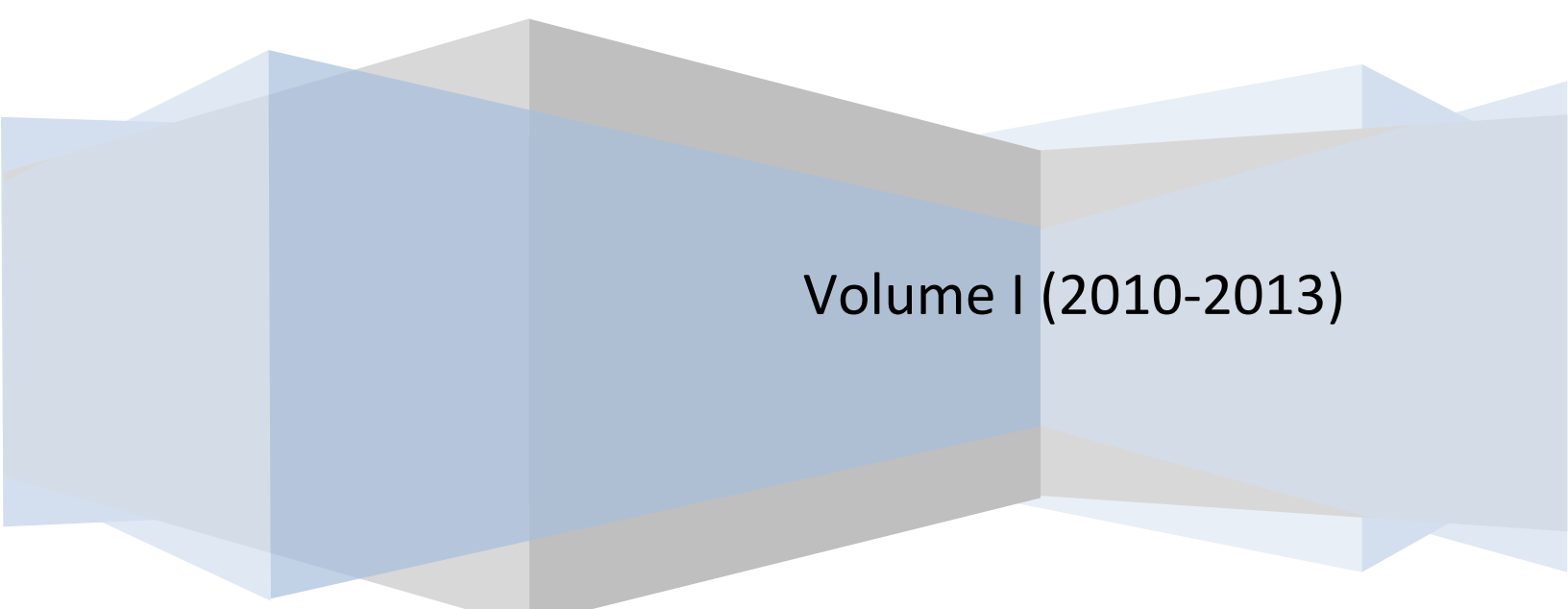


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Blog Posts

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Akiye's Blog



Volume I (2010-2013)

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Forgotten Obligations

In 2007, Ethiopia's population was estimated about 77 million, with only 16 percent "Urban." That is according to a report from the Population Reference Bureau posted at <http://www.prb.org/Countries/Ethiopia.aspx>, accessed on May 30 2010. In case you wonder what Ethiopia's population would be in 2050, you may safely guess around 145 million. Yes, shy a little - away from being twice as much. I imagine, by then, the urbanized proportion would still be near 16 percent. That should be frightening to all of us!

Inarguably, social inequalities are visibly harsh in "rural" areas. Low socioeconomic status, low level of education, and poor health -- all take their toll in "rural" populations. In Ethiopia, we are talking about 65 million people, at the present alone. This is not to say that the quality of life among the current "urban" segment of the population is any superior either.

For countries that count money in trillions, an annual economic growth of 10 or 15 percent is probably considered enough. However, for a country at the bottom end of the prosperity ladder, similar annual growth patterns are far from what need to be achieved and should not be taken as a reason for comfort. Whether prioritization dictates the future direction of a country or the future direction of a country dictates prioritization, urban and rural areas remain in the same boat with an ever-shifting space between them. When rural areas fail, the country as a whole fails.

It for sure will not be tomorrow, when all urban and rural populations enjoy equal opportunities for the best education, best healthcare, and advancement in science and technology that would enable them to live a prosperous and peaceful life. However, it is undeniable that courageously defining the country's future, and taking the first aggressive step today, towards building a prosperous and peaceful country, is sadly the forgotten obligations of the present generation.

~ Akiye, June 2010 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

It is a small world after all!

Now and then, I ask myself, how did the universe exist, and where did we humans (life for that matter) come from? Well, I already have booked to come back for a second life, when and if ever there would be answers for those questions. For now, I remain puzzled, which fields of curiosity – religion, science or a combination of both - would ever be able to decipher those mysteries.

Short of a valid answer, for how the universe did exist, and where humans (life) did come from; there is a growing body of evidence on the patterns of human inhabitation on planet earth that might as well serve as a proxy indicator where the origin of humans might have been. Based on historical writings, anthropology, archeology, and human genome studies; I subscribe to the

dominant of the existing models that describe the patterns of human presence across the different continents. This model is the one that underscores the importance of the region in east Africa – “humans originated in eastern part of Africa, migrating first to the Middle East, then to Europe, Asia, the Pacific Islands, and finally to the Americas.”

Factors that influence human mobility include but not limited to the following: curiosity, climate variability or climate change, war, political or religious persecutions, trade, industrialization, education or work opportunities, and social or personal factors. Although some reasons may be dominant over others at a certain point in time, the possibilities for the presence of more than one reason that tend to vary from place to place and from time to time are visible attributes of human mobility.

At the present, the movement of humans from place to place is occurring in mass and uncontrollably faster pace than ever. It is no more a surprise to find oneself in different parts of the world, be it for a short visit or to settle permanently. This obviously changes the mix and spread of humans on the planet and the complexities that come with it. Coupled with a virtual lifestyle that resulted from the unfolding digital revolution, the world as we know it, is becoming a much more connected and smaller place to live in.

If your lives include aspects of human mobility, and find yourselves in a far place; let it not be a surprise, and let it not make you feel like a stranger. It is just part of a continuum, of humans' existence -- as a free-living being. Instead, strive to catch-up and assimilate in the society you are in, define yourselves, aim to be successful, and live to the fullest. If you intend to make your existence bigger than life itself, do something good for others -- near or far -- it should not matter. It is a small world after all!

~Akiye, July 2010 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

Perseverance

For this month, August that is, I opt to blog about my take on perseverance. Perseverance - as in – interpretations that googling or Bing may pull through, such as – “steady persistence in a course of action, a purpose, in spite of difficulties, obstacles, discouragements, or past failures.” The goal of this blog is not to provide a complete subject matter expert opinion on the word perseverance, but to use it in perspective, of course Ethiopia and Ethiopians in mind, and briefly revolve my thoughts around it.

Whether it is running a neighborhood soccer team, nurturing a dream to kiss the golden World Cup; or struggling to achieve the highest level of democracy, peace, and prosperity; the steps necessary to succeed are never straightforward, and success not only would not come easily, but also may never become a reality, no matter how perseverant one might be. Sounds pessimistic? No -- not at all! Bear with me for a moment.

Perseverance is a construct, a phenotype of interactive processes of multiple attributes, if you will, that fall under an overarching heading – Strategy -- directed towards achieving a common

set goal. Therefore, perseverance is only and only good as the balance among the strengths, weaknesses, variability and coherence of its attributes. Talk about mission, goals, objectives, implementation plans, performance indicators, continuous evaluation, and quality improvement guidelines!

Allowing myself to drift away from generality, I see a possibility in perseverance to be considered as either beneficial, or harmful. The merits of perseverance could become even more complicated, and blurred if the meaning of success is not well defined and different versions of success are up for grab -- fertile grounds, where a long list of reasons for confusion and disagreements flourish and push the horizon of success one sunset away indefinitely.

When I think of perseverance, one thing that comes repeatedly to my mind is politics in the present day Ethiopia. Despite the persistent struggle for the past five or six decades, the reasons why the country never seems to reach to a visible peace and prosperity certainly require a serious revisit of past strategies, by those who are close to politics and governance. There are exemplary countries that were invisible fifty to sixty years ago but are now the leading economies globally. Take Japan for example. After a devastated economy during the Second World War, Japan transformed itself into one of the wealthiest nations in the world. I believe a difference in strategy is the primary reason for where Japan and Ethiopia are presenting themselves today on a global scene. There should be no reason why Ethiopia would not be one of the globally leading economies in 2050.

All things that matter considered, a paradigm shift of politics and governance is long past due for Ethiopia -- A clean transition from politics and governance that put first individuals and political organizations - to - politics and governance that must put first Ethiopia and Ethiopians. A genuine revisit of past strategies, and making necessary changes, even if it means moving 180 degrees into a new position, is the only way out.

It is not a choice, but an obligation for those close to politics and governance in Ethiopia to put all the energy together, and move not only fast but also exponentially faster as one. In order to be able to move exponentially faster as one; the first step ought to be to take a deep breath, or smell the heavenly rich aroma of Ethiopian coffee, whichever works for the concerned folks, and deal once and for all with "human factors" that are crucial but untold reasons for the lack of the key element - oneness. Human factors, if not watched carefully, can over shadow reality and cripple a noble intent from achieving its goal, rendering a perseverant struggle - (with all due respect) - to become just a futile exercise.

In my opinion, perseverance with sensibly formulated and dynamic attributes that always put first the common good is beneficial. The mere perseverance itself; however, could be harmful if left unchecked, and would likely to cross an uncharted territory where then becomes insanity - as in - doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.hmmmm! -- may be possible but not probable. I assume, Einstein would not mind, my using of the words perseverance and insanity contextually, and I take comfort in that. Cheers!

~ Akiye, August 2010 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

Systems of Care

Systems of Care, as a topic, in a less structured blog; is too much to handle. Therefore, I hope to come back to it, in a formal and detailed report in the future. Time willing! Until then, the purpose of this blog is to briefly share the concept of Systems of Care as it relates to health, with my readers, aiming at, primarily, creating a reason for an hour or so of a coffee-table conversation on the topic among friends and families.

Speaking of a topic Systems of Health Care (SHC); first, allow me to state the reasons why I am, and all of us should be worried about “health.” If you said at this juncture, how dare him! I understand, but I will do it anyways, as a repetition to all of us. Health, said a definition from a leading global organization - health is “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” According to the just mentioned definition, it is hardly possible that any one on the planet would be found with a certificate to prove that he or she is “healthy.” Well, I believe, inspiration was the magnificent mindset in the room when that definition was adopted over half a century ago.

In all seriousness, while an ideally “healthy” planet is practically close to a fantasy, at the same time, there is an unadulterated truth in the existence of a huge disparity in the health status of populations across the continents and the need to do something about it. Inarguably, populations in developing countries, including Ethiopia, are suffering from higher levels of morbidity, mortality, poor quality of life, and shorter life expectancy compared to populations in developed nations. Disease conditions that span from malaria to measles; from malnutrition to arthritis; from myocardial infarction to cancer, from benign psychosocial distress to crippling mental health abnormalities, are all mercilessly torturing all segments of the population in poorer countries. The impact to the already devastated economy that is associated with direct and indirect health care expenditure is enormous; and the suffering and premature loss of precious human life is just despicable. When it comes to a conscious existence, “health” should be placed at the top and center of everything else. The rest, either would be streamlined seamlessly as a result of building a healthy population, or can wait. Therefore, based on the above qualitative reflections, I was serious, when I decided to repeat the obvious, and said that we all should be worried primarily about health. Fighting diseases and building a healthy and productive society must be a priority second to none, for east and west, north and south, rich and poor, this and that!

The continually increasing risk factors both in numbers and complexity including the presence of high numbers of afflicted people with infectious diseases, a very susceptible population to infections; malnutrition, polluted water and unsanitary living conditions, very low immunization coverage, lack of knowledge about health and disease, shortage of adequate and reachable health services, the cost and complexities in prevention and treatment modalities, and scarcity of data that would otherwise assist continuous quality improvement activities and evidence based health care, to mention a few, are over arching reasons that put populations in poorer countries in a extremely disadvantageous position, rendering them as the most endangered species on earth.

