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# CORRUPTION

## The World is one family

The Rig Veda ("knowledge") says that when even one human being dies of starvation, it is a sign that corruption has crept into society. UNESCO has included the Rig Veda in its Memory of the World Register, as a heritage of exceptional value.

South African Food Sovereignty Campaign says "14 million people go to bed hungry." The seers of the Vedas firmly believed that all should share equally in the necessities of life and nobody should suffer hardships for the lack of it.

It was their ideal that entire mankind should live harmoniously together as a family (Vasudhaiva

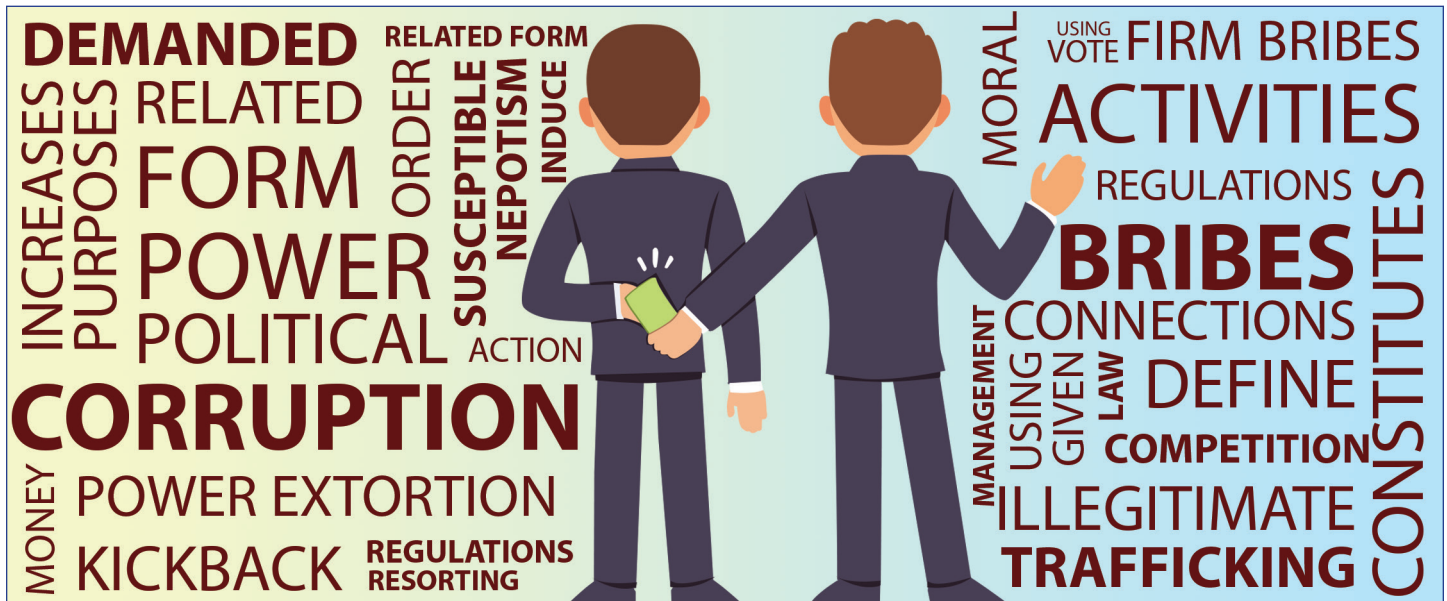
Kutumbakam) and share the necessities of life such as food, shelter and clothing. Today, sanitation, education, and healthcare can be added.

## Public officials are trustees who serve

When control of the resources for the production of goods and services falls into the wrong hands, corruption sets in. Public officials are appointed to serve the interests of the people and act as "trustees" for the greater public good.

The resources are not there for their personal benefit but meant for the people. Public officials should consider it an honour to serve their fellow citizens. They should lead by example, being honest in thought and deed in both their personal and official lives.

**"Public officials should lead by example"**





## SA corruption index

How do these ideals of a good public official stand up to the reality in our country?

