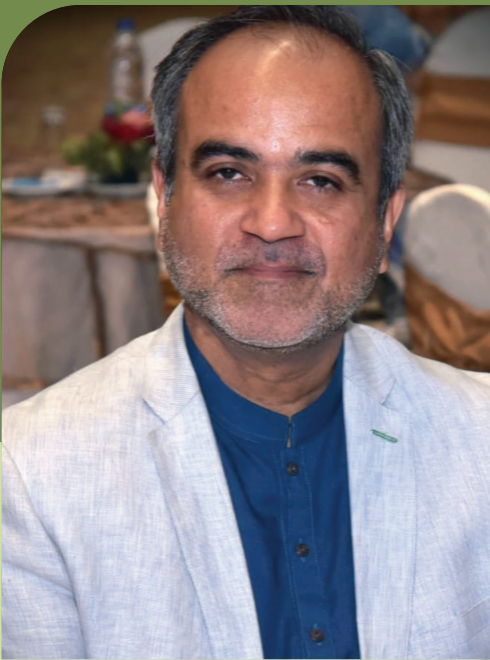


## EDITORIAL

# Corruption vs. Competence

Dr. Haider A. Naqvi

The Editor-in-Chief, Soul Newsletter, Karachi, Pakistan



I am happy to write this piece as an Editor-in-Chief of Soul Newsletter which has acquired an **ISSN # 2959-1368**. This is one of the milestones we envisioned. It all started in a dingy little room at Civil Hospital, Karachi where office, admin support, and internet facility are all scarce in terms of skill set. The crowding of a public sector hospital ensures that every nook and cranny is occupied by those seeking relief from the misery of health care issues. The doctors also find writing peripheral to their work (except for writing office orders, cheques and routine communication matters). As it is destined to happen with all things, what is to be will fit its own course.

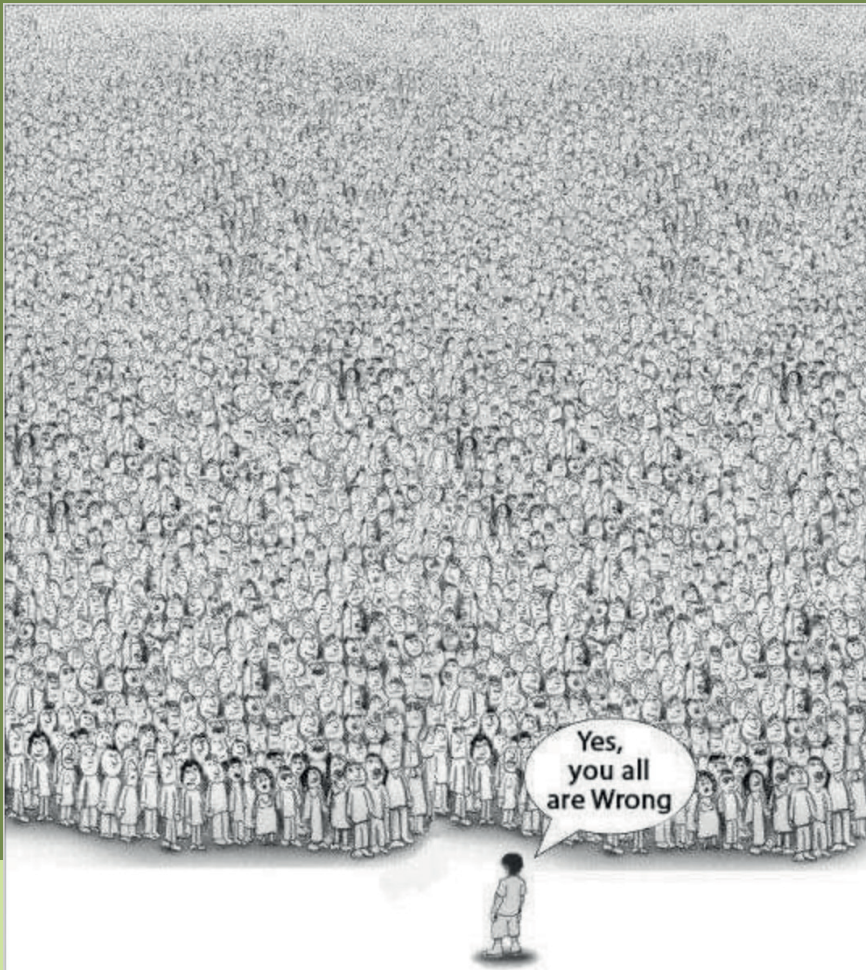
When I joined the Office as a Chair, Department of Psychiatry, the status quo ensured that I focus on my track of work; the doctrine of necessity, "no one is given absolute power" so I was told, "you work with what you have". I was stuck with the potential of students and how some of them wanted to make a difference. A group of three started this journey which took more than

three years with many joining hands to make it successful. There were countless hours of discussion on medical writing, the nuance of publication ethics, and the sanctity of written words (Divine Huruf ) besides my own experience of publishing more than 100 scientific papers, blogs, newspaper articles, and opinion pieces. I

taught them what I knew and they gave their best to the job at hand, in fact, they did better as they did formal courses in medical writing and journalism from the University of Lahore without any of these activities affecting their training. The Board Members supported this budding initiative which was a distant vision. However, persistence and perseverance, paid off, as they do in other matters of life.