The enormity of the health problems among populations in poorer countries dictates the need for aggressive and comprehensive measures - an all out war - if you will, to bring about the needed changes faster. That is where the concept of SHC would prove itself relevant. The term “Systems of Health Care” as described by Lee H. Schwamm et al in Stroke2005; 36; 690-703; after a little touch of your own humble blogger, could be seen as synonymous to a network of multiple related stakeholders functioning in an environment where effective interaction and collaboration is nurtured. The essence of SHC is that organizations, and people involved in providing primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention services, are functioning in an integrated manner, following standardized approaches that are professionally tailored to each individual health problems (ok, to each one of the major health problems). Although, academicians, practitioners, service providers, advocates, policymakers, and representatives of the community are core members of SHC, the involvement of sectors that are traditionally seen as foreign to the health care system, such as ministry of agriculture, ministry of transportation, ministry of telecommunication, religious institutions, wozeterfe, is equally crucial to move faster in the right direction.

The intent of SHC would not be to replace a formal health care system of a nation, but rather to complement and reinforce existing formal national health care delivery systems, aiming at integrating, and orchestrating efforts to achieve desired results quicker and in an efficient manner. Just to make a distinction to where a difference exists, the essence of SHC is not similar to existing associations, committees, councils, etc. that by far are dysfunctional and passive. The SHC is an actual health service; a powerhouse of knowledge, skills, and resources that is proactively energized by a spirit of voluntarism, and high-level professional determination to make a difference. The players in SHC are the actual health care and health care related professionals, and the job would be done within and along the existing health care infrastructure of the country.

Now, in order to translate the concept of SHC on to a reality, it requires the creation of an environment where two or more geographically adjacent cities, districts, zones, or regions build networks or a strong SHC and work together to reduce morbidity, mortality and improve the quality of life of their populations. The SHC or networks are created based solely on common/shared health problems. Period! Any governments, that chose to lead their people in a civilized manner, should make their primary obligations visible that they are in the process of fulfillment by providing the necessary support and leadership to such endeavors. For Ethiopia, such strong SHC would not only be instrumental in strengthening the helpless approaches of tackling health problems; it would also bring closeness, love and a sense of oneness among the different clans, or tribes throughout the country. That in and of itself would just be priceless!

~ Akiye, September 2010 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

Vivid Love

Imaginable
Untold Alfa affection of the brittle

Curious, surprise, or comfort
Whichever way is inherent
Spontaneous, deeper, naïve
Heavenly, un-interpretable
A triad – silent gaze, a cry, or giggle
A mystery - undiscovered treasure within
Just wish, if brittle self- had to explain.

Mystic presence – portion of life
Filled with nothing, but vivid love.

Awareness, conscious, discovery
Expressive, happiness - energy
A blossom - re-livable
Desire and rebel
But genuine, like haven
Mysterious – quite - dangerous
Hopeful, but unsure
Shivering – galloping - breathless
Sleepless - feels like sickness
Oh- no, it is that blossom - re-livable
Desire and rebel
But genuine, like haven
As blossom self has made us to believe-in.

Mystic presence – portion of life
Filled with nothing, but vivid love.

Complex - genius
Futuristic - realistic
Intimacy, partner
Best wishes to the future
Ownership - belongingness
Righteous reflections - sacrifice
Mature, responsible
Selfless devotion to principle
Obligated, determined
Dedicated

Uncertainty, dreams, nightmares
Endless - tumultuous days
God bless
All those friends, who are not with us.

Mystic presence – portion of life
Filled with nothing, but vivid love.

Reflections – mixed emotions
Memories
Restful, still hopeful - but nervous
Experience - grace
Second nature - no time to thinker
Obvious - spontaneous
Wise and generous
Ostensible
An Omega, time to windup the travel
That began as a brittle.

Mystic presence – portions of life
Filled with nothing, but vivid love.

Akiye, October 2010 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

The Season

During the coming three or more months, daytime will be shorter, darkness will set in earlier, the temperature will fall lower and lower, and rain and snow will be here often. By default, folks tend to be more at home, get closer to family and loved ones. If you pay attention -- nine, or ten months after this season, you will hear about the news on the months where the number of newborns has spiked. The season is upon us!

It has begun with shrugging off the ghosts from our shoulders, and we all are heading towards indulging ourselves with some unsuspected Turkeys and annoying strange uncle or aunt commentaries. Christmas, is also around the corner, and you can feel the envy that Christmas has on Thanksgiving :-). Did not Christmas celebration, at least the shopping side of it, have already started months ago! Oh, and there is that time of the year, where we all will be left with little energy - just enough - to count from ten down to the “Happy New Year”, and a kiss or two as a sign and seal of the end of the holidays season.

Well, with all the good stuff around holidays, we somewhat tend to forget how extra busy and restless we can be. Caution is in order folks! Roads and driving are seasonally risky, alcohol consumption and unhealthy eating are on the way, and there is that guiltless spending pattern

as well. I know - I know, while spending a little more may be unavoidable, one has to plan for it, and refrain from becoming obsessed with purchases. Your pocket will thank you latter. Do not forget to take a break, get enough sleep, and watch the little ones carefully. It is easy to be caught up with the flow and forget yourself until you reach a stage of total burnout. This time of the year, the stress index understandably will spike up a little, and may even push you off the edge to predispose you to things like the common cold or the flu, where otherwise you might have avoided, if you were paying the deserved attention to yourselves.

Anyways, from your humble blogger - to you all out there; Happy Holidays!

Akiye, November 2010 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

Sad News

This past week, while at a break from work, I pulled out my Berry to check e-mail. As always, several e-mails were listed - still in bold. I run down, eyeballing to chose and pick which ones I should open and read. Among the list, one in particular attracted my attention, because it was sent from a close friend. When I pointed to it, the subject line reads "Sad News." I hesitated and really wanted to read it after I get back home later in the day. But again, after a few seconds, I went and read it anyways.

The initial thread was sent from Ethiopia, to let my friend know that a dear friend and colleague of ours recently has passed away. Shaken, and tearful, I run to the back room, and let it go quietly until I felt a little better. I read the e-mail again and again, only to find myself jumping from disbelief to sadness, back and forth. Many others and I have a very close and long history of friendship, collegiality, and brotherhood that began long time ago, at a very young age, right after high school, when circumstances took a number of us all to a very long-term academic and professional endeavor.

Nothing less than a pleasant fairy tale, the shared life has made us grow from young classmates, roommates, and friends, to mature professional colleagues. No matter you know that life is going to end at some point - when a dear friend, a brother and a colleague suddenly leaves you, it hurts deeply! Our friend was a very fun loving, humorous, and selfless gentle man. We have seen the best, the good, the bad, and the ugly of life together, and that makes the news much more difficult to comprehend. Too little time to reflect; much more left to live. I will definitely miss him, and he will be missed by all who knew him.

In memory of a dear friend, Dr. Asseged Debebe.

Akiye, December 2010 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

መልካም አዲስ ዓመት !

ወድ የአዳራሽ.ኔት እንግዶች: እንኳን ከ 2010 ወደ 2011 አሸጋግራችሁ! አዳራሽ.ኔት አዲሱ ዓመት አዲስና ጠቃሚ ነገር የምትጀምሩበት እንዲሆንላችሁ ትመኝላችኋለች።

ታዲያ እንግዲህ - ይህ እኮ የፈረንጆች በዓል ነው የሚለውን ለሌላ ግዜ ትተን፤ ጥሩ ነገርም እስከሆነ ድረስ ሰበብ እየፈለጉ መተንፈሱ ጉዳት እንደማይኖረውም ስለማምን፤ እስቲ በ 2011 ለኢትዮጵያ ምን አዲስ ነገር ቢገጥማት ይበጃታል በሚል የተነሳ በሀሳቤ የሚመለስውን ባጭሩ ላካፍላችሁ።

ኢትዮጵያ ሰላም ማጣቷ እንጂ - የት በደረሰን ነበር - የሚል ወገን ቁጥር ስፍር እንደሌለው አንባቢያ ሁሉ የሚጋራኝ እውነታ እንደሆነ ላፍታም እንኳን አልጠራጠርም። ለኢትዮጵያ ሰላም ማጣትም ሆነ ኋላቀር መሆን - በቅድሚያ ተጠያቂው ማነው ስንልም - ከጥንት ጀምሮ በየጊዜው እየተፈራረቁ የገዟትና አሁንም እየገዟት የሚገኙት መንግስታት መሆናቸውም አሌ የማይባል ሃቅ ነው።

በሌላ በኩል ስንመለከት ደግሞ - የመንግስትን ያስተዳደር ስርዐት እንቃወማለን - የተሻለ ስርዐትንም እናመጣለን በሚል - በተቃዋሚነት ጎራ ተሠልፈው - የየድርሻቸውን በመወጣት ላይ ያሉ ወገኖች ቁጥራቸው እጅግ ብዙ ሆኖ ሳለ - ለኢትዮጵያ አንጀቷ ላይ ጠብ የሚል ነገር እንዲመጣ ለማስቻል አለመብቃታቸው - ለኢትዮጵያ ሰላም ማጣትና - ብሎም ወደኋላ መቅረት - በተቃዋሚው ጎራ የተሰለፉት ወገኖች - ተሳክቶላቸው በየወቅቱ የመንግስት ስልጣን ላይ ከተቀመጡት ያላነሰ ሃላፊነትም ተጠያቂነትም ሊሰማቸው ይገባል ባይ ነኝ።

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Akiye, January 2011 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

United We Stand

There is nothing dignifying and precious like fighting for your freedom and winning it. Africa has an abundance of history in doing just that – and that is exactly what the world will be witnessing soon in the largest country in the African continent, the Sudan. In early January 2011 the people of Sudan went out to voting stations to decide on whether or not the South secedes from the North. The result, when announced sometime in mid February, is likely to confirm just that. Freedom!

However, I am rightly reminded to what has happened two decades ago in the neighboring country Ethiopia, and couldn't help it, but wonder if the split of Sudan in to two countries would bring solutions to the complex problems that the people of Sudan are experiencing. What would be the likelihood that the people of Sudan would continue facing lingering challenges on issues like border demarcation between the would be two separate countries, the countries resources allocations, destruction of family - social - institutional structures, the

politics of future leaderships, euphoria based animosity, the future of Africa etc. might shatter genuine expectations ?

Although freedom is a right that comes naturally, in an African context, separation is not necessarily the right or the only way of securing freedom for the people of Sudan. Separation could in fact be a reflection of inadequacy of leadership and helplessness and may likely come back and haunt the people of Sudan and the African continent for years to come. The motto “United We Stand, Divided We Fall” was valid then and is valid today. The way to go for Africa is to unite and become one nation. Not to separate. Yes, the United States of Africa is the only solution for the infinite senseless wars that destroy precious human life, and drain resources. Then and only then, the children of Africa will get an opportunity to focus on building Africa towards a more peaceful, prosperous and civilized continent.

Best wishes to the people of Sudan, and the continent of Africa!

Akiye, February 2011 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

Element of Success

Natural events that result in volcanic eruptions are metaphorically comparable to events that result in eruptions of the emotions of oppressed people. It will happen, one way or the other - and it is only a matter of time. When it comes to volcanic eruptions, the events that initiate and build up the pressure in a magma chamber deep below the Earth's surface cause the magma to be forced upward, reach the surface, and ultimately end up to be a spectacular eruption. Likewise, eruptions of the emotions of oppressed people – focusing here on problems in governance – begin because of oppression, violation of civil rights, unrest, injustice, discrimination, corruption, poverty, and hopelessness, that inevitably end up in a compounding unhappiness, and justified anger. That unhappiness and justified anger pass the threshold of the force that is keeping them quiet and in fear, and ultimately cause uncontrollable eruption of emotions to bring about a change to the status quo once and for all. In a way creating a new landscape of politics and governance of the future. Unfortunately, not all new landscapes of politics and governance are to the satisfaction of the people's need. And that has been the engine behind the endless uprisings and revolutions witnessed throughout the planet since humans' existence.

When it comes to uprisings of oppressed people, for the ever-roaring continent - Africa - the year 2011 – is not in any way new or different. What is new and different however is, it has been very change full - so far - and until now the changes in the making seem to go in line with the demand of the people. Tunisia and Egypt are cases in point. Now Libya in the queue that will not be the end of it. I genuinely hope this is the beginning of a dream come true, where oppressive regimes are forced to leave their powers and replaced by the power of the people with no bloodshed. To the people of Tunisia and Egypt, Congratulations are in order!.

