

Juni Huni & Buni

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Physician, Heal Thyself

“The food you eat can be either the safest form of medicine or the slowest form of poison” exclaimed he, in an awareness campaign. He must have been a dutiful doctor performing his responsibility like a ritual. At least his tiresome eyes seemed to persuade the poor public of his toil. He was Dr. ABC who worked at a public hospital in Lahore and he was a renowned physician of the city.

It was a usual day at hospital. The ear deafening noise of vehicles was adding to the agony of the patients. The corridors were occupied by the destitute families with women swaying their howling kids in their laps. They were probably attendants of the admitted patients. The OPD was full of men and women of different ages. One could feel an obvious fizzle in the pit of one’s stomach at the sight of jam-packed OPD. It appeared as if the whole story of the misery were carved in the features of disease-stricken people awaiting their turns. However, everyone working at the hospital looked accustomed to this monotonous routine and so did the doctors.

Like his colleagues, Dr. ABC was also busy in checking patients, writing prescriptions and advising Do’s and Don’ts for better recovery. Amongst the patients were a fairly increasing number of young boys and girls. Be they the students or the illiterate belonging to poor working class. Most of them usually complained about gastric problems.

After a brief check up of a patient who was a vendor by profession, Dr. ABC prescribed him some medicine for gastritis treatment and strictly forbade the intake of substandard fried foods. Moreover, Dr. ABC warned him of the injurious effects of smoking. The patient who was really indebted to the doctor for paying attention to his issue immediately pledged to follow his directions. “Our public is so simple; they always put the doctors to high pedestal,” thought Dr. ABC while grinning at this simple act of the patient.

A few hours passed. Dr. ABC was advising in the same mechanical way and especially young patients were resolving silently in their hearts to follow the footsteps of their Messiah. After the wearisome duty hours, Dr. ABC headed towards his home. His chest was straining due to intermittent coughing. On his way, the well educated doctor spit on the hospital fence and drove to the house.

“What a busy yet another uninteresting day it was!” with this thought, he picked up a publication from the book shelf, lit a cigarette and diffused the slogans raised in the awareness campaign and the advice of a “dutiful doctor.” into the smoke of the cigarette.

It’s very rightly said:

“He who doesn’t believe does not live according to his belief.”

In an hour, the ashtray was full of branded cigarette filters. While flipping through the publication, Dr. ABC got so much anxious by what he had read about the effects of smoking that he gave up, reading of course!

At the weekend a dinner was arranged by one of Dr. ABC’s colleagues. The famous doctors of the city joined the lavish dinner party. Nobody cared to pay any heed towards the highly saturated and processed salt junk. They were drooling over the lamb steaks, chicken kebab and sausage sandwiches. ‘Meetha pan’ was somehow a nice addition to the menu for some young-spirited men. Protruding tummies of most of the guests were shouting of their excessive fondness for gluttony. From nowhere they looked healthy lifestyle-oriented doctors. It reflected that they, not poverty-stricken illiterate public, were in need of awareness campaigns and walks rather. After a truly ‘sumptuous and luscious’ meal, an outstanding cigar was the most relishing complement for all the cigar lovers including Dr. ABC. Oblivious of the message they were delivering to the society, they themselves were indulged in pursuits they used to condemn daily in front of their patients and that was the true dilemma.

The doctor is undoubtedly a legend woven throughout history. The white coat is not merely a piece of fabric; it is a symbol as well. A symbol alone is meaningless; the realization of true essence of symbol makes it sacred. A doctor is more than being educated, skilled and sophisticated.

“Say what you mean, and mean what you say.”

It’s about being coherent with what you say and what you act because society expects a doctor to be a hallmark of integrity and righteousness. One should practice what one preaches.

The Holy Quran says:

"Do you command other people righteousness and forget your own selves?" (2:44)

Once there was a saint. A woman came to him and requested him to forbid her child from eating raw sugar. The saint asked her to come the following day. The next day, he advised the child not to take raw sugar. The woman was surprised, and asked for justification. The saint explained that the previous day that he himself had taken raw sugar. He said, "How much it was unfair to forbid others from doing what I myself had done!"

Unfortunately, we spare ourselves while criticizing others. We must remember that people usually follow their role models either intentionally or subconsciously. If we wish to reap the benefits of a great nation we must bear the fatigue of supporting it.

Not gold but only men can make
A people great and strong;
Men who for truth and honor's sake
Stand fast and suffer long.

Aneeqa Ali
2nd year MBBS,
Roll # 25,
Punjab Medical College,
Faisalabad.