It was not, however, without its due challenges. People created hurdles by complaining on the 'utility of exercise', 'approvals', 'financial matters', rather than spending time discussing professional skills which are a part and parcel of thesis, academic writing. Needless to say, plagiarism and paying money to publish thesis was seriously thwarted. Fake complaints were registered but the group thought that the best answer is the work itself. However, I have to admit, side stepping the heap of junk was challenging at times, especially keeping the junior colleagues motivated. I could see the core group developing. They were getting better at paraphrasing, chucking information in tables, reviewing existing information and systematically summarising the complex information required to make headway in knowledge-gaps of medicine.

The art-work was getting catchier as we experimented with composing. I allowed them to experi-



ment, as I was given my due share of chances by my mentors. Idea was to blend art with science so there is a movement towards "Wahd'at" or Unity. After all, psychology is a discipline which should not be fragmented into discrete logical sections with little room for intuition, aesthetics and higher calling of the Soul. The name Soul has its own little story. We went ahead with the idea of arbitrary names, civility, etc., however, we had the nagging sense that name defines the outlook of the project. Like-minded people started getting attracted to the work. I had this in mind that the newsletter is for younger audience, to attract junior doctors to the field, and communicate essence of mental health conditions to general public. "After all, people don't find God, because they don't stoop low enough", quoting Saint Francis, is what I told them. Therefore, creating a popular appeal was the target as scientific literature and journals were quite dense; most are written by handful of experts and read by the same (after peer review).

It was not that I was not aware that I would not have to pay the price but went ahead with it anyways. On the eve of release of the first edition, I wrote the following note on social media, "Upset with me the gods (of psychiatry) asked, "why is the light given to mortal men?", "Humanity has suffered in silence", I replied, "the bewitching pharmacopic potions and psychedelics numb them to existence".

They peered with eyes blazing fire, "Exactly! Don't you see they are half dead, half awakened", "I see the other half", I replied, severing the link between the two worlds with my sword. The voice trailed, "what good is the sword, if they haven't identified their enemy?". "The knowledge you have

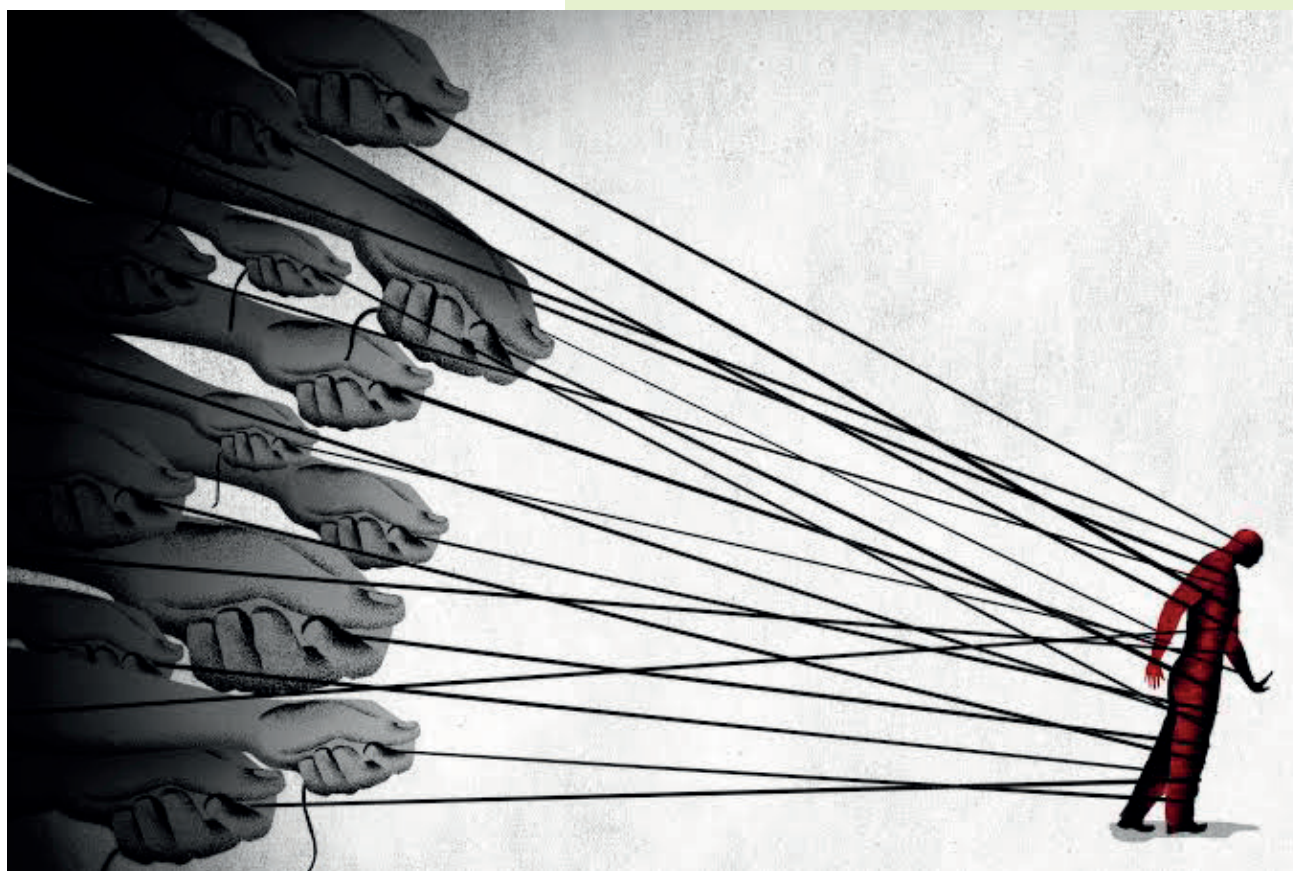
given is infused with doubts, the purity with blemish. The enemy lurks within. Let them identify Self, they will find their purpose. Authenticity leads back to the truth which is embedded deep in the human nature. To overcome the base nature, carnal desires is the original struggle. It takes more courage, not to take out the sword, than to take it out on every whim and wish", I replied. A voice echoed, "Like Prometheus, vultures will devour you...". With a smirk I replied, "my will is forged out of the place where tempest behest - the eye of the storm - I fear not the vultures nor the demons".