There are two crucial points that I am reminded by the events in Tunisia and Egypt and I believe deserve to be said out loud, scripted in red, bold, italic, and underscored. One - oppressive regimes will never willingly leave power, and two - when people revolt in one voice and in unanimity, they will definitely win.

Now - The fact that oppressive governments will never give up power willingly, is something that is not arguable. Suffice to highlight what the overthrown government did recently in Egypt: Ordered the police to do whatever it takes to stop the uprising - to the extent of shooting to kill. They failed. Launched a miss-information campaign and attempted to undermine the movement and demoralize the youth who were the engine of the uprising by labeling them as children who do not know what they are doing. Cheep shot – did not work. Shuts down communications, the Internet and Social Media. It too, did not work. Instead, it provoked the outsourcing of usernames and passwords to access the Internet from far away countries. The government also attempted to create chaos by organizing a counter protest using its supporters. They came on the back of camel and horses holding whip and stick. Mel Gibson's next Movie! It too did not work. Finally, it attempted to show a hesitant defiance – by coming out officially and telling the people that the regime will stay in power –That too did not work.

Coming to the people's corner - the fact that - when people revolt in one voice and unanimity they will win - is also not arguable. I am not being too optimistic here, but rather hopeful. Again, relying on the recent memory from the experience in Egypt - a youth propelled movement of oppressed Egyptians, supported by the tools - the Internet, twitter and face book - flooded the ancient cities of the North African country, marching in absolute determination for one and only one purpose – Demanding the resignation of the oppressive regime, and building a democratic and prosperous Egypt – One Egypt that is! Interestingly, the necessary absence from the picture was the names of political parties or the names and faces of opposition leaders. Instead, the Egyptian people came out in one voice, all for one nation, all as Egyptians demanded their voice to be heard and did it in a smart way. The oppressive regime has left the building – No return!

The future of politics and governance both in Tunisia and Egypt remains to be seen, and for sure is not free of uncertainties, even as we browse. However, so far so good, and I wish both the people of Tunisia and Egypt all the best. Also, it will be unfair to history, if I fail to mention how the Egyptian military behaved for 18 days, and thank them for being exemplary. Waiting to hear or read in the future, why and how the Egyptian army acted the way it did, I only wish that the military of other countries in Africa, and for that matter in any parts of the world; learn a brave lesson from the Egyptian army. No shooting on your own people!

That said - Africa is a very diverse continent, with many cultures, languages, and economic - social -political circumstances. Therefore, to carbon copy or copy and paste the experiences from Tunisia and Egypt will not necessarily be the appropriate or the smart next step for other African countries that are under dictatorship and oppressive regimes.

Yes, the use of Internet, and social media, the neutrality of the army, and the involvement of the international community and international media have greatly contributed to the fall of the

oppressive regimes, particularly in Egypt. However, at the same time, history has documented revolutions before the era of the Internet, twitter, and face book. Revolutions with brutal army siding oppressive governments, the international community or the international media turning their back on the truth, millions of precious human lives lost, human dignity robbed and the future of nations crippled. Revolutions, nonetheless successful in terms of fulfilling the demand of the people! The morale of the story is, if you need to bring about a needed change, come out as one, for one united country, one, and only one goal – building together a peaceful, “democratic,” prosperous and civilized nation where all of its citizens will genuinely consider home. That - and only, that is the golden element of success!

Akiye, March 2011 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

Friday, 11 March 2011 02:46 PM

...early post

Somehow sleepless that night of Thursday March 10, I kept flipping channels, until when I came back to myself, waking up from a seemingly breathless fixed stare at the television. Yes, it was, and this time really was breaking news, broadcasted live. March 11, Friday afternoon at 2:46 PM local time, a catastrophic earthquake hits the Northeastern shore of Japan. The magnitude, at the initial period of the broadcast was a 7.9 in Richter scale, which kept increasing to 8.9 and when I was drafting this blog, the number rises to a 9.0. These numbers are in a logarithmic scale, therefore a one-unit change equates to an exponential increase of the measured quantity.

The earthquake hits offshore, the blow from underneath the ocean, pushes the ocean water upwards, creating gigantic waves of biblical proportion. You could literally follow live when the waves are heading onshore with a speed unimaginable that a decent gentle body of water would ever travel. It looks like the water has bones, muscles, joints, vessels, and a boiling circulating blood in it that somehow manifests itself as an angry beast sets out for revenge.

Once the beast hits ground, it literally scavenged and destroyed everything on its way. Buildings flipped out of their base, ships, boats, cars swept away as plastic toys and disintegrated into pieces on the go. Once a beautiful farmland and a nearby city were left helpless and hopeless as it was later left as, a rugged shore filled with rubble covered in mud. Crumbling buildings, burning infrastructures, exploding power station that potentially is even more worrisome, what can I say - just nothing seems spared in that part of the planet.

It will be difficult even where to begin talking about the human side of the tragedy. I can only imagine how gruesome it could be. The scare, the bodily damage, lost lives, separation of families, societal disruption, and chaotic scenes. The calamities, not only for the people of Japan but also for the whole world will be a tragedy to ponder for decades to come. My heartfelt condolences to my Japanese friends here at home, and to those who are in the midst of a tragedy in Japan. May God bring calmness, a quick and prompt recovery to all.

Changing gears at this juncture, the planet has been restless this year, and damages that are caused by natural forces should remind us all how brittle and powerless humans and living things are. No matter how we think we are under control, Mother Nature is proving us all wrong time and time again. I hope one additional good thing to come out of not only the recent but all natural tragedies is - for humans to come to our natural senses and accept that manmade power is a fake power that always lags behind what is in store naturally. We will remain surprised. The helpfulness and genuine selfless relationships that somehow become unleashed when a disaster hits, are the very humanly things that we all should practice on a daily basis, even when the days seem normal.

It is a righteous purpose to create a world that will not only protect us from natural disasters as much as the human mind allows, but also from manmade damages that are inflicted by our own deeds. Those who are able having money, power and mind, should be humbled by what we have, and be generous to create a better world for all. It is the right thing to do. Unfortunately, the reality is closer to the contrary. As we can see - individuals, with an opportunity to hold power, and supposedly govern their citizens justly - are spending thirty or forty years, doing nothing but creating a fantasyland for themselves and leading spoiled lavish lives at the expense of the suffering and misery of their own people.

As the world is witnessing, in the northern part of Africa, sandwiched between two relatively peaceful revolutions, the people of Libya are in the midst of killing each other. It is just mind boggling, how is that difficult to lead a nation of FIVE or SIX million people, to a peaceful and prosperous life, when you have the largest oil reserves in the continent, and you have had - not four, not fourteen, but forty years in power? With no additional interpretation, explanation or debate, the fact that the sitting leaders of Libya were not able to avoid any of the happenings in the country, should be a justification - more than sufficient - for them to step down and let a new generation of leaders take the responsibility for rebuilding the future Libya.

When we have natural disasters that wipe out our existence without any notice, how is that even thinkable - leave alone be acceptable - that we add another misery to ourselves? How about for a change choose to do good and only good, and strive to bring about the abolishment of disparity between the rich and the poor, eradicate diseases, and establish peace throughout the planet. Like Nelson Mandela, like Bill Gates. It is all doable, if we all humans on the planet start to be honest with ourselves and define human existence as a communal marvel that needs to be worshiped. For some countries, this should start with the regimes that failed to lead their nations in a civilized way and are unable to bring peace and prosperity to their fellow citizens, show a little decency to humanity, and voluntarily step down, to give the next generation an opportunity to craft the future.

Akiye, April 2011 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

Time

Whether you are a realist as was Isaac Newton or a rationalist as was Leibniz, on your views of what time entails, the essence of time inarguably occupies a universal significance in society. Society structures itself time-wise, and time is a valuable resource that often is equated to money. Important events in life, like days and the different stages of the universe and of human existence are all expressed in respect with time.

Speaking of time, you probably have wondered how unbelievably fast the month of May is already here. May 8, a day for each family to honor their mother is around the corner, and taking this opportune time adarash.net wishes you all out there a Happy Mother's Day!

Before reaching to Mother's day, on the first day of May, many countries around the world remember the day as an international celebration of social and economic achievements of the labor movement. You might have heard the day referred as May Day, International Workers Day, or Labor Day. May Day celebration began close to one and half century ago, after a victory on Eight Hours Day and subsequently the Haymarket Affair. Eight hours work day, overtime pays, paid holidays, paid sick leaves, keeping an eye on workplace discrimination, fighting workplace abuse, and bargaining power that all workers and their families at the present day are enjoying did not come overnight or without any sacrifice. The sacrifice dearly paid by the predecessors in the labor movement was the essence to the achieved victories in the work place that we tend to take them for granted. It is for sure, and is becoming more obvious that the risk of those achievements to be taken out of the hands of the present day workers is never zero. When it comes to justice, equality, and freedom, we are still deeply immersed in an ugly mess of unsettled philosophical battle that society needs to come in terms with.

In remembering May Day, the generation of workers at the present time and would be workers of the generations of the time yet to arrive owe two things to the heroes and heroines of workers movement of the past. First, to recognize their sacrifices and say thank you and second, revive their quest to justice and equality by carrying the torch of struggle and freedom with the at most respect and convictions and hand it over to the next generation. Time has changed a lot, but still workers questions remain unaddressed.

Akiye, May 2011 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

On the other side

If you are sitting in front of your new "tower-less" PC, or tapping on the slick blackberry playbook, you for sure are on the other side of the apocalypse prediction. And no, you are not in a different dimension! On a lighter note – no other than Dads who are thrilled to still be breathing and is past May the 21st, 2011. That means, there for sure is, an opportunity for a Father's day celebration, come June 19. I only assume that you Dads are looking forward to all

those, well planned, Mothers consulted - top secret, hand crafted cards, your little ones made that has scripted reflections saying - "I love my Dad", "my Dad is my hero" – and a drawing of presumably you –“Dad” dressed in wing-ish colorful costume, up on the sky-in the clouds, hovering around like Superman. Just precious! It at least washes out the feeling that you had all year when the kids say (“it is easy, even my Dad can do it :-”) any ways, happy Father’s day to you all Dads out there.

Speaking of Father’s day, it was a year ago in 2010; on Father’s day, that adarash.net was launched with a purpose of active participation in the global efforts towards nurturing hope and germinating a better future for Ethiopia, Africa, and the world. Well - that may be a stretch, but hey, I always dream big. Looking forward, adarash.net is determined to provide a better service and increase its visibility in the years to come.

In closing the first chapter - a yearlong of monthly blog that is – paraphrasing the ideas reflected on the 12 blogs posted on adarash.net is in order. First thing first, my blog follows its own format, comes every month, less structured, spontaneous, and presents sketchy perspectives. All is in the interest of time. Nonetheless, it is my hope that the ideas presented have initiated a conversation somehow somewhere, and that essentially is the purpose. I shared highlights of my perspectives on the social, economic, and political mess in Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular, underscoring the need for an exponential change not to the better but to the best. Africa is a continent that still is sleeping. There is no other way but to work triple, and quadruple times harder and smarter, to catch up to where the rest of the world has already reached. The creation of the United States of Africa is a necessary institutional framework. Most wars in Africa (not referring the struggles for best governance), are senseless, and need to be stopped. All resources should be used for advancement of the continent in areas of peace, human rights, education, health, communications, science, and technology. Individual countries need to begin aggressively exercising these while crafting the Union.

Faulty governance is one of the primary obstacles for development that drags the African continent backwards. Inherently, struggles for better governance are not easy tasks. It is with all that understanding and admiration of those active players, alternative perspectives are shared. It is true that not all struggles that claim to fight for better governance take the right directions. Therefore, alternative perspectives play a vital role to help mending distorted principles and harmful geopolitical ambitions. At this juncture, Ethiopia more than any other country in Africa, needs alternative ideas. No denial is necessary, Ethiopia needs to travel many extra miles to make life a little better to her Citizens. In order to bring about desired and applicable positive changes (a little better life), to Ethiopia, it requires the active involvement of the Ethiopian people. Now better than 40 years ago, there is apparent maturity among all stakeholders including the Citizens of Ethiopia. Newer ways of thinking are necessary to accommodate the realities on the ground. The future for sure will be better. The ways how to bring that better future, sooner, is yet to be figured out.

Akiye, June 2011 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

Independence

Before turning several weeks deeper into summer, July is welcoming all of us together with our celebratory mood to one of the priceless day of remembrance for Independence Day. Come July 4th, the Nation will get together to honor the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, pronouncing independence from the Kingdom of Great Britain. Independence Day is celebrated with a plethora of festivities, including ground shaking, chest knocking, and endorphin flushing fireworks. While getting ready to celebrate, please do not allow familiarity with any aspects of fireworks to make you careless. Remember, a nanosecond of carelessness can result extensive injuries and even loss of lives. That said, using this opportunity, your humble blogger wishes you all a happy 4th.

