

To accept bribe, a crime. To give, divine!

Dear Friends,

Ask any Indian, what is the future tense of “I give”? Pop will come the answer, “you take”! And this in a nutshell, that makes corruption live and thrive in the land of the Mahatma.

As a Nation, we are obsessed with corruption. Open the dailies and chances are the lead story will be another case of corruption involving the high and the mighty of the land. Switch on to the telly and you will be inundated with one string operation after the other, exposing the bribe takers, sometimes literally with their pants down. We cheer and glee in perverse pleasure at the hint of the next scandal breaking, wriggling our hands in sadistic anticipation waiting for the drama to unfold. We choke our airwaves forwarding text messages about how Kalmadi went to hang himself, but the ceiling collapsed and write miles in our Facebook walls about 2G’s and Spectrums ensconced in our misunderstood misnomers. We hate the guys who take bribes with all our hearts. They are the ones who have brought the Nation to where it is today and we demand nothing less than corporal punishment for them.

Yet, paradoxically, when it comes to giving the same bribe, we have a different set of rules. How many of you can cross your hearts and say that you have not broken the traffic signal when the cops weren’t there? Or, not greased the odd palm to speed up things? Or not coveted thy neighbour’s prize? And that is exactly the point I’m trying to raise. We, the hypocrites, are not concerned about corruption per se, what turns us on is the voyeuristic pleasure of taking a sneak peek, of having a chance to wear our shrouds of morality and rubbishing everything from the system to the protagonists conveniently overlooking, sometimes even consciously white-washing our own dark deeds.

Otherwise, how do you explain the almost lunatic ranting of the industrialist who even though has been fined for insider trading, continue to routinely hold conventions on integrity? That too with one of the leading dailies as a co-organiser and funded by, as skeptics put it, shareholder monies!

The answer is not far to seek. We are a Nation that is morally bankrupt. In our mad haste to earn more and more, we have not only sold our souls but have had no qualms in going to the farthest points to cater to our vested interests. So far, it is still acceptable. But what is really painful and potentially destructive is the fact that the same self, by virtue of their ill gotten wealth, seek to appoint themselves as the conscience keepers of the Nation – ombudsmen of sorts. And by doing so, we continue to plant the seeds of our and the Nation’s destruction, hastening the wrath of the Judgment day.

Corruption is a silent killer. It corrodes, quietly worming its way through the socio-economic and moral fiber of the Nation, occasionally blowing in the face. But that is another story.

Till then, Happy Reading.

With Best Regards,

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