

Editorial**Forced to Emigrate**

Jaffar M Al-Bareeq, DLO, RCP, RCS*

Following my publication of the editorial titled “Professionals – Rare breed,” I received this letter from a consultant who left Bahrain Government Health Service to a lucrative position and salary in Europe.

He insisted that I do not reveal his name at any cost and I promised to abide by that promise.

Normally, I would have published this letter in the section of “Letter to the editor”, but he insisted that his letter be published in the Editorial Section since I have dealt with this subject in that place. He addressed his letter to his colleagues and to those in power.

“Dear Sir,

I worked in the government health service for 10 years as a consultant and chairman. I did my best to train my Bahraini fellow citizens and I was very happy to see some of them rise to consultant posts.

Because of my liberal thoughts and actions, I was not in total agreement with those in position at some time and I could not appease them as the others do.

My salary was not able to cover my expenses especially having two children studying in St. Christopher’s School. My classmates in high school who went for business degrees were earning double and some of them were earning treble my salary. Mind you, I managed by cutting corners, here and there; what was worst is that my junior consultants whom I had trained, started to make trouble for me, pushing me to leave the service in order for them to inherit my private practice, which earns peanuts - they did not know that.

The final blow came when my colleagues encouraged one of my patients to complain against me and to take me to court on a disputed case management. My colleagues were appointed by the authority as medical witnesses and jurors in a case they neither understand nor studied and they delivered a Mickey Mouse Judgment.

The straw, which broke the camel’s back came when the clown's court approved the Mickey- Mouse decision and delivered its judgment against me.

Therefore, I declare, in this bulletin, to my colleagues and to those in authority who drove me out from my beloved country that you have won the war, I should have

* Chief Editor
Bahrain Medical Bulletin
Kingdom of Bahrain

anticipated this for a long time, your victory had been inevitable, you had orchestrated everything against me and you were in harmony with the power base. Never before had it been as obvious as it was at that moment. As far as medicine is concerned, you are the God on this Island.

I concede, Great Power you have, commercial agency you have, scientific power base you control, college of medicine you manage, professional and allied societies you are in charge, the ministry of labor would not permit another society without your permission; therefore you are in total control. All these you manipulate to the best ... I admit that you won the battle. I became irrelevant since I have no power economically or otherwise; people are scared to touch or come near me, people here support the winner not the underdog.

Your victory has cost every one of us in medicine. And it would hurt the future generation deeply, if it is not halted.

You may have managed to run or own a hospital/s and provide an array of gadgetry for patient convenience and impression, but it has left us in a country without vision in medicine and without research. Our ethical values have been reduced to a forgotten tradition. Our aspirations and individual values have been stripped in order to pray for the new power; we the founders of medicine in this country had become meaningless in your system.

You made us feel utterly alone in a globe full of hostility instead of benevolence. Betrayal had become a virtue among the medical community. Is it any wonder that those enlightened among us now feel more depressed and defeated in the history of medicine? Do you hold anything sacred in medicine? You are driving the best to emigrate; you are driving the medical service to degenerate without the flinch of repentance.

You drove the wise and kind medical colleagues to fight and insult each other publicly in a meeting; you drove them to attack each other physically, as if they are living in ghetto – does it make you happy?

The war between virtue and power is over, you have won. But you have not won fairly, you have won by exercising your absolute power. You have won by radically running our medical society and by hiding the truth and overriding the medical ethics. I cannot keep up with you, since your power growth is exponential. It feeds on itself like a virus. Every day you open a new door to expand your control. Everyday you kiss more hands and feet to increase your power-base.

The rift between us grows deeper and deeper, as I see myself left behind, I find myself in an ethical void. I cried out for meaning; believe me I did cry out. I see all these eccentric ideas and irrational projects implemented in this country. I have become desperate, tormented and crippled by what you do of illogical and unscientific procedures. I feel ashamed of what you do of immoral behavior; what depressed me more that I cannot change the path or influence the outcome.

Too much power invested in you has destroyed the creativeness in us. Power, I say, has destroyed us. It is said, “absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

Since the days of Dr. Snow I tried to build an ethical attitude in the medical community, sometimes with misguided means, but always with benevolent intention. Nevertheless, with all your victories, you are creating chaos in the health services; you are moving down the path of destruction.

You need ethics and moral framework before you exercise your power; you need to be reigned. You are like an imbecile given a gun, but had not been warned of the danger of using it. Medicine is not merely performing a procedure or delivering drugs; you should have moral signposts that bind you to your patient and your colleagues. Medicine without morals, like an empty container, looks good, but offers nothing.

I have become tired and exhausted from trying to amend your faults; my voice of balance was drowned in the wave of your power. But how can I resist and survive and you are supported. Your world moves so fast into corruption that if you stop even for an instant to consider the implications of your actions, someone more efficient in corruption will take your position and power. So you move on.

Your hunger for power and destruction is without restraints. You deprive medical manpower of research and the means of improvement. All what you want them to do is to be subservient to your whims and to praise you, day and night without thinking of the moral implications of your actions. You seek an awesome power.

I tried reaching you, but I failed, because the more I reach, the more you push me away, yet we are supposed to be reaching out to everyone. I tried to make you understand for the sake of our future medical generations, but you adamantly refused.

Who is your idol; prove to me he is fair by bestowing all these powers on you. You claim that you follow heavenly orders and our great traditions – prove it to me, if not, you and what you claim are morally bankrupt.

When there is no one to audit you, you are not afraid of accountability. Of course, you are not accountable to yourself, to your colleagues, and to a higher power or even to the truth. Compassion is a word you do not understand; therefore you are roaming out of control.

Are we, the compassionate doctors had become obsolete, or are we part of history because we care for our patients, for our colleagues and we care about morality.

The medical community is perched on a precipice. None of us can afford to be careless. None of us can ignore the power of corruption and immorality – how big it is, or how mighty it is, it should be resisted; otherwise, the whole society will suffer. Together we can save the society from the abyss. Recent history showed us that rich countries have been left in ruins by corrupted officials

Finally, I was disgraced and you were glorified; your position and power was not earned because of your creativity or productivity, it was only bestowed on you because of your subservient behavior and because of nepotism. You deprived me economically, while you extended your empire from Bahrain to Cairo to London; you would not have hesitated to castrate anyone in your way, if you could.

I admit that you won the battle, but I won the future by leaving you to your follies and I am concentrating where I am, on delivering better service to my patients and advancing research.

I am grateful to you that you forced me to emigrate, to lead a better life, but I am not grateful for depriving the Bahraini patients of my service.

I am proud to be a doctor who serves the sick and I would like to dedicate the following poem by Dr. Celes to all honest hard working doctors in Bahrain who care not about power, but about their patients:

Thank Thee O Lord, for making me Doctor;
Thou show'd me life and how to preserve it;
Its greatness lies in its noble factor;
Make me to serve the sick in manner fit.

I heal the wounds of the afflicted ones;
Ameliorate the anguish in their hearts;
I shower on them love in many tonnes;
They render praise to God and me in carts.

In life, I need not take the begging-bowl;
Peace of mind and satisfaction, they give;
Bless me O Lord, let me not do things foul;
A disease-free and perfect life, I live.
Good that I chanced to become a Doctor,
Guide me O Lord; with life, I shouldn't blunder.”

This is his letter without addition except my few comments at the beginning and at the end.

**You are welcome to send your comments or contribution to
jmab@batelco.com.bh**