Speaking of Independence Day, I am obliged to mention that Ethiopia is the proud nation in the African continent that was never colonized by outsiders. Some historians are heard reporting third quarter points to blur the truth and intentionally exaggerate the transient and seemingly upper hand by the Italians. These same historians, play deaf, when they are reminded about the final battle report, the fourth quarter points (metaphorically speaking), where Ethiopia became victorious over Italy.

Anyways, independence - as in, "freedom from any control by others," is conceptually rich and complicated word. My take is, in structured society at a level of a country or even a continent – Independence should not necessarily be interpreted solely as it relates to occupation by an outsider. As long as the natural rights of human existence is controlled against the will of the people, oppressive domestic governments should be considered as mirror images of colonizers in a textbook sense. That invites a struggle for freedom and brings the inevitable independence of oppressed people. In that macro context, the number of countries on the planet that still need to be independent are countless!

Well – on a personal note - after a very busy and restless year, I am heading to a long awaited brief break. I will travel to where there will be an opportunity for me to get together with good old friends, and fellow *yager lijoch*. I hope to be back loaded with new stuff. Stuff, you know – the sound of human migration - the color of time dependent changes - the state of mind and the state of sole. I will keep a log of my stay and will share my experience with you all in my August blog. See you then.

Akiye, July 2011 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

Big Red

Once upon my cyber browsing lifetime, I came across a description of a tree "Big Red" that left a big impression in my archives. A snip goes like this - "Considered to be the largest Ponderosa pine in Oregon, Big Red is 162 feet tall, 28.9' around and may be in excess of 500 years old.

Located in LaPine State Park, during its lifetime the tree has seen the Deschutes River often change its course and at one time stood in the middle of the river. At other times, it has withstood an estimated 50 to 100 forest fires. Big Red bears a number of charred scars on its trunk.” a noticeable presence indeed!

Yes, size matters. Like “Big Red” - a country, a society, a family, what have you - that is big - always stands out. Fragmentation, disintegration, and separation by far create the contrary. The creation of the 54th nation in the African continent - the South Sudan – was declared ceremonially on July 9, 2011 as planned late last -- early this year. Disintegration that is! I shared my perspective in one of my previous blogs on this particular issue. Most of what I suspected then is already happening, and the future probably is going to be even tougher not only for South Sudan but also for the region and the continent.

If Africa wants to be big, strong, visible, and impressive in global competitions, it has to get itself out of the idea that takes separation and disintegration as a viable solution to bad governance. The United States of Africa should be the future. That is the “likely” solution to most of the problems that Africa faces. When the United States of Africa becomes reality, healthy competitions among the now 54 individual nations will replace all the bad things that are scaring the continent. In that respect, a model that nurtures separation or disintegration of existing nations into pieces will at least not be productive.

Shifting gear, at this juncture, as I mentioned in my July blog, I did take a short break and went to Atlanta. I did not hear myself complaining about jet-lag, but there was a little added stress as a result. When I reached to Atlanta, the first thing I noticed was the heat and humidity. I said to myself - quietly that is – Ahaaaa! – Summer is here :-). Summer – is a season filled with warmth, positivity, and happiness. Outdoor activities seem considered more of a blanket prescription with satisfactory compliance. While enjoying the beautiful weather, it is important to remember that the heat and increased activity will support one another to boost the risk of becoming dehydrated for all of us. Dehydration occurs when there is an imbalance between the amount of fluid lost and the amount of fluid replaced throughout the day. Children, the elderly, and those who are sick are more vulnerable to the consequences of dehydration. The signals and complications of being dehydrated span from simple thirst, to lightheadedness, to low blood pressure, to swelling of the brain, to failure of multiple organ systems, and even coma and death when severe. As it is true for most environmental risk factors, prevention is the best approach to avoid becoming dehydrated in the first place. Pay attention to your fluid loss during hot weather. Keep an eye on the little ones and those who may use your help. In most cases, drinking more appropriate fluids to compensate what is lost (water and electrolytes) would be sufficient. But if for some reason severe dehydration ensues, it would need immediate medical treatment.

In Atlanta, I had a chance to mingle with *yager lijoch*. It was the time for the 28th annual gathering for a weeklong soccer tournament. I confess that I have not attended to all of the events in the program as I probably should have, but the little time I have spent thinking about it provided me the gist of what was on the plate. All things that matter considered the lead

organization has done an amazing job to make this years' tournament a reality. However, there is an apparent perception that it could have been made a little more impressive.

Here as well, I will take comfort behind the "Big Red" metaphor. Aside from a long list of inconveniences that any organization of the size could face, the fact that two temporally overlapping events were taking place, separated only by a flight distance of 542 miles, or 872 kilometers, by two different organizations, appeared to be a major distraction. If the goal is to bring us all together, to help build a bigger, stronger, visible, and influential society – and by extension country, "Big Red" - so to infer - why was a decision to carry out the two events in one city never considered more relevant. While diversity and healthy competitions are all good and dandy, now is absolutely not the right time to branch out. Not yet anyways! It only makes all fragile, invisible, and powerless. I only hope to see both events held in one city in 2012. In unison! It only takes to put the common purpose a common priority! Think "Big Red" --- Cheers!

Akiye, August 2011 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

እንቁጣጣሽ !!!

የመስከረም ወር ለኢትዮጵያውያን የዘመን መለወጫ ጊዜ ስለሆነ ፤ አዳራሽ.ኔት ወቅቱን አሰመልክታ፤ “እንቁጣጣሽ” እንኩዋን ከዘመን ዘመን አሸጋገረን ትላለች! መጭወ አመትም የሰላም እንዲሆንልን ልባዊ ተስፋዋን ትገልጻለች። ጊዜ አልፎ ጊዜ ሲተካ - ተወደደም ተጠላ - በሁሉም መስክ ለውጥ መኖሩ አይቀሬ ነው። ታዲያ ከሁሉም በላይ ትኩረት ሊሰጠው የሚገባው ነገር ፣ ነባራዊ ለውጦችን ባግባቡ መረዳት ብቻ ሳይሆን - እያንዳንዳችን - የምንፈልገው ለውጥ እንዲመጣ ለማስቻል ምን ያህል አዎንታዊ አስተዋጽኦ - በግልም ሆነ በጋራ አድርገናል ብለን እራሳችንን መመርመር እንደሚኖርብን የመገንዘቡ ወሳኝነትን ጭምር ነው።

መተባበር፣አብሮ መስራት፣የጋራ ለሆነ ተልዕኮ ቅድሚያ መስጠት፣መደማመጥ፣መከባበርና - ጥረታችን ሁሉ ሀገርንና ህዝብን ወደተሻለ ህይወት ለመምራት የሚያስችል እንዲሆን ማረጋገጥ - ቅድሚያ ሊሰጣቸው የሚገባቸው መሰረታዊ ጉዳዮች ናቸው። የሰለጠኑት ሃገሮች አሁን የደረሱበት ደረጃ የደረሱት ፣ ከላይ የተጠቀሱትን ነጥቦች ትኩረት ስለሰጧቸው ጭምር ነው። የሰለጠኑት ሃገሮች ተርታ ለመሰለፍ የቀረን መንገድ የትየለሌ እንደሆነ መረዳት የተሳነን ይመስል ፣ እዚህ ግባ በማይባል - የግልም ሆነ የቡድን ደንዳናነት ስንመጸደቅና ስንፈነድቅ ፣ ሲልም ደግሞ - ስናንቀላፋ - ጊዜው ትቶን እየሮጠ - ቁም ነገሩና ዋነኛው ሃገርንና ህዝብን የማስቀደሙ ነገር ደግሞ እየተረሳ ሄዷል። የራሳችንን ችግሮች መፍታት አቅቶን ስንደናበር ደግሞ፣ የአፍሪቃን የወደፊት እጣ ለመተለም በሚደረገው ጥረት አይነተኛ ሚና የመጫወቱን አጋጣሚ ሌሎች ከእጃችን ሊነጥቁን መቃረባቸው ሲታይ ፣ መጨወ ትውልድ ሊያፍርብን የሚችል ስራ እየሰራን እንደሆነ መገንዘቡም ብልህነት እንደሚሆን የሚያጠራጥር አይሆንም።

ወቅሳ ሳይሆን - ማስታወሻ ነው! የያዘነው መንገድ እና አካሄዳችን - ወደምንፈልግበት ግብ ፈጽሞ እንደማይደርሰን ከገባንና ከተረዳን ዘመናት አልፏል። ሊገባን ወይም ሊረዳን ያልቻለው ጉዳይ ግን - መንገዳችንን እና አካሄዳችንን መለወጡ የግድ እንደሆነ አምኖ መቀበሉ ላይ ነው። እስቲ በአዲሱ ዓመት - አዲስ መንገድ እንቀይስ፣ በአዲስ አስተሳሰብ እንገነባለን።

እንቁጣጣሽ ኢትዮጵያ !!!

አክዬ, መስከረም 2004 እ.ኤ.አ | aku_63411@yahoo.com

Smile

This past Saturday, September 24, I woke up 5:30ish, somehow loaded with energy and the urge to write - nothing in particular- just about anything. I uncovered all the windows and gazed outside. It was still dark and quite, but there was a beautiful ambience created by streetlights penetrating through the mist and dense fog that blanketed my neighborhood. I said to myself, hmmm, I think I just wake up in haven, and smiled. That morning, I ended up writing a two paragraph e-mail response to a friend that was closed with a :-). Yes, a smile – an inherent universal gesture – effortlessly decipherable, positively contagious, instant connection, heartily resolve, happiness, cheer, thrust, therapeutically powerful – a treasure within - that money cannot buy - that we tend to take for granted.

Life is finite, and it is up to each one of us, individually and collectively, make a good use of it. Cluttered by a lengthy list of stressful attributes; the good things, the happiness, the precious and enjoyable components of life tend to be trodden, potentially rendering hopelessness and helplessness. That must not be the case! Despite inevitable downsides of life, there are infinite good things to be happy, hopeful, and cheerful about. It is a matter of making time to uncovering them. Truly – it does not have to be big stuff. In fact it is the – pure, genuine – seemingly simple -- things that weigh most in a good humanly way.

Make time to uncover those precious (pure, genuine, simple) attributes in your life and smile. Make the time to help others uncover theirs, and help them to smile. The harvest is mutual! By the way, since 1999 - said a website I visited - on the first Friday in the month of October, “World Smile Day” is celebrated with a theme “Do an act of Kindness. Help one person smile!” I were not aware of this event before. Now I am! This coming Friday – October 7 2011, I plan to take an active part in the celebration. I invite you to do the same. Cheers :-)

Akiye, October 2011 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

99%

As the saying goes, the only constant in life is change itself. True that is – for most countries the ever circulating four seasons are coming and going on a pretty regular predictable pattern. Summer has already gone and we all have (may be hesitantly!) welcomed autumn that is loaded with a taste of an early snowfall, and the fringe inconveniences.

I hope this will not be the reason for folks who are hard to persuade on matters related to global warming. Any cold or warm weather that comes and goes on a yearly or every other yearly basis essentially represents climate variability. Hard to see meaningful patterns on such short interval fluctuations of weather. For a climate change, however, as opposed to climate variability, decades and even centuries of climate data are needed. Existing summaries of such

decades and several decades of data unequivocally support the prudent positions that come from advocates of global warming or climate change.

Speaking of the relevance of long-term events as the foundations for meaningful change, an important subject matter that is vital to 7 billion people and instantly comes to mind is - "Governance" – Did I just say, 7 billion? Hmmmmm....., I digress! Where was I, yea – Governance – as in "Government" – Most for sure, will recognize capitalism and socialism as the two dominant philosophies that painfully beg for change. To go right for the jugular, both capitalism and socialism have miserably failed to provide good governance and narrowing down the gaps in wealth. Socialism by focusing on wealth distribution, while ignoring the necessary elements i.e., building a vibrant economy, fast development, civilization, and global competition. Likewise, capitalism failed to provide good governance by focusing on wealth accumulation by the very – really very - few - the 1 %, and forgetting humanity and decent compensation for - the 99 %.

Both capitalism and socialism thrived because of numerous decades of scarcity of education and information and irrefutably on the backs of the innocent 99%. That however is going to be replaced slowly but surely by an abundance of educated people and seamless, instant circulation of information worldwide. Now things have changed for the better, more educated and informed people on the planet, the ancient principles that dictate capitalism and socialism, as we know them will never hold water anymore.

