

Essay:-

"If gold rust, what shall iron do?"

Outline:-

1) Introduction:

Thesis Statement: "For if a priest be foul, on whom we trust, No wonder is a common man should rust."

The Prologue of Chaucers Canterbury Tales

2) What the Phrase "If gold rust, what shall iron do?" Entails:
Geoffrey Chaucer

3) How does the Phrase "If gold rust, what shall iron do?" Apply on Historical Events:

a) Eventual decline of Empires in history

Case in Point: ~~Eventual~~ The downfall of Roman Empire in 476AD

b) Dark Ages of Medieval Europe etc

Case in Point: Aristocracy and kingship of feudal lords in England

c) Miserable defeat of Mughal Empire in the subcontinent

4) Implications of "The Phrase" at societal level.

a) Disrupting the morality of leadership leads to political corruption

Case in Point: Watergate Scandal in United States from 1972 to 1974 has led to distrust in political institutions

b) Disappointment of expectations of populace over their leaders

Case in Point: Brazil's Operation Car Wash and South Africa's Zuma Administration

c) Profound Impact on faith, due to involvement of Religious leaders or institutions, in misconduct

Case in Point: Catholic Church's Sexual Abuse Scandal in the United States in early 2000s

5) Implications of "The Phrase" at National Level:

a) Defective functioning of pillars of state leads to exploitation of rights

Case in Point: Case study of Military Junta of Myanmar (Burma)

b) Tendency of people to adapt unlawful means

Case in Point: Protests and unrest in Hong Kong during 2019-2020

c) Death of National Integrity Case in Point: Civil War in Syria in 2011.

6) Implications of "The Phrase" at International level

a) Defective leadership of major powers has contributed to the erosion of loyalties from developing countries

Case in Point: US withdrawal from Paris Agreement under President Donald Trump.

b) Unlawful hegemony of leading countries leads to the reaction in the form of extremist organizations

Case in Point: The U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan following the 9/11 Attacks

c) The Arab Spring: A product of defective leadership

Case in Point: Case Studies of Bashar Al-Asad regime in Syria, and Ali Abdullah Saleh's regime in Yemen

7) Conclusion

Examples are always set by those who are at the top. Those people are guiding line for the others. As if such ~~persons~~ people will be right then the nation will be at the right point and vice versa. So, when people start considering someone as pure as angel, and the same angel starts to scatter violence and cruelty then what can be expected from a common man? As Geoffrey Chaucer posits that:

"For if a priest be foul,
on whom we trust, no
wonder is a common
man should rust."

The Prologue of
Chaucer's Canterbury Tales

Moreover, one can find the historical evidences of the phrase "If gold rust, what shall iron do?" from the fall of empires and dynasties in history. It also impacts the spirit of true leadership from society, nation and the world which has a trickle down effect on the lives of common people.

This essay will start off by giving a brief explanation of what the phrase "if gold rust, what shall iron do?" entails. Then the focus of this discussion will shift to elucidating the historical evidences for the phrase. After that the implication of the phrase at societal, national, and international level will be discussed.

As discussed earlier if the most precious ones can deteriorate then nothing can be expected from laymen.

The phrase "if gold rust, what shall iron do?" is attributed to the English poet Geoffrey Chaucer from his work "Troilus and Criseyde". The line suggests that if something precious and valuable like gold can deteriorate or become corrupted, then something less valuable or sturdy like iron is likely to fare even worse. Similarly, this can be observed from history that how empires fall due to high authorities' lack of moral values and

aristocratic rules. Such behaviors of the top leaders are still effecting lives badly at society, national, and international levels.

First and foremost, among a host of historical evidences the world has witnessed, the eventual decline of empires is worth mentioning especially the Roman Empire in 476 AD. At the zenith of its power, the Western Roman Empire was akin to gilded gold - a symbol of opulence, might and virtue. However, over time, internal corruption, moral erosion, and political instability began to corrode the empire. The very gold that represented nobility and strength became tarnished symbolizing the corrosion of empires mortal fabric. As the empire weakened from within, the inevitable question arose: if the noblest of metals could succumb to rust, what chance did the more common iron have?

Similarly, the proverb "Of gold

rust, what shall iron do?" can be applied to the Dark Ages of Medieval Europe. When the aristocracy and kingship of feudal lords which was often symbolized by gold based challenges to its integrity and moral standing. Feudal lords originally entrusted with the well-being of their subjects sometimes succumbed to the allure of power and wealth. This ~~to~~ thing lead to the corrosion of moral authority which had a direct impact on common people who found themselves vulnerable to the consequences of deteriorating governance.

Thirdly, the miserable defeat of Mughal Empire in the sub-continent also justifies the phrase, "Of gold rust, what shall iron do?" As the main reason behind the fall of empire was the moral decline of last Mughal emperors. They were indulged in bad activities and could not maintain their administration. And the result was eventual fall of empire by

invasion of Britishers and East India Company with the imprisonment of last Mughal Emperor Bahader Shah Zaffar in Rangoon. Hence, the low morality of emperors leads to fall of empires.