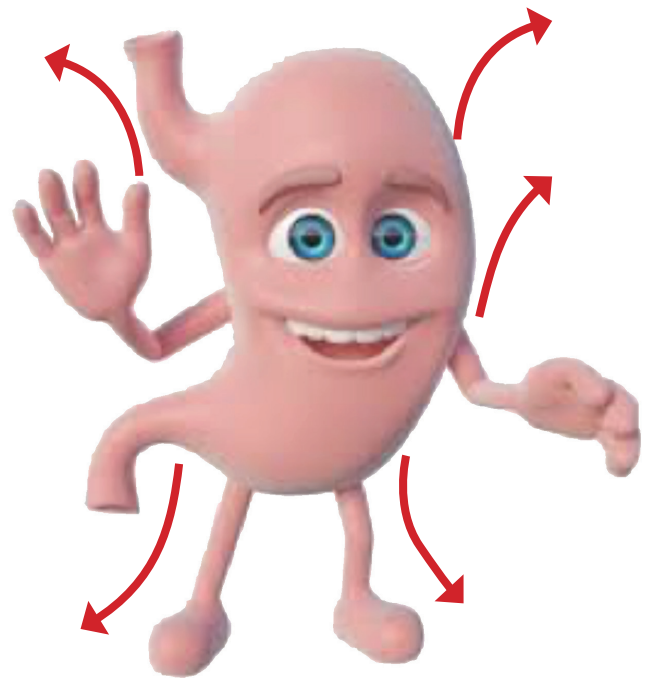
The Corruption Perceptions Index ranks countries based on how corrupt their public sector is seen to be. A scale of 0 means highly corrupt and 100 is very clean. South Africa scored 45 points out of 100 on the 2016 Corruption Perceptions Index.

***“State resources should be distributed fairly to all members of society”***

Daily, the newspapers report new cases of looting of state resources by politicians and their cronies. Such looting deprives communities of the quality service delivery they deserve. South Africa has a legacy of poverty and inequality to address. Sadly, many politicians are acting in ways that betray the trust placed in them by communities. Many are not leading by example but are busy furthering their own selfish interests.

## Be like the stomach

The Vedas give an example of the stomach which receives food and then distributes the nourishment to all parts of the body equally. If one part of the body is neglected, it will not grow healthily and will become deformed. In a similar way, the resources of the state should be distributed fairly to all members of society and not stolen for the benefit of a few connected individuals. Society will not develop in an orderly and healthy way if this happens. There is evidence that the resources of the state (i.e. belonging to the people) are being siphoned off to benefit only a few.



## Stomach distributes food equally to body

The mouth is like the leader (government) receiving food and distributing it equally to every limb in the body (society).

If one part of the body receives more than the other, we would have an unhealthy body. This is what is happening in society today, where the connected share resources and the poor continue to suffer.





## Causes of Corruption

- Corruption sets in when people see resources as something lifeless and unlike a human being who is alive and has emotions. Such people feel they do not harm anybody when taking state resources for themselves by unfair means. The Rig Veda says the spirit of God is in everything, even in the atom which is the building block of matter.

The use of matter (i.e. like mineral wealth, produced goods and money etc.) used for the benefit of all is seen as a virtue and its excessive use as a sin. An illusion, called Maya, creates a golden dazzling veil for individuals who do not see the true nature of resources which have their own unseen 'life or energy'. There are negative consequences when this 'energy' is used incorrectly.

Corruption destroys all the noble qualities of human beings whose 'god' becomes wealth which is the sole measure of their worth.

- The Rig Veda also says that purpose of human birth is to assist God, the Supreme Architect, to maintain His Grand Design. To do this, He has created eternal cosmic laws, called Rta. God wants all human beings to follow these laws. God Himself follows them strictly to avoid any harm to the divine creation. Thus He and His Laws (Rta) are the same. The