Exciting enough, to provoke long time memories, from my high school and early college years, the surprising warm and genuine reactions to the 99% movement that somewhat takes a global shape in 2011, will for sure play an instrumental role in bringing about the change that is long overdue. A more truly civilized change that gives a just credit to the contribution of the 99%, who are the real owners of the planet's wealth. Hopefully that will come to be true at last!

Akiye, November 2011 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

Manner-gate

If you step into the kitchen of life, and mix nature and nurture together, bake them for few minutes, and season them up with social norms, rules and regulations – hey, what can I say, you have just perfected an abstract of the complexities of life as we know it.

When I think of the complexities of life, at least in line with the newsworthy events during this past month, manner issues just roll up to the leading position, as the important topics of all things that need attention most. You know what I mean! Whether we like it or not, manner issues are tightly interwoven into the fiber of our life, and are increasingly becoming the litmus indicators of who is and who is not fit to be successful in -- practically anything. For those of you who closely follow current political runway events, given the resultant quencqunce, flaws of

manner ostensibly become detrimental to the extent of denying someone's dream of an exceptionally high honor.

I am still debating to come into terms of the described flaws of manner surfaced in the news this past month, and the weight prescribed to it that extends to the extent of making a contender quit. That of course is assuming - manner flaws were really the only reasons for a potential candidate to drop out of a race early in its initial phase, or is it? When we notice that it is a recent memory that others have survived such storms in similar contentions, is it possible that the surfaced manner flaws, just came handy, less politically confrontational, easily considered by most as nothing but personal matters, to safely turn up the heat around and force the candidate quit?.

That was a moment of reflection and a luxury, only possible when you are lucky to live in a civilized country. When, I hold my breath on the subject, I transcend into a fourth dimension and ask myself the question how many of the other nation's leaderships on the planet are measuring up on issues like manner? Can you imagine how many of them should resign from their positions and hold accountable for exponentially serious manner flaws they are immersed in? I am talking about manner flaws in terms of corruption, abusing people's power, denying natural rights of their own citizens - Manner flaws of being ignorant when millions die of poverty, disease, and senseless war - while they build a lavish empire for themselves - I am talking about manner flaws that are tainted with dictatorship and progressive numbness.

Well, with the holiday's season upon us, I wish the dominant conversation topic were a different one. Anyways, this time of the year, getting upbeat is only inevitable, even when it is illusive for some of us. Take care out there, and happy holidays!

Akiye, December 2011 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

Another Year

Inevitable that is - the natural clock is ticking unstoppable. Keeping pace with the ticking natural clock - and living purposefully - need conscious efforts that for sure require lots of sacrifices. When a year ends and another year begins, it will be wise to genuinely reflect back, and take necessary measures, to make the future a little different - a little better and fruitful. In my previous blogs - I revolved my thoughts around a thesis - the crucial need of revisiting past strategies and crafting newer and better ones to bring about the vital changes in Ethiopia. Yes - that was about Ethiopian politics, the lives of Ethiopians, and the future of the country Ethiopia.

I had two hopes in 2011. First, at the end of 2011 to see a united opposition front with sensible, different and measurable strategies --- and second, to see a remorseful government with open arms to different ideas that will create a newer, civilized and democratic political system, and create the opportunity to take Ethiopia to a better place -- sooner. Unfortunately, the opposition groups are fixated with their own blue prints and are tightly closed to newer

approaches. They spend time and create more confusion - playing childish game on creating a united opposition front- without distancing themselves from the reasons that made past efforts a failure -repeatedly. The government on the other hand, hiding behind the support mainly from the West – continues to play deaf on issues that matter most to Ethiopians and Ethiopia. The resultant grim picture is an impoverished country where prices of goods and produces skyrocketing, corruption and dictatorship practiced fearlessly, and stress index taking its unbearable toll to the extent of pushing individuals to burn themselves to death.

Well, now is a newer year – the ultimate responsibility shouldered on both the opposition and the government is to make a good use of 2012 and help Ethiopia, Ethiopians and the rest of the world talk about “a success” -- a true and civilized success - come 2013. One of the many visible bottlenecks that put success one sunset away indefinitely is that -- at actual systems reorganization processes, the opposition talks about the government, and the government talks about the opposition. Unfortunately, very complex and intricate human factors always suck the oxygen out of the room and suffocated all past attempts to an irreversible failure. In 2012, try this --- Begin the task by talking about Ethiopians, Ethiopia and our place at global scenes. Then look for civilized solutions. Leave ego, pride, and stubbornness at the last traffic stop on your way to the meeting. They are hard to see - no one will blame you for littering. You can do it!

Happy 2012 to all!

~ Akiye, January 2012 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

City in White

Wow!..... January starts very friendly and took all of us on to fall in love and sing “City in White!” Beginning mid January, snow came down generously, and painted the city in White. Streets, homes, trees.....you name it, just turned white. Beautiful!

Off course, beautiful is what comes to mind first, until the fringe inconveniences start to show up. Before you know it, driving gets difficult, the number of accidents increased, and at home, everyone is staring at the weather channel. A rush to grocery and equipment stores became the order of the day. If you never thought a shovel is a necessary tool to keep in your garage, well, a time like this will make you to believe in!

The snow, that took nap on trees, before it hits ground, getting heavy and heavier rendering tree limbs overwhelmed and break. Broken limbs, took down power lines, blocked streets, destroyed homes, and took human lives. The ice that was piled up on the ground, made the surface underneath loose, and trees lost their traction and fall everywhere making the problems the limbs started - only worse. When power went out, Internet, and phones went down as well. It feels like aliens from a planet -- yet to be discovered -- concurred planet earth, and snatched everything we took for granted away from us! It is amazing to see how we get ourselves dependent on our own creations and inventions!

Well, as in every inclement weather human history documented before 2012, this time as well, life is restored to normalcy. Still, if you drive around today -- you will see big piles of ice -- that were humanly made to clear drive ways and streets -- making sure that their presence is noticed -- Except -- now the beauty has gone, look tired, powerless, weaker, and dirty. No doubt, Mother Nature is still in charge. What goes up -- comes down.

~ **Akiye, February 2012** | aku_63411@yahoo.com

It is a Boy!

Hmmm, I said -- looking at a picture of a baby, with a wide smile, born on Tuesday February 28, 2012. It was the next day early morning; I received a text message together with an attachment of his newborn boy from a dear friend of mine. A stylish baby -- already! He has a nice hat on his head, but the rest of the visible body naked. Vladimir Putin has to worry now -- a brand new competitor has arrived! :-)) The new family just needs to buy a horse to easily win the competition.

I replied to the text message instantly, congratulating both parents and welcoming the newborn to planet earth. That evening I called my friend, and talked with him and his wife. Obviously, both parents were delighted. There was a palpable cheerfulness in their voices. No doubt, a new chapter has begun! Later that night, even I could not stop thinking about the good news. At one point, I wondered if I were to interview the newborn, just prior to the first 24 hours after his arrival to planet earth -- using a miraculous language that we both understand, asking him questions related to humanity, environment, peace, and the priorities he would consider relevant to the future. What would his responses be? -- Responses only "God" would give, with no prejudice -- selfless and unadulterated.

I would imagine, he would not hesitate to tell me that we have not done a good job. I would imagine, he... he.. would not hesitate to tell me how our values have shifted -- undermining the preciousness of humanity -- to selfishness and materialism. I would imagine, he would not hesitate to tell me how human actions have damaged the environment. I would imagine, he would not hesitate to tell me how wars are a sign of weakness. Yes, I would only imagine, he would not hesitate to tell me that health, education, and justice deserve to be our priorities, for a better future.

Well, yemamush abat and yemamush enat - Congratulations again! , yes indeed.

Akiye, March 2012 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

The Priority!

Now and then, I ask myself – how would governments in troubled countries, including Ethiopia, behave - if there were no opposition groups against them. In other words, do opposition groups make governments to behave badly? Are opposition groups doing a disservice to their own cause, by just being the opposition and at times by taking an ineffective path?

Well, it is for sure that bad governance creates opposition. It is not the opposition groups that make governments to behave badly. On the contrary, bad governance and unlawful governments necessitate the creation of opposition groups. In effect- it is bad government that creates bad governance - by extension - it is the bad deeds of individuals in bad governments that create bad governance.

Asking historian's forgiveness from the outset – Wait a nanominute, I will take that back :-). The HaileSillasje government, compared to the ones that came after him, had no fierce opposition groups, aside from the trouble in Eritrea, which is a little different - contextually. However, during HaileSillasje, Ethiopia was dragged backwards through a feudalistic rule where the majority of the population was forced to pour their livelihoods to the few rich and royal families. When the rest of the world was busy in building their nations towards civilization and industrialization, Ethiopia was practically put into a deep sleep.

The Mengistu government, at the initial months and may be early years, had no fierce opposition either. It is when the political directions he took become oppressive and fascist, then and only then he started to face opposition. He spent all his reign in Arat Kilo – fighting a fierce and bloody battle against different opposition groups, on top of the trouble in Eritrea that he inherited. What a miserable life it was!

Now - The Meles government came to power carrying a baggage filled with complicated politics. It is a little different compared to Mengistu. Nonetheless, even Meles himself had no fierce organized opposition at the very initial months and early years of his walking to Arat Kilo. Ethiopians were genuinely hoping to see a more civilized government that would lead the country with national pride and dignity! Alas – That never happened! Eritrea, Port of Aseb, University students, instigation of fight between tribes, corruption, lawlessness..... why did even I start! Anyways, his bad governance became the reason for the revamp of the hesitant fierce opposition struggle.

There should be no doubt that bad governance is the actual problem in Ethiopia. The opposition is an inevitable reflection of a vital need to change that bad governance. However, a serious caution is in order here, as bad governance - replaced by another bad governance - replaced by another bad governance, was pretty much the story of our lives. Now is the time to cut this endless circling at a roundabout. Now is the time to take right and drive away to the future.

That said however, I am not sure how that could even happen. The present day opposition groups are too many, most of them useless and confusing. This reality blurs the direction of the

country, and makes the immediate future very very scary, to say the least. There is a need for painstaking steps to be taken by the opposition groups to guarantee that the next government would not be another bad government. Today more than ever, experienced and pioneer political groups that have proven their reverence repeatedly to Ethiopia and Ethiopians, have a renewed historical responsibility to prevent another bad government from holding power again. Never again! This task should take a priority!

Akiye, April 2012 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

Sanction

A sanction is an action designed to control the conduct of entities such as countries or governments. Sanctions by far are international stands and come, more often than not, in the form of a threat of possible punitive action, usually economic in nature, against conduct viewed as unacceptable. A variant of sanction – boycotting - is another tool common in politics. It takes place when individuals or groups refuse to participate in an activity or function in order to show their opposition. Boycotting usually emanates locally, lacks formality, is short lived and involvement is assumed voluntary on a collaborative basis. Nonetheless, the intent of both sanction and boycotting is to pressure governments into upholding principles of democracy and rule of law and or facilitate regime change.

That said however, a sanction or a boycott - by itself - is not a necessary strategy in any political struggles to bring about the desired change – regime change. A sanction or a boycott is rather a component strategy, when mixed with the right circumstances - together with other strategies - serves as a catalyst, and helps lowering down the action potential where the desired change – regime change - begins to happen. Undoubtedly – that necessary strategy, that winner strategy, in a political struggle – where without it no struggle will be fruitful, is of course unity!

Unfortunately - in Ethiopian politics, the opposition “hates” or “fakes” unity. Every breathing opposition group thinks that they and only they are the only ones capable of bringing the desired change - regime change. If that was the case – well, that would have been proven right long time ago. Spare Ethiopians and Ethiopia the sense of false entitlement. Just show us in practice, how you will function together in a civilized manner – to save Ethiopians and Ethiopia, without resorting to dictatorship. Convince us on your capability to form a united functional front, right now! Give us a reason to believe that you will not be another bad government after the fact. Unite, and you will be amazed by the support you will be receiving as a result.

In the absence of unity - the only single essential winner strategy, no matter how many other component strategies are added to the mix - the singular purpose of the struggle “saving Ethiopians and Ethiopia” will remain a challenge, and success will be one sunset away indefinitely.