The social structures of power hierarchy are designed to promote competence at least in civilized societies. People who are able, have requisite IQ, are conscientious and committed to standards of service and academic excellence rise to the top. This is how it should be. Those people, at the head of governance structure, then ensures that other individuals with capability rise up the ladder of success and competence. Having said that, it takes a lot on part of such people- a continuous effort to upgrade oneself in terms of skill, communication and competence. Not many people are motivated to do that. However, perks or benefits offered by social limelight lure those who have a desire to be recognised socially.

In terms of archetypal forces, they try to rise to the (mountain) top to have a clear view of things. Such desire may be governed to have a more galactic view. However, power structures at the top demand their due share, or concession, from the dark forces which lurk in the unconscious mind. Logic is subverted and primal impulses find a channel to make themselves manifest. Ultimately, what is at the top has to come down, irrespective of the support it receives from outside influences- political or combatant they might be - so a level playing field can be maintained. Power, in the hands of few corrupt. As they say, "absolute power corrupts absolutely".

Coming time will see creative interacting systems perform for the welfare of most people; current system which





works to enable the power of capitalism in the hands of chosen few, to serve fewer, is fading out of existence. It might take few decades or a century but Agenda is on the table. Most of us are pawns in this forward march of Civilization. The corruption is challenged by competence. The face-off leads to the exposure of inner strength or potential. The corrupt resorts to dark, dirty and evil tricks it has used since time innumerable. Mudslinging, gossip mongering and false accusations used by some to distort the social image of (few) others is an old method. This is especially pertinent when work or performance cannot be questioned. Women and men do it equally; it's not that women use gender related issues to forward their agenda of academic progress but men also resort to such tactics however crude they may be. Those who are focused on progress know that at the end of the day it's the constructive work that matters. Justice, no matter how pristine it may be, cannot balance the books. Human justice is at least this way. Divine work takes into consideration things which lie at different levels and is always balanced, spanning across lifetime or perhaps beyond (i.e., The Judgment Day).

The theme for this edition, Genomics, Genetics of Mental Disorders and Biotechnology, is consciously chosen to highlight the discourse in this area

and connect various research stakeholders across disciplines. We are pleasantly surprised to realise that some very skilled people are working in this area. What is needed, 1) to develop collaborative projects in areas of high priority as measured by burden of illness 2) training programmes to develop research capacity. The field of genetic research has proliferated after completion of Human Genome Project. Many Single Nucleotide Polymorphism (SNPs) has been identified as contributing to the aetiology of schizophrenia, bipolar affective disorder and other mood disorders. This has been more like looking for a needle in hay stack, in fact epigenetic factors, as contributing to genetic basis of diseases or faulty protein coding, is the new area of inquiry. Genes interact with environment to give rise to diseased phenotype.

Much of the work, to identify basis of mental subnormality and other childhood onset learning disabilities, has also advanced with funding into biotech research. This has value in prevention of diseases. Pakistan, with its unique sociocultural milieu of inter-marriage, has huge burden of disease due to mental retardation. While it's common place to ask a trainee psychiatrist to demonstrate proficiency in genetic counselling in certifying exam, little is done in term of public health impact, research into the cause and consequences of such conditions.

We envision that time is not far when we will have a fellowship in biotechnology as a career in psychiatric research besides the clinical fellowship. Such models may not exist so far, but it's a unique need of our Country to train young people in this emerging world of science.