***“When God’s laws are ignored, corruption sets in.”***



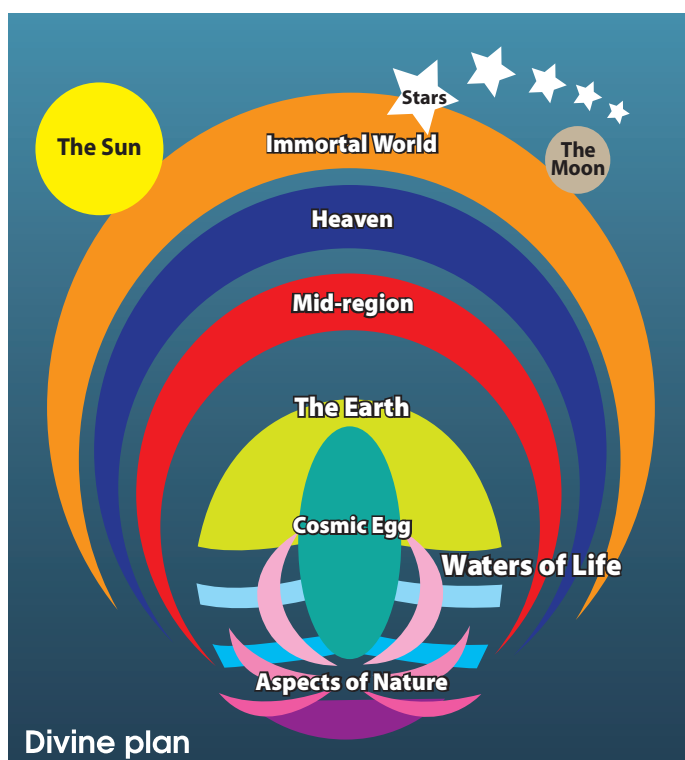
## Gambling is evil!

Laws can be called “the Truth” and when individuals in society start ignoring these laws, corruption sets in.

- The Rig Veda 10-34-13 also says that any kind of gambling is a cause of corruption. The terrible effects of this evil of gambling have been described in the Hindu epic, Mahabharata.

Today, it is common to find casinos in every major city and town. Slot machines appear in shopping malls and children are exposed to gambling from a young age. Gambling has left many people destitute and is considered an addiction. People get used to the idea of seeing some 'quick money' for no effort, and this thinking also encourages them to steal resources meant for the people of the country.

We see many who want honour, power and wealth for themselves. They take to flashy worship and give donations/gifts to gain social recognition. Ethics and community welfare are ignored. The Rig Veda says the thieves of God (bribe givers/takers), who see matter as something inert (lifeless), become insensitive to the many headed serpent of corruption. Once you start, there is no end to it.



## Crisis of nation is crisis of character

To prevent corruption from becoming commonplace, the promotion of integrity (honesty, decency, honour) among young people is critical to building a better future.

Dr. S Radhakrishnan said, "You cannot make or build the nation by just bricks; you have to establish the minds of the young people. Then alone can nation-building take place."

We cannot change the behaviour of the nation by passing laws. We all know that as soon as a new act comes into effect, people will find ways to defy it legally and illegally. There is a saying — 'sow a thought, reap an action; sow an action, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character'. Character is nothing but a bundle of habits formed through repeated acts.

The foundation for character-building has to be laid at a young age. Parents and teachers are the most important agents for building this character in children.



### What parents can do

Parents should speak and act in ways they would like to see in their children. Children learn by imitation, so it is important for parents not to tell them how to behave but 'walk the talk' and be living examples of this behaviour.

### What teachers should do

The teacher or acharya in the Vedic age was responsible for not only imparting knowledge, both religious and secular, but also for moulding



the character and personality of the pupils of his gurukula. The gurukula was a school where pupils lived and learned under the care of the teachers. It was something like a full time boarding school. The teacher was an excellent role model. He played the role of a loving father, an effective teacher, and was a person of high moral and spiritual qualities. He maintained discipline by the force of his personality. Even today, a school which emphasizes tolerance, respect, hard work, honesty and integrity in teachers naturally encourages good character in its students.

Corruption robs us all. The society our grandchildren will inherit depends on seeds we sow now at home and at school.

**CHARACTER  
COUNTS!**

**"Corruption  
robs everybody"**

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#### Reference

Post dated January 26, 2011, What Vedas say about Corruption? by P.K.Sabhlak

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