Akiye, May 2012 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

Courage

The sitting government in Ethiopia is forcing each one of us to snatch the credit from the Ethiopian people, for the fall of the Mengistu's regime and attempts to own the entitlement to ruling Ethiopia and Ethiopians at its will. This is just the most ridiculous delusion and shamelessness of the century. Ethiopians, who were old enough and beyond to attend elementary school in the mid to late 1960's and early 1970's according to the Ethiopian calendar, are witness to the fact that the sacrifice made for 17 years by the young and the old, students and workers, males and females, from all regions of the country - north, south, east and west is the reason and nothing but the only relevant reason why the Mengistu regime ends its existence.

I will leave the details for pioneer political organizations to elaborate on this issue because it is important to clear the fog away so that the international community and the current generation see and know the truth about the past 40 years of politics in Ethiopia. As far as I am concerned, the reality is that no single political group is entitled to take the credit for Mengistu's going away party. If there is any one that deserves to take the credit for overthrowing Mengistu, and justly deserve to claim entitlement to take the lead in crafting the future of Ethiopia and Ethiopians is the Ethiopian people and Ethiopia alone. Period

Building aimless roads here and there, opening dysfunctional schools and ill-equipped hospitals, or opening factories where workers are treated like slaves, robbing election results; are all shameful contents of the 20 years report card of the sitting government in Ethiopia. Mind you all - Even colonial governments have accomplished these tasks better than what the sitting government in Ethiopia is claiming to accomplish. Standing in front of the parliament and reading on how many meters of roads are built, and how many schools are opened does not in any way give entitlement to continue to be a lawless ruler of the country Ethiopia. Those tasks are in fact taxpayer's money or money that came to the country in the name of the suffering Ethiopian people that is immersed in a colossal backhandedness. In reality, even those so-called accomplishments are all practically useless, and by no means should be used as a cover to the atrocities practiced in the country.

Lawlessness, corruption, and irresponsiveness to the cry of the Ethiopian people are other areas of the pathetic governance by the sitting government that the world should be made aware of. The grim reality in Ethiopia is that while life is becoming unbearably expensive, on the other hand the politicians in Ethiopia – who never were known for their richness, all of a sudden became millionaires within the past decade or two -- Imagine this is happening in a country at the bottom end of the global prosperity ladder! Please spare me the justifications for that.

All things considered, the sitting government in Ethiopia was never and is absolutely not entitled to govern the country Ethiopia, and need to be replaced by a legitimate people's government elected by the Ethiopian people through a transparent and democratic process, Now!. To take this position and line it up with the position that has been made still relevant by

dear sacrifice for the past four decades --- the transparent and democratic election process should take place after the sitting government resigns from its ruling position, and in its place, a transitional government body of the Ethiopian people is established. In closing, one thing is repeatedly proven to be for sure. Without a courageous struggle, nothing will be coming to fruition. And as I see it, courage appears to skip a generation. Wake up!

Akiye, June 2012 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

Happy Streets

Africa, now a 54 countries strong continent -- because of the diversity of its citizens, misdistribution of resources, past colonialism, abusive and dictatorial governance, and numbness of most of the African leaders to the cry of their people -- chaos appears to be the most visible fabric of African lives. As unbelievable as it seems, that is real. However, equally undeniable is that Africa is improving, slowly but surely to the common best. In political terms, it is a recent memory, where in the Northern part of Africa, a revolution, propelled by the use of Internet, and social media -- accentuated by the neutrality of the army (in Egypt), the involvement of the international community and international media -- have succeeded to overthrow oppressive regimes.

It begs to notice that whenever any news comes out of Northern Africa, it easily is scrutinized as an issue of the "Arab World," as opposed to as an "African Issue." While both ends have rightly ties, most often than not, implications of the changes in the Northern part of Africa to the continent itself is not discussed/scrutinized enough or is disproportionately diluted even when attempted. Processes that intend to create the future "African Union," and finding solutions to issues surrounding the Nile River, are two continent-wise political issues that need to be sufficiently scrutinized along with the change of power in Egypt, for instance.

Nonetheless, today (June 24, 2012), the culmination of a courageous movement brought hundreds of thousands Egyptians out to the streets - victorious, and joyous. Yes, the Egyptian people voted, and elected Mohammed Morsi, as its new president after a 3 decades oppressive rule of Hosni Mubarak, and a year and half-courageous fierce battle.

As the day progressed, with lengthy opening remarks, towards the announcement of the results of the presidential election, supporters stood firm their battle ground (literarily and figuratively) in Tahrir Square, enduring the grilling high temperature, and awaiting for the moment. When the votes are announced affirming that Mohammed Morsi won enough votes (51.7%) and becomes the President -- Elect of Egypt; well, what can I say -- Egyptians in Tahrir Square exploded with happiness, and the streets instantly became filled with joyous Egyptians. One of the very rare precious moments in life -- indeed!

That said however, at this juncture the power structure is somewhat unsettled and shaky. The military, which has been passive during the recent revolution, brewed some animosity while in

position against the revolutionaries, and continued by law to clinch to all of the important power outlets. This raises a suspicion at least for now, rendering the President Elect Mohammed Morsi, for all intensive purposes, to become a symbolic President. This put the Egyptian people in a joyous position half-heartedly. There are still numerous issues that need clarity and need to come into terms with the revolutionaries. Right now, I simply wish Egyptians and by extension Africans nothing but all the best!

Akiye, July 2012 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

Unity versus Unanimity

Summer of 2012 is unfolding itself as a busy season for Ethiopian politics around the opposition groups. One of the topic areas, hard to ignore, is the ever endless attempt to form a united opposition team of some sort. Déjà vu! -- Excuse my French. One particular corner of discussion on the topic of forming a united opposition team that begs a notice this time around is the fact that there exist a confusion between forming a functional and strong united opposition team between any of the opposition political organizations versus forming a united opposition team that brings all opposition political organizations together. The next few paragraphs briefly highlight the points in favor of a strong and functional united opposition team between any, as opposed to the idea of bringing together all opposition political organizations. Here it goes.

At a macro level – therefore, calibrating the level of conversation at a political organization level – the word unity – is referring to the “state of any of the numerous opposition political organizations being one.” Therefore “unity” could and should begin anything from two opposition political organizations to agree to function in unison, goes to three opposition political organizations to agree to function in unison, and goes to four opposition political organizations.....do you see where I am going with this? On the other hand, the word unanimity -- refers to “state of all opposition political organizations being one.” The “state of all opposition political organization being one” therefore “unanimity” necessitates all opposition political organizations to agree to function in unison.

Now, if the numbers of involved opposition political organizations were to be only two or three, both unity and unanimity would have been easy to achieve – that is assuming minimal and uncomplicated history between involved opposition political organizations. That said however, when in reality there exist eight, nine, ten opposition political organizations, especially in the presence of complicated background history and the absence of any common sense of urgency; unanimity becomes hardly possible. That holds unity higher up as the only viable expectation.

For those of you, who are tireless advocates of unity, be careful not to be trapped in any illusion of confusing unity with unanimity. That clarity is crucial to keep hope alive, and reaffirm the long kept promise yet to be fulfilled. The absence of unanimity does not necessarily equate to the absence of unity. It is in the absence of unity - the only single essential winner strategy, where the singular purpose of the struggle “saving Ethiopians and Ethiopia” will remain a

challenge, and when success will be one sunset away indefinitely. After all, unanimity among any political organizations is an absolute rarity, so do not be discouraged or distracted by its absence.

A unity formed between two opposition political organizations could be sufficient, to save Ethiopia and Ethiopians. The only relevant difference is that in the absence of unanimity, the path that a unity formed between two political organizations should take becomes much more challenging and harsh. Therefore, any preparations need to be tuned a notch or two upwards to withstand that grim reality.

Looking forward, even when the opposition gets its way and shoulder the primary responsibility of leading Ethiopia and Ethiopians on to the future, issues that come with the mere existence of multiple political organizations will remain a pain in the -- you know what! Learning on how to handle those issues from the outset – issues that are fringe consequences of the existence of a long list of political organizations, without resorting to dictatorship, is a skill none of the existing opposition political organizations seem to excel.

Akiye, August 2012 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

Ethiopia

The month of August 2012 has rolled down itself hosting a number of events and major news. News, spanning from the Mars Rover of NASA's Curiosity --- to the opening ceremony of Summer Olympics, London 2012 highlighting the proud presentation of Britain's National Health Service --- to the announcements of Olympian glories --- to the loss of the head of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and most noticeably the passing of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia.

Following this recent phenomenon, one thing is for sure in Ethiopia: The chair of the Prime Ministers' position is open. What that means to Ethiopia and Ethiopians is of anybody's guess. Right now--Ethiopia and Ethiopians remain, more than ever before, at a time of absolute political uncertainty. Uncertainty - as in - a state of very limited knowledge where it is almost impossible to decipher existing circumstances, impossible to confidently anticipate processes that would follow, and impossible to surely predict outcomes. In such a situation, two outcomes: 1) the very bad and 2) the very good -- are equally likely to take place. It is therefore up to the cleverness and courage of all involved – to do what it takes to save Ethiopia ad Ethiopians, and make sure what comes out of this opportunity is the very good outcome.

The premises for the conversation should by now be clear for all. Ethiopia is a very poor country, still at the bottom end of the global prosperity ladder. The country's livelihood is deteriorating and citizen's are rendered hopeless. The platforms for education, health, science, and technology are primitive and fragile. The cohesive existence among the different tribes and clans are now on a shaky ground. Ethiopia has lost her territory, and her borders are continually breached. Human rights and civil liberties are violated. There is a light years of gap between

citizens and political leaders. Those all are multipartisan grim realities that need revisits and corrections.

In order to bring the needed revisits and corrections to the above mentioned issues: First, it is an absolute necessity that a decent civilized government that puts foremost Ethiopia and Ethiopians, elected by the people and for the people, through a transparent and democratic election process to take the leadership position. Second, it is equally necessary that genuine political organizations that uncompromisingly believe in the country Ethiopia to function on the ground, domestically. Third, after a transparent and democratic election -- whomever, whichever party wins – all would accept the results, and defeat will be acknowledged gracefully. Fourth, in between consecutive elections, the winner party and the rest will work hand in hand towards the betterment of the country! Finally yet importantly, it is never enough to highlight and repeatedly underscore the crucial relevance of a long overdue change in how politics is practiced in Ethiopia. Once and for all, a shift 180 degrees to the right future, by all political parties, with no exception, is a must!

Before closing, and looking forward, in a fortnight, Ethiopia will turn her calendar from 2004 to a New Year, 2005 --- so it is only appropriate to hope and wish a Happy New Year – to Ethiopia!

Akiye, September 2012 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

Plan

Wow, already October! Just unbelievable. For those of you who spread out a yearlong plan and did your best to implement each one of what you thought you would accomplish in 2012 – well, the next three months are time for revisits, making sense of what you have accomplished, and may be rash to the finishing line with some of the unfinished businesses. Good luck with that!

Anyways, you likely have a truckload of data that assisted you on performing a continuous process evaluation – to measure the effectiveness of the details of the strategies you have outlined. The assumption here is -- you have been doing that on a monthly or quarterly basis already. Right? Once that is done, the next step is to measure the actual set goals, and determine how much far or closer you are to meeting them. That is essentially the purpose of having a plan in the first place.

Now, while process evaluation is absolutely necessary and integral part of a well thought plan, at the end of the day, the set deliverables to show and tell, as planned, are the status on those set goals. Yes, it is wise and inevitable to adjust expectations based on successes and failures learned from the continuous process evaluation. That is, as long as it does not distort or stray away from the very intent of the plan – meeting the agreed upon, set goals - a priori. Cherry picking successes from your process evaluation, and recalibrating goals around them, not only create unsettling feelings; it also is a recipe for an endless journey. It negates the idea of planning all together.

Well then - on a seasonal note and looking around, the Labor Day weekend cuts the ribbon and opens doors and windows, for a holiday season. Before you know it, you will cross path with lookalike runaway cast members from Michael Jackson's thriller, act like a big baby – complaining about going to your in-laws, get busy with a gift buying spree, and of course count down from 10 to a Happy New Year. Time for a better plan!

That in mind, from adarash, to you all out there, Happy Holidays!

Akiye, October 2012 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

Alternative Voices

Time and time again, Ethiopians have paid unforgettable, selfless sacrifices, to protect Ethiopia from danger. Deflecting the Italian invasion, Ethiopians have mobilized not only men but also women and children, as a family, as one – left their villages, traveled long distances, with practically minuscule logistical preparations, to save Ethiopia from danger and preserved her to the present generation. Resisting the fascistic regime of Mengistu – Men, women, and children throughout the nation have paid dear sacrifices, and played a crucial role in ending the Military dictatorship in Ethiopia. Not long ago, voicing their undeniable readiness to a civilized democracy – Ethiopians have voted for a newer civilized democratic governance, as opposed to the continuation of the EPRDF regime, if it weren't for their voices muted, and their votes robbed.