Moving further, the top class leaders impact life at societal level in several way. As their morality disrupts the whole political system leading to corruption. In many societies, political leaders are often considered as "gold" due to their positions of power and influence. When corruption occurs at the highest levels of government, it sets a precedent for unethical behaviors throughout the political hierarchy. The example worth mentioning here is of Watergate Scandal in the United States from 1972 to 1974 which has led to distrust in political institutions. This incident involved the administration of President Richard Nixon.

which eventually led to Nixon's resignation. Thus, when the gold is rusted, nothing can be saved.

Additionally, the society places certain expectations on its leaders and institutions. If these expectations are not met, there is a sense of disappointment and disillusion among the populace.

For example, the Operation Car Wash in Brazil uncovered widespread corruption involving top political and business figures. The scandal revealed that high ranking officials were involved in bribery. These revelations led to mass protests and significant loss of trust of political figures.

Another example is of Zuma Administration in South Africa. His administration was marred by allegations of corruption, mismanagement, and a failure to address social issues. Resultantly

such incidents disappoint the citizens who expected better governance.

Another impact of the phrase

at societal level is on religion and faith of people on religious leaders due to their involvement in misconducts. In the early 2000s, a series of investigations and media reports uncovered extensive cases of sexual abuses of minors by Catholic priests in the United States. This scandal revealed not only the abuse itself but also the systematic cover-up by bishops and other church officials. They reassigned the accused priests rather than reporting them to law enforcement or removing from the ministry, this example illustrates how a scandal involving religious leaders can have far-reaching consequences affecting the faith of followers.

The phrase, "If gold rust, what shall iron do?" has also great impacts at national level. First impact in this case is the defective functioning of the pillars

of state which leads to the exploitation of people. This exploitation of rights of people can be observed in the case of Myanmar (Burma). The military dominance in Burma has resulted in the suppression of political opposition, restrictions on freedom of expression, and the marginalization of ethnic minorities. Moreover, the judicial system has been criticized for lacking independence. Hence, these systems has led to the exploitation of citizens' rights and a dire human rights situation.

Yet another impact of top class leadership's low morality on national level leads to the tendency of people to adopt unlawful means. These means are adopted by people due to systematic corruption at various levels of government. In this regard, protests and unrest in Hong Kong (2019-2020) is the best example. During the pro-democracy protests, in Hong Kong some participants resorted to unlawful

means such as vandalism and clashes with the police. More protestors were engaged in confrontational tactics as a response to perceived political injustices and erosion of freedoms. This example highlights the tendency of individuals to adopt unlawful means.

Also, the impact is on the national integrity of a nation. And the concept of "death of national integrity" typically refers to a situation where a country experiences significant internal divisions, conflicts, or challenges that threaten its unity. The ongoing civil war in Syria which began in 2011 is the best example of death of national integrity because it has resulted in the breakdown of national integrity. The conflict involves various factions including the government, rebel groups and extremist organizations leading to widespread violence and displacement. The divisions along ethnic, religious, and political lines have eroded

The sense of unified system
Syria nation.

The phrase "If gold rust, what shall iron do?" has also impacts on international level. One of the profound impacts is the defective leadership of major powers which has contributed to the erosion of loyalties from developing countries. Case study in this case is the US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. The decision by the United States under Donald Trump to withdraw from the Paris Agreement on Climate Change demonstrated a lack of commitment to global efforts to address environmental challenges. Developing countries particularly those vulnerable to climate change were critical of this move. The withdrawal was seen as a disregard for shared global responsibilities and contributed to a decline in trust and loyalty towards the U.S. in context of international climate efforts.

Moreover, another impact of low top class authorities' morality leads to the unlawful hegemony of leading countries which moves to the reaction in the form of extremist organizations. The case in point is the U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan following the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent prolonged military presence contributed to opposition and resentment among certain Afghan factions. Resultantly, the Taliban an extremist group gained strength in response to the presence of foreign forces positioning themselves as a resistance movement against what they considered an unjust occupation.

Lastly, the impact on international level is also the Arab Spring which is a product of the defective leadership. It is a series of pro-democracy uprisings that occurred across the Arab world starting in late 2010. The prominent examples are of Bashar Al-Asad's regime in Syria and

Ali Abdullah Saleh's regime in Yemen. The President Bashar Al-Assad's regime in Syria has been characterized by authoritarian rule, suppression of dissent, and allegations of human rights abuses. The government's harsh crackdown on demonstrators escalated the situation into a protracted and brutal civil war making a devastating outcome of the Arab Spring. Similarly, President Ali Abdullah Saleh governed Yemen for over three decades maintaining power through authoritarian measures and facing accusations of corruption. These examples illustrate that how Arab Spring was part of defective leadership.

In conclusion, it can be stated that even the most esteemed and resilient entities are susceptible to corrosion and imperfection. The proverb also compels to reflect on the broader implications for human behavior on society, national, and international level. As it

is said that:

“And when the brightness of sun
is vanished

Surely the moon will also
be perished.”