

## THE GLASS BEAD GAME -

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Anna started his fight against a very crucial and all pervasive issue of corruption. People from all walks of the society supported him spontaneously. To a young generation who does not seem to have any specific, constructive aim, Anna gave a purpose for which they can fight collectively; gave a goal which was attainable. His appeal resulted in a self-inspired response. This preliminary fight brought the issue of the long-pending Lokpal Bill to the forefront. The government was constrained to take cognizance of the same and at least the government draft was finalized.

Anna and his team are disappointed with this draft hence they raised the flag of non-cooperation. From here onwards, in my opinion, Anna has been stubbornly displaying theatrical uproars and throwing tantrums. This is like a kid playing a game... when the opponent keeps the den, the kid is happily playing; but when it's the kid's turn, he leaves the ground crying 'unfair play'! Anna's protest was so untimely that it aborted a possible mature ending before reaching its 'parliamentary and constitutional' solution. There should have been a discussion in the parliament about both the drafts. The representatives of the people would have been able to analyze both these drafts and Anna could have presented a comprehensive option to the public without jeopardizing our parliamentary democracy. Instead, Team Anna is insistent that 'Ours is The "Jan" Lokpal draft and therefore, a constructive and just one! The government draft is coercive, destructive and fails to offer a 'correct' solution!' The slogans like 'Anna is India & India is Anna', '*lao nahi to jao*', 'we want "dial 101" so that an officer will come to your doorstep from the Lokpal's office to take care of your complaint against a corrupt incident' are naïve and lack any political acumen. All these developments in last 5-6 days and the Team's obstinacy make me doubtful about their motive.

Anna has become an "event" and he doesn't seem to mind it! To appeal for any constructive purpose is one thing, but marketing one's popularity is quite

different! Why did Anna feel the need to use the media cheaply by appearing on 'Little Champs' or other Reality shows? Why did he approach the leaders of all the parties who themselves are so corrupt and when Anna himself has no faith in them? On what moral basis did he meet them? Will it be wrong to say that he went to them solely to get political support?

When he was released by the government from Tihar within 12 hours, he refused to leave by saying "I'll leave only if all my demands are granted unconditionally". What could have been his intention behind that stand? He could have continued his fast at home after his release. What was the need for a 'public' event? Is he merely interested in creating more conflicts? Is he trying to play the number game and to capitalize on the emotions of the followers by perpetuating confrontation? What is he really trying to achieve? One can see Kejariwal's agenda but why and how are Prashant Bhushan and Justice Hegde are being parties to this arm-twisting parade?

To cure any disease, it is necessary to find three kinds of remedies – preventive, curative and reformative/protective. What are the alternatives suggested by Anna to eradicate the presently incurable disease of corruption? Has he or his team members suggested any detailed economic reforms? Introducing a Jan-Lokpal Bill is a preventive measure he has put forth which has its own inherent shortcomings at various levels. It will take at least five years for it to be effective, if executed! Even if those five years are granted as a grace period, what reforms or actions have TEAM ANNA offered to eradicate the corruption during this period? The need of the hour is to seek maximum possible preventive and curative remedies through academic, pragmatic discourse, and deliberative, scholarly pursuits in the fields of economics, statistics, demographic planning and administration. Socio-economic and political evils like tax evasion, illegal wealth, black money, parallel economy etc need to be wiped out without adhering to the extraneous measures. To achieve this, academicians, economists, philanthropists, scholars and experts need to be gathered to bring about changes and reforms in the legal and administrative framework. Naïve perpetuation of Anna's single point agenda is fundamentally inadequate and lacks broader vision.

What I find most dangerous is the “blind and ignorant” mass following that is being flashed 24x7! How many of these people are non-corrupt? How many of them have escaped a sticky situation without giving a bribe? How many have not copied in their exams or bought question papers? How many have not paid to get attendance marked, or have not paid capitation fee for college admission? How many have applied for a Pancard and have filed their returns honestly? How many of them have formed a learned opinion after studying the issue in depth? The literacy of these supporters will qualitatively differentiate them from the mice which followed the Pied Piper! The corruption is infiltrated and perpetuated through these supporters as well. Anna should have appealed to this charged youth energy, “to vow to remain clean in their respective social-personal affairs without falling prey to any illegal temptations or inducements”. Instead he proclaimed, “It’s the second fight for freedom!” totally ignoring the great momentum inspired by respected Jai Prakash Narayan. If these supporters were alert, vigilant, and not following Anna merely with an emotional faith, we would have experienced awakening of a responsible, mature gathering of common-man coming out of their political apathy! Ramdevbaba had also managed to assemble a hyper crowd; political leaders repeatedly demonstrate their power with ‘hired’ supporters! Even history has dazzled us time and again with the colossal numbers of mindless followers who carried out the aspirations of their dictator rulers. Let’s not forget the humiliating and atrocious scars that they have left on the civilization!

Though the specific ideal of wiping out corruption has brought together these flaunters of ‘Anna Hazare cap’, they don’t have to propagate strategies of ‘cornering the government with a mandate of obeying Anna’s words to the last’. Are these masses really capable of assessing the situation objectively and furthermore, creating dynamic yet clean and non-corrupt India? Announcing ‘fasting unto death’, ‘taking a vow of silence or non-cooperation’ are un-parliamentary practices which are obsolete in a vibrant democracy. It is our fundamental duty to adopt means ensured by our constitution. Team Anna are embracing methods as irrational, unreasonable and brutish as slashing the wrists to hold the entire family at ransom till the family succumbs to the blackmailing!

This must be resisted, lest on the way to Anarchy, Mobocracy will win and Democracy will perish.

People at large, their representatives, intellectuals, social reformers, media should curb this wrong socio-political precedent. We have a very positive illustration of an explosive bill getting amended 153 times before RTI was issued as law. Anna believes that the entire establishment is run with a sole purpose to rob people, therefore, all administrators are robbers. Clutching on to nihilism, where is he steering this movement... towards forming a utopian, trustworthy system? He is selling a dream which is not viable and accessible. When this trust or faith of his followers turns out to be fruitless, then the onslaught of frustration and disappointment and cynicism will have far deeper repercussions. Pessimism and apathy will overshadow any activism! History will then prove that this scar of disillusionment was irreparable, irreversible and too harmful!

Even if Anna manages to bring down the existing government, can he guarantee that the disease will be eradicated from the new system? How will he assure a new government that will be entirely free of corruption? Can these supporters not ask Anna such simple questions and seek some clarity? Is Anna capable of offering any concrete solution besides his simpleton appeals?

The point is this 'Anna event' has to be stopped. His followers must understand that Anna is neither a prophet, nor an angel or a James Bond! The media should stop its heightened drama and harbor adult discourse. The possibility of all this frenzy turning violent and destructive should not be ignored. Anna ought to seek a long term reform by bringing a viable solution on the table.

I am aware that by exercising my freedom of expression, I may be branded as 'Anna's antagonist' or even a 'traitor'! Even then I want to assert that Anna ain't and should not be *The Magister Ludi!!!*