In all those and many other testing times – there were commonalities that helped to mobilize the whole country to stand as one. Clarity is one! The messages were clear, and the purposes were clearer. Trust is another! The messengers come as one, organized, consistent, and determined. Familiarity is again another one! The organizations, the leaders, the supporters were known to the people. The lack thereof allows confusion to set in. Whenever confusion sets in, peoples' support tends to harbor in a distant. Until clarity, trust, and familiarity win over confusion -- peoples' responses to any unavoidable exposures in life would understandably be filled with noises as opposed to real signals. That is nothing but natural, and seems to be the reality at hand.

To the very real moment in time, Ethiopia remains a very poor country. The country's livelihood is deteriorating and citizen's are rendered hopeless. The platforms for education, health, science, and technology are primitive and fragile. The cohesive existence among the different tribes and clans are now on a shaky ground. Ethiopia has lost her territory, and her borders are continually breached. Human rights and civil liberties are violated. There is a light years of gap between citizens and political leaders. Inarguably, the need for change still is valid, and much bigger than individuals and political parties.

If you stand for best alternative voices, do not despair. As long as the purpose is genuinely for the common best, and preset to save Ethiopia and Ethiopians, the peoples' support - as always -

will surface back on the right side of Ethiopia's best future. That said however, clarity – trust-- and familiarity would be a challenge to achieve, if the response to the people's demand – "unity" - is yet again and again another new additional group of alternative voices. Proactively preventing and settling substantive differences without resorting to "my way or the highway" is nothing but maturity. And that is crucial because what is at stake here is Ethiopia's' future, and the future of 80 million Ethiopians. Don't those mean anything anymore, to anyone?

Akiye, November 2012 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

CPE

I am writing this December 2012 Blog with mixed feelings -- realities at hand and hopefulness in the future. First thing first, roughly between the 4th week of October and 1st week of November of this year were the days when hurricane Sandy forced all of our attention towards its devastating natural force. The loss of human lives, destruction of towns and cities, and disturbance of normalcy, particularly in New York and New Jersey areas, was just heartbreaking. My condolences to all affected by hurricane Sandy, and best wishes on the recovery and rebuilding efforts.

Environmental disasters like that of hurricane Sandy and widespread forest fires bring discussions on global warming or climate change to the forefront. Yes, there is always that hesitance and heavy debate on what is causing climate change. However, this time around -- a visible aspect of the conversation included the question of what we should do to protect ourselves -- from keeping the storm at bay, may be by building tall walls alongside the coastline -- to changing infrastructure codes - to making our towns and cities withstand what is inevitable and probably frequently and strongly coming dangers as a result of climate change. Historically, building codes for seismic activity greatly helped in minimizing injuries, death, and damages to infrastructure. It is only prudent to do the same for events related to storms.

On the other side of life, political campaigns for 2012 election ended on November 7, 2012, with the re-election of President Barack Obama. Nationwide, elections for the Senate, House of Representatives, Governors, and a long list of elected offices took place concurrently. If you are not a professional politician - it probably was a very busy one or two years journey for you depending on when and how frequent you paid attention to the 2012 election processes.

Throughout the 2012 election period, for all intensive purposes, there were only two major parties running for election. During the primary and general election, the focuses on the debates were solely about the people, the people's choices, and the country's best future. Issues on global, national, and local economies and how to handle economic uncertainties were debated. Technical terminologies like derivatives, national debt, interest rate, outsourcing, stimulus, austerity, fiscal cliff and many others become household vocabularies. Pro-life versus a pro-choice positions were heavily discussed. Who would have thought the point of "hormonal contraception" would be discussed outside lectures and grand rounds in medical schools.

Discussions on stem cell research – just brilliant! National priorities like education, health, and innovation were discussed in depth. Issues on immigration, foreign affairs, and same sex marriage were firmly argued. In one or two states, even the issue of the use of marijuana for recreational purposes was on the ballot.

Both parties have utilized persuasive arguments, mobilizing grassroots support, door to door knocking, insistent communication and passionate fundraising drives, as strategies to win the popular vote, and earn a greater number of Electoral College. A three percent greater popular vote win is a testimony on how both parties performed an excellent job campaigning. Towards the closure of the 2012 campaign, at national, state, and local levels -- contenders graciously concede defeat, and promise to work together, hand in hand, with the winners -- for the best of their respective constituencies, states, and the country. That was just precious. It was a civilized instructive lesson on the essence that elections are not about individuals or even political parties. Instead, elections are about the people, people's choices, and the best future of the country.

True, at times, both during the primary and general election, we have seen intense arguments and glitches in the processes here and there. However, all things measured humanly – this election process was certainly a showcase for a civilized democracy in action! It was like a Continuing Political Education (CPE) opportunity at its best -- Only tuition free.

Before closing, I wish and sincerely hope that politicians (governments and alternative voices alike) in the other parts of the world --- watched, paid attention, and learned from the election process we had in the United States during the 2012 election. The people, people's choices and the best future of the country always come first.

I shall see you next year!

Akiye, December 2012 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

አዲስ ገፅ

መስከረም መጥቶ መስከረም ሲተካ፡ ወይም - ጥር መጥቶ ጥር ሲተካ፡ እንኳን ከዘመን ዘመን አሽጋገረን ማለት የጋራ ህይወት መግለጫ እና ማስታዎሻ ባህል ነው። እናም - እንኳን ለ 2013 አደረሰን! ያሳለፍነው ዓመት ምንም እንኳን ብዙ ክንዋኔዎች የታዩበት ዘመን ቢሆንም፡ በ አዲሱ ዓመት ምን ካለፈው የተሻለ ነገር መሰራት ይገባል የሚለውን ለመዳሰስ፡አንዳንድ ጉዳዮችን መርጦ ጠቆም ጠቆም ማድረግ ተገቢነት ያለው እንዲሆን ያስገድዳል። ይህ እንግዲህ ኢትዮጵያን ብቻ የሚመለከት እንደሆነ እንዲሰመርበት ያስፈልጋል።

አንደኛ - ኢትዮጵያ በሁሉም መመዘኛዎች ማለትም፡ በጤና፣በትምህርት፣በቴክኖሎጂ፣በኢኮኖሚ፣ እና በማህበረሰባዊ ኑሮ አስተዳደር ጥቂቶችን ለመጥቀስ ያህል - እጅግ በጣም ሓላቀር ከሆኑት ሃገሮች በተቀዳሚነት የምትነሳ ሃገር መሆንዋ ሁሉም የሚስማማበት ተመክሮ ነው። ይህ የሚያሳየው ደግሞ - መሰረታዊ ለውጥ የማስፈለግ ጉዳይ ማሳመኛ ነጥቦች ቁጥር ስፍር የሌላቸው መሆኑን ነው። መሰረታዊ ለውጥ የሚመጣው ደግሞ - ላደለው የሕዝብ ስልጣንን በሃላፊነት የተረከበው ወገን ተፈላጊውን ለውጥ ማምጣት ዋነኛ ስራውና ዜጋዊ ግዴታው መሆኑን አምኖ ሲቀበልና ተግባራዊም ሲያደርግ ነው። በሰለጠኑት ሃገሮች እንደሚደረገው ማለት ነው። ስልጣንን በሃላፊነት የተረከበው ወገን ተፈላጊውን ለውጥ ማምጣት አስካልቻለ ድረስ ደግሞ - አማራጭ ድምፆች - ያንን ተፈላጊ ለውጥ ለማምጣት ያለውን ሃላፊነት የመሸከም እና ዜጋዊ ግዴታቸውን መወጣት

ቀሪውና ብቸኛው መንገድ ሆኖ ይገኛል። ይህ ደግሞ በኢትዮጵያ ያለውን ነባራዊ ሁኔታ የሚያሳይ እና ምን ያህል ከባድ ፈተና እንደሆነ የሚያስረዳ ግንዛቤ ነው።

ሁለተኛ - ያልታደለች ሃገር ሆነችና አጋጥሚዎች ተሳክቶላቸው ስልጣን ላይ ለመቀመጥ የበቁት ሁሉ ኢትዮጵያ የሚያስፈልጋትን ለውጥ ሊያመጡላት አልፈቀዱም ወይም አልቻሉም። አማራጭ ድምፆችም አንጀት ላይ ጠብ የሚል ነገር ማምጣት አቅቷቸው ይኸውና ዘመናት ተቆጠሩ። ይህ በእንዲህ እንዳለ - ስልጣን ላይ ባሉት ወገኖች በኩል የመሻሻል አዝማሚያ የማይታይ ቢሆንም - አማራጭ ድምፆች በበኩላቸው ከምንጊዜውም የተሻለ ጠንካራ እና ተስፋ ሰጪነት ያለው መንገድ እየተከተሉ መሆኑን እያስመሰከሩ ይገኛሉ። ስህተቶቻቸውን በይፋ ማመን ጀምረዋል ፣ ሃላፊነቱንም ወስደው ለማሻሻል ቃል ገብተዋል - ትልቅ ነገር ነው! ትግሉን ሃገር ቤት ውስጥ የማድረጉን ወሳኝነትንም አምነው ተግባራዊ ለማድረግ ፈቃደኛነታቸውን እየገለጹ ይገኛሉ - ሊያስመሰግናቸው ይገባል!

ሶስተኛ - ታሪክ እንደሚያስተምረን የኢትዮጵያ ሕዝብ ምንገዜም ቢሆን ሙብቱን ለማስከበርም ሆነ የኢትዮጵያን ሉዓላዊነት ለማስከበር ተገቢውን መስዋእትነት የከፈለም አሁንም ቢሆን ሳያቋርጥ እየከፈለም ያለ ሕዝብ መሆኑን ነው። የለት ተለት ኑሮውን በስቃይና በመከራ እየገፋ - ሃገራ ብሎ መኖሩ ብቻ ከምንም በላይ ክቡር ሊያደርገው ይገባል። ስላሳ አርባ ድርጅቶች ባሉበት ሁኔታ - ሕዝብ ባመዛኙ ጠቀም ያለ ድጋፍ ለአንድ ድርጅት ባይሰጥ - ተጠያቂው ሕዝብ ሳይሆን - በቂ ዘዴና መንገድ ፈጥሮ ሕዝብን በራሱ ጥላ ስር ማሰባሰብ ያልቻለው ድርጅት ነው።

አራተኛ - አማራጭ ድምፆች በየድርጅቶቻቸው በኩል የተጣለባቸው ታሪካዊ አደራ እና ያለባቸው ሃላፊነት ምን ያህል ከባድ መሆኑን በቃላት መግልጽ መሞከር የዋህነት ከዚያም አልፎ ሞኝነት ይሆናል። የሚሰነዘርባቸውም ወቀሳ - ባመዛኙ ለምን የሚቻለውን ሁሉ አልምከራችሁም እንጂ - ለምን አላሸነፋችሁም መሆን የለበትም። ቢሆንም ታዲያ - የሕዝብ እና የሃገር ጉዳይ በመሆኑ - አማራጭ ድምፆች - የሚከተሏቸው መንገዶች ሁሉ ሕዝብን እና ሃገርን የከፋ አደጋ ላይ የሚጥሉ እንዳይሆኑ ደጋገሞ ማስገንዘቡ የእያንዳንዱ ኢትዮጵያዊ ግዴታ ነው።

አምስተኛ - መጪው ዓመት አዲስ ገፅ የሚጀመርበት ጊዜ መሆን ይኖረበታል። ወይ ታለፈው ዓመት የተሸጋገረውን ምእራፍ በተሻለ ሁኔታ ማጠናቀቂያ ወይም አዲስ ምእራፍ ፣ የተሻለ ምእራፍ መጀመሪያ። በሁሉም በኩል - ለሃገር እና ለሕዝብ ቅድሚያ የሚሰጥበት ዓመት እንዲሆን ማድረግ ዋናውና መሰረታዊው ጉዳይ መሆን ይገባል። መልካም 2013!

አክዬ, ጃኗርይ 2013 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

Lub-Dub

Impressive, I said....watching a recorded video – a choreographed simulation of a one big red heart, beating ---lub-dub, lub-dub, lub-dub in open air, in person -- in the middle of a football stadium. That was part of the presentations at the Africa Cup of Nations opening ceremony on January 19, 2013 in South Africa.

