialism – the philosophy that Sartre believed in. Conversely, what we can comprehend from the quotation is that in order to understand the life and to live it appropriately one has to go through a transformation – he has to experience various difficulties, problems and even despair.

Living a life that has been decided for us by our socio-economic circumstances does not really mean that we are living our lives with complete responsibility. In that case we are just puppets, dancing with the strings that are being moved by the society. In order to live a true and productive life, it is important that we should create such a life.

Creating a life means finding the true purpose of the existence and then following the same through our actions. Creating such a life is not a piece of cake; rather it requires great energy and enthusiasm. It requires, as mentioned above, a complete transformation.

The transformation can start from negating what is already taught to human beings by his surroundings. He requires to un-condition himself. The conditioning that is carried out by the society may not always be favorable for a person, and most importantly that conditioning is as per the thinking and the perspectives of others. Every person needs to discover himself.. He has to decide his life according to his own comprehension of his self.

During this transformation, he may feel despair; and may experience nothingness. The world may look meaningless and purposeless. The roads may look dusty and leading to nowhere. The trees may look autumn-stricken and the water may be flowing in a directionless directions. The relations may seem absurd and the friends may appear to be strangers. As Rick Warren had observed, "Transformation is a process, and as life happens there are tons of ups and downs. It's a journey of discovery – there are moments on mountaintops and moments in deep valleys of despair."

However, the important thing is not to get stuck in this despair as the life is on the other side of despair. It is not within it. This despair may prove to be a necessary evil. It may provide an opportunity to a person to rethink about his life, to rewrite its script and to rebuild his personality. As the great novelist Dostoevski had said, "Suffering is the origin of consciousness." Gold becomes gold after many years of suffering. It has to bear the extreme temperature and great pressure. It has to go

through various processes to sparkle as it does. A seed becomes a tree after going through a long and tiresome process. It has to bear the different sorts of weather and have to extract its nutrition from the earth. Only after surviving through every thick and thin it is able to stand strong as a tree and grow flowers and fruits.

History proves that the same is true for human beings as well. The personalities that have gone through very critical circumstances have been able to stand taller as human beings.

Every human being has to go through the experience of despair if he has to discover his true self. As Soren Kierkegaard quoted in Concluding Unscientific Postscripts to the Philosophical Crumbs, "...The discrepancy is that the ethical self should be found immanently in the despair, that the individual won himself by persisting in the despair. True, he has used something within the category of freedom, choosing himself, which seem to remove the difficulty, one that presumably has not struck many, since philosophically doubting everything and then finding the true beginning goes one, two, three. But that does not help. In despairing, I use myself to despair, and therefore I can indeed despair of everything by myself. But if I do this, I cannot come back by myself. It is in this moment of decision that the individual needs divine assistance, whereas it is quite correct that in order to be at this point one must first have understood the existence-relation between the aesthetic and the ethical; that is to say, by being there in passion and inwardness, one surely becomes aware of the religious - and of the leap."

Borrowed ideologies, borrowed destinations and borrowed motives can never work for an individual. Every individual is unique in what he really is. Finding that unique self will require going through the quagmire of despair, yet the great revelations are waiting on the other side. Though going through this quagmire is necessary, sticking to it is not recommended. Getting stuck in the quagmire means pitiful death. It means a useless and wasted life. The quagmire should be considered as a necessary passage to the real destination on the other side of it.

Today's world wherein most of the people are lost in hustle and bustle and in pursuit of the materialistic gains, this is a crying need that the human beings must discover true human gifted with perfect realization of the responsibilities and understanding of the human existence. He must suffer and despair, but has to take a rebirth. He has to be born as a different human being after what he goes through. This is the only way human beings can change the world around themselves; no other way is possible today.

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