

Lord Acton: "Power tends to corrupt and **absolute power** corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men, even when they exercise influence and not authority; still more when you superadd the tendency of the certainty of corruption by authority."

Why is it that absolute power corrupts absolutely?

Is it that when one achieves absolute power, it makes you think of yourself all the time only? ... that one becomes completely self-absorbed?

Does it mean that when a person just becomes self-absorbed, he can no longer think of other people?

This refers to any situation where one person acquires a considerable amount of power.

e.g. large companies where the presidents or the CEO might control a huge amount of money and the resources of the company. It also may refer and really does probably refer to the source of even a greater power - government.

Leaders of government sometimes get to control the resources of a nation and all the individuals within it. The power ranges from the leaders of democracies which have some restraint although probably not too much, to a totalitarian regime where the leaders have power concentrated in one particular man or a group of men.

Examples of this would be: Totalitarian regimes include Mao Tse Tung in China, Pol Pot in Cambodia, Hitler of Nazi Germany, Stalin of the Soviet Union.

Even presently, there are quite a few totalitarian regimes currently in place in the world. Africa has many; China qualifies as it is an oligarchy with the concentration of power is within a few at the top it's not just one. Putin's Russia is an oligarchy

Most countries which are governed by Islam are theocratic totalitarian regimes. There are no true democracy in Islam because the top clergy have ultimate decision making power on decisions made within that country.

On the other end of the spectrum we have democracies in the West & Asia world. In these democracies the concentration of power is not as great.

So looking at the spectrum of power concentration within government, can we say that absolute power corrupts absolutely?

First in order to understand the situation let's delineate the process of every day life decision making. We do this because all life entities make decisions.

First, there is a one controlling priority as soon as a life entity comes to be: it is the first ductim of life and of economics: all of life strives for which is good for it.

Secondly, into the conscious of a life entity, there are two types of stimuli: exterior originating stimuli that is from outside the body of the life entity and interior originating experiences that come from within.

The stimuli comes in to a life entity and is information, and to it the entity's consciousness attaches a priority. And a priority is a degree of importance that the information holds relative to the life entity. And example of this is hunger.

Once, we prioritize a piece of information, it becomes a piece of knowledge. Knowledge is an accumulation of what is important to us.

The interior originating stimuli of hunger pings the consciousness, and we attach a priority to it because it's important to us

The decision-making process

In every decision we know that we have to make a sacrifice in order to achieve a reward. And this reward is a priority.

we decide to achieve that priority which is our reward for a sacrifice.

Equation out of this: our sacrifices = our rewards.

we make this sacrifice to achieve a reward

the sacrifice side, we set up the risk involved in the sacrifice, the time involved in the sacrifice, the effort involved, and the knowledge required to effectuate it.

this fulfills the first dictum of life and economics that we all seek that which is good for us.

In every decision we make, we formulate in our consciousness through the use of our information, knowledge, the amount of time, the effort, the risk involved and whatever material it require if any to obtain every reward.

add the ingredient: motivation

Motivation is achieved by comparing sacrifice to the reward.

Lastly, in our decision-making process there is a complication. This complication comes about because there are others in society with whom we become involved.

And in society if there are others that have the same priorities, there arises the situation of competition!

competition is the convergence and divergence of priorities.

e.g., supply and demand
As there are more buyers for a certain item the price, it goes up.

as our priorities are the same as others - that is they converge upon each other - there is competition for the same resources

Therefore, in response to this, life entities try to diverge away from the direct competition. They tried to get away from the high prices by diverging away from clashing priorities, that is, by differentiating their priorities.

They might try to find substitute items to buy which is known in economics as the elasticity of demand. In essence, it's really divergent priorities.

Companies differentiate

So, how is it that absolute power corrupts absolutely?

let's go back and take a look at ingredient number two which was the construction in our consciousness of the sacrifice versus the reward equation

all governmental leaders have to make decisions of great importance but those with absolute power and make them without restraint. They can do this because they have absolute power; thus, they can make their decisions without receiving influence from others; or receiving input and advice from others and they are unrestrained by other governmental powers.

So at this point where we construct our priorities in our consciousness, the totalitarian who has absolute power will construct priorities of great moment that will have great influence all throughout his domain.

Suppose a totalitarian leader is interested in a particular ideology, say, for example, Islam or communism. The absolute leader takes an interest in one of these ideologies, and then, starts to make the priority that he will mold the society to be commensurate with such an ideology.

And when the totalitarian leader makes such a change, he does not seek the influence or advice of prominent leaders in the society with their knowledge. He does not seek a Democratic vote of confidence in the new society. It is done without influence. Therefore, the totalitarian leader seeks only the thoughtfulness of himself or his immediate advisors if any who would also hold the priorities that are close to his because he - as well as life in general - does not like competition.

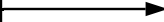
he will do so in order to avoid having to experience the second half of competition which is the divergence of the priorities.

Hence, he becomes selfish, introverted, and often, this is accompanied by paranoia.



And this is the corruption of oneself. Ergo, absolute power corrupts absolutely.

There are many examples throughout history



So we know absolute power corrupts absolutely, we have established a reason but why is it necessarily so?

And the reason is that because there is no cooperative behavior in a totalitarian's life he will descend into selfishness.



If the priorities he chooses to live by tend away from the first dictum of life and economics, which is for the individual life entity to seek goodness for itself, but for the individual to seek collective goodness - established by he who has absolute power - then the country is in for a problem.

As the totalitarian leader no longer has any reason to cooperate with others, he will examine his priorities only in making a decision.



And because he is totalitarian and doesn't have to accept any other priorities - other than his own - the amount of obligation to cooperate with others diminishes almost, probably close to zero.

Because it is natural and easy to be selfish, the totalitarian necessarily does become selfish and look to his own priorities.



And the more you are isolated due to non-cooperative behavior, you will believe that your priorities and thought are superlative, and thus, the delusional despot concludes that others should follow his way.