The 2013 Africa Cup of Nations coincided with the 50th anniversary of the African Unity. The event was a joint celebration, and no doubt that the people of Africa did not want to miss this opportunity and were prepared to tell their leaders and the whole world, for that matter – that their choice is to see Africa as one unified country - a one big red heart—beating in unison. No better way of telling it, but the African way!

The time-perfect opening ceremony was generously filled with a very pleasant, artistic, down to earth music reflecting the greatness of Africa and its people. The message was clear. Africans choice is peace and unity. The determination was reassuring - a confidence in Africa’s future – a show of readiness to shutter the walls of poverty and disease that block Africa from moving

forward to its best future. The ceremony paid a tribute, to the one and the only, incomparable leader of Africa. Nelson Mandela. Madiba. There was a proud highlighting moment, not only the dear sacrifice that Mandela paid fighting apartheid, but also his wisdom -- teaching Africa and the World about courage, compassion, collaboration, and forgiveness. Nicely done...I said when the opening ceremony came to an end.

Well, in case you wonder, I am not shunning the very primary reason of the gathering – football. I just wanted to ponder, on an aspect that did not receive much coverage. Enjoy the games!

Akiye, February 2013 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

See and Raise

For those of you, who are in the Northern Hemisphere, be ready to welcome spring in a little over two weeks. That means longer daylight hours and warmer weather. Flowers will bloom in different colors - generously - to give that special seasonal makeover for cities and towns alike. There will be a breath of fresh air, for most anyways. Birds will join the celebration of the arrival of spring, with a pleasant melody of chirping, twittering, and their own ways of choreography. You even have that opportunity to watch tiny rabbits running around, seemingly, nothing planned, just wanting to check what is around and have fun. People will come out of their houses, step out of their cars, and take a walk or two in the neighborhoods, hop up on their bicycles for a test ride or more – to the streets - to the hills – to the mountains – everywhere. Spring is rich in an ambiance that fosters a healthier lifestyle.

During the fall and winter, you may have noticed the effects of a stored energy in excess, manifesting itself in the form of weighing more, a pound or two. You do not want that to follow you throughout spring and summer -- the seasons of outdoors. Even better, you do not want that excessively stored energy to compromise your health. Do you? No..That is what I thought! So, avoid any missed opportunities. I heard someone saying this; with a touch of mine ... stop listening to the voices of doubters and the exercise haters. Believe in yourself, and go for it. Nicely put!

Take advantage of that richness in spring. Get yourself a pair of nice walking shoes, and get out to the nearest street, park or wherever you would be able to move. Walk slower, walk faster. If you find a street where jogging does not look awkward, then jog. Do not overdo the first day you are out there. Build up the pace slowly over the days and weeks. Along the way, appreciate and enjoy the nature around you.

Try if you can see my amateur athleticism, and I certainly would not mind if you raise me to a professional caliber. Happy Spring to you all!

Akiye, March 2013 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

Palmtop

When I finally got the time and energy to write this blog, it is already April 3rd. I took my sit at my study desk at home, pointed my left index finger, and pressed on the power button on my computer. When the lights come on, the first thing I noticed was that the monitors, the keyboards, and the printer top are sprinkled with a thin layer of dust. Hmmmm..... I said to myself – It really has been a while since I used my laptop on my desk. That actually is true. It has been a while!

Just imagine with me for a moment, about the recent past three decades – It can pretty equally be divided in to three eras, right? - The desktop era, the laptop era and of course the palmtop era. Would you agree that the desktop era could be represented by its nature of dominance, mystery, smart, challenge, sedentary, uncertainty, hope, and excitement? How about the laptop era? -- Elegant, chic, agile, smarter, positive, confident, efficient, portable, and futuristic? Well, let us try the palmtop era, shall we? How about nimble, brilliant, restless, dangerous, in-control, and the future!

Yes, the palmtop era is the future. With your palmtop, you can do almost everything that you used to do on a desktop or a laptop. Browse the Internet, do your presentations, send or receive e-mails, voicemail, telenavigate your way around, send your paycheck to the bank , patrol your house from afar, make a call, text, blog, twitter, and put your face on a book☒

Are we closer, more than ever before, to call desktops and laptops things of the past? Or should I blame myself for not frequenting my desk as I used to? Naaaaaa....will blame my palmtop instead --- in a good way!

Akiye, April 2013 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

Olive Branch

A little over 40 percent of all countries in the world commemorate the first day of May (May Day) as a National Holiday. To make a long history short, the core theme of May Day emanated from an old world revolutionary movement -- a struggle for workers right, equality, and universal peace. The achievements of the workers movement, such as eight hours work day, overtime pays, paid holidays, paid sick leaves, keeping an eye on workplace discrimination, fighting workplace abuse, and bargaining power that all workers and their families at the present-day are enjoying, just to mention a few, did not come overnight or without any sacrifices. The sacrifice dearly paid by the predecessors in the labor movement was the essence to the achieved victories in the workplace that we tend to take them for granted. Remembering and saying thank you to the heroes of the workers movement of the past is the least that present-day workers and relatives can do.

Among the many countries, still struggling for equality, peace, and prosperity -- Ethiopia is probably top on the list. The fact is-- there is no Ethiopian in his or her right mind that supports the way Ethiopia is moving forward. A fact interestingly accepted and shared by folks in power and folks with alternative voices, alike. The sad thing is that none of the two sides comes with viable solutions to the table. Both sides lack a sense of urgency on all matters that are dragging the country backwards. Both sides are playing deaf on the fact that moving fast is not enough for Ethiopia, and moving exponentially faster is nothing but a necessity.

In the spirit of May Day, all things that matter considered, without trivializing the sacrifices paid for over a half century, forgiveness and national reconciliation, appears to be the most selfless and responsible option towards building the best future of the people and the country Ethiopia. True that is, there were several attempts of forgiveness and national reconciliations, without success. One of the never enough mentioned reasons for all past failures is the lack of sincerity. Both, on the side of folks holding the power, and folks with alternative voices are helplessly anchored to the past, and waste precious time exchanging hateful and insulting words that will only serve a purpose of self gratification, and not in any way helpful in building the best future of the country. Saying, we tried is not enough! Try from your hearts and minds. Try until it is done! It should not be difficult to understand that even at an individual level, when you want to make peace between two persons, it is impossible to achieve your goal if one or both of them come to the table, with fisted hands, boiled blood, and hateful gesture towards each other. That has to stop.

Time, Ethiopia does not have, is being wasted selfishly. If anyone is sincerely interested in building a better future for the people and the country Ethiopia, the only futuristic option is forgiveness and national reconciliation. If any of the sides sincerely stand for the people and the country Ethiopia, you would not choose to clinch on to the status quo forever. My way or the highway - is never a good idea. That is selfishness! You all need to change and change for the best now! All sides should come to the table calm and collected, with sincerity and acceptance of common responsibility and obligation towards building the best future of Ethiopia. You tried the complicated approaches before, and you failed. Try a simple approach this time around. Approach each other holding an olive branch with both hands. “አንተም ተጻው - አንተም ተጻው.” should do the job!

Akiye, May 2013 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

Opportunity

June 2013, adarash is remembering its third year presence on the web. When you visit adarash, you will see that there is a monthly blog, on topics, by far chosen spontaneously. Things that I read or heard just a day or two before writing the blog influence the subject matter for a particular month. As the list of entries became longer during the past three years, it was necessary to add pages for search and archive adarash contents. Healthy Précis Quarterly

comes every three months or so, with a synopsis of health related topic areas for visitors and encourages a coffee table conversation with family and friends. The News Desk captures news, mostly on Africa, and put them in one place just for convenience.

I thank visitors who over the years sent comments and feedbacks on items posted on adarash. I also thank those primary news websites for making it possible to tap into their links and capture news items. As always, the mission of adarash is to bring futuristic ideas to surface, so that readers will ponder on them, and at their will promote them towards building the best future of society everywhere. A year from now, if things work as intended, adarash will get a makeover; and add a staff or two, to update adarash on a much more frequently basis.

In the spirit of the anniversary for adarash, I chose – opportunity—as the topic of this blog. Bing, the search engine, pulls several definitions for -- opportunity. One of those says “a favorable, appropriate, or advantageous combination of circumstances.” I like it! It provides a three dimensional perspective to the word. You name one aspect of your life, and start examining it. What you likely would be doing is that you will travel through a thought process, dissecting the several dimensions of opportunity. That bears testament to the everythingness of opportunity.

Yes, opportunity is everything. Au contraire, not everything is opportunity. Neither everything is “favorable, appropriate, or advantageous,” to an aspect in life, nor everything has a healthy combination of the multi dimensional attributes of opportunity. When scrutinizing nature and nurture or a combination of the two – dissecting opportunity, and placing all in perspective is what most of the times, provides to all of us, with the tool that keeps us going, regardless!

Because opportunity is everything in life (personal, society), one has to be on the lookout for potential "missed opportunities," and do what is necessary to avoid them. When opportunity knocks, open the door and invite it to come inside. If not, someone next door will! Never take opportunities for granted!

Akiye, June 2013 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

Maturity

In some parts of the Northern hemisphere, the month of July in 2013 arrived with a temperature, a little higher than what most would like to see. Hot, hot, hot! Unless your house is equipped with AC, restless and sleepless nights appeared to be blanket orders to all. While Mother Nature has her own temper, it is always good to remember the risk associated with such high temperatures. Focusing on hydration, look after the little ones, the elderly, and any one that require assistance should take a priority.

On a nice summer day, it is tempting to stay late into the evening ours. That was just what I did on July 3rd. My mind was ok with that notion, as it knows that the next day is a holiday. It means - I can have an extended bedtime in the morning. Yes, today is July 4th – Independence Day here in the United States. Happy Fourth to you all!

At some point, yesterday evening - news on Egypt caught my extra attention. Egypt, after an over three decades of a brutal regime, had a “democratically” elected government, just a year ago. Yesterday, on July 3rd of 2013 -- that democratically elected government of Egypt was toppled by the military. Wow – yes, that was what I just said -- wow! The good thing is, the reasons or the rumors, whichever way you look at it – for why Egyptians demanded their democratically elected government, to pack and go - in its infancy - include the lack of inclusiveness, the absence of democratic governance, and dictatorial practices.

In the context of leaders in Africa or any parts of the world for that matter – anything that has a military or army flavor is unsettling. However, a year ago, the Egyptian military sided with the people, facilitated a democratic election, and stepped out of first hand governance duty. Will history repeats itself for Egypt? Let us wait and see.

From the outset -- while Egyptians are showing their readiness for democracy -- it appears that there is no mature democratic milieu or a mature democratic system in the country - a necessary factor for a democratic governance to thrive. In that respect, a superior idea for Egypt might be to create a civilian transitional government. A transitional government that brings all political parties to the table and figure out what is best for Egypt, while laying down the foundations for a democratic institutional framework, and preparing the nation for a settled democratic election in a year or two. Best wishes!

Akiye, July 2013 | aku_63411@yahoo.com

Tiqur Abbay

This morning, I took the liberty of entertaining myself tinkering about water. About 75% of a newborn’s body and 60% of an adult’s body is water. Basic science, public health, and medicine gave a good share of their professional wisdom to the effort on deciphering the intricacies about water. Impurity, shortage, or abnormal distribution of water in the body is dangerous to your health. However, before going any further, thoughts of “Tiqur Abbay,” habitually referred as “Blue Nile,” took over my tinkering tool.

Time willing, I would one day come back and talk about Tiqur Abbay, Ethiopians, and Ethiopia. Today however, I just wanted to say a word or two on a topic that recently became a theme of conversations on Tiqur Abbay and the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. First, there is no one Ethiopian in his or her right mind that disagrees with the idea of building a dam on Tiqur Abbay.

I did not hear, or read anything to that effect. Yes, there are debates and opinions from engineering, environment, and economics, social and of course political perspectives. Still, existing opinions did not resort to suggest any to the damage of the project.

A tangent reality is a conversation within the troposphere of Ethiopian internal politics. While the sitting government promotes the idea and moves forward with completing the project, political organizations with alternative voices seem clueless on what position to take. Some tried to take advantage of the governments irresponsible practices, corruption, and forcing Ethiopians to contribute funds towards the project. Some took their implied positions as far as pushing a conflict with upstream countries. That is the point I want to make.

Struggling for democracy, the rule of law, and the pursuit of civilization and prosperity is one. Implying to reinforce bad notions of outsiders against Ethiopians and Ethiopia is another. For political organizations with alternative voices, the idea of “the enemy of my enemy is my friend” is not necessarily a preferable tactic to bring about the needed change in Ethiopia. Statements that come out against carrying out the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam need serious considerations.

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