

2019 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Youth Category – 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize]

## **Long Way to Go**

(Original)

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In my country, the biggest achievement of someone's life is to leave the country. It is quite ironic as it sounds. But it is the reality. I am an undergraduate student. I am currently pursuing my B.Sc. degree in Electrical and Electronic Engineering. I come off a middle-class family. We are leading a well-established life here. Still my parents are hopeful that I will finish my graduation and try to have a scholarship and leave this country for good. Since my childhood, I also have possessed the same dream.

I live in my university dormitory. There is a local market beside it. One morning, I was having my breakfast there. While I was having my breakfast, an old man of around 60 years came to the shop. He started to wash the dishes. I thought him as a normal employee who worked in the shop. Suddenly I observed something irregular. He had a polybag with him. He didn't just wash the dishes but also filled his bag with the leftovers from the dishes. It was quite unusual for me. So, I got interested in him. I initiated a conversation with him.

This old man was a random homeless person living in the streets of Dhaka. He had this deal with the food shop that every morning he can take the leftover foods. In return, he had to clean the dishes. Every morning this old man, who can barely walk due to his age comes in this shop and collects whatever he can. Then he takes this food to his sick wife who can't even move after having a heart attack last year. He also has to take care of a daughter who is mentally unstable and whose husband left her due to her sickness.

Can you imagine what this old man was going through? I don't think you can. I don't think anyone can. I don't know if it is bad luck or something, but I definitely know that this old man is not alone. There are millions of people in this world just like him.

There are lots of great souls who have devoted their lives to make this world a better place. But it seems like we are always being outnumbered. Some of the privileged people are trying to be kind but it is never enough.

There is a war in Yemen. A severe humanitarian crisis is going on there. There are the

Rohingyas leading inhumane lives in the refugee shelters in Bangladesh. There are consistent famines and food, water crisis in a huge part of Africa. There are millions of homeless people all around the world. We have come this far in this civilization, yet a huge number of people in this world don't have access to basic medical care. Children all around the world are dying due to malnutrition because of excessive poverty. There are people who pass days without even eating proper food. The world is witnessing an extreme refugee crisis.

Now is the time we ask ourselves. We have to ask ourselves if this is the world we want.

I asked myself. The answer was clear. I don't want to live in this world. I definitely have to change it. But I have to be rational. For now, I can't help the children in Africa or help the people in Yemen. But I can help the old homeless man I met in my breakfast. I can't just dramatically change his life, but I can be kind to him. I can help him as much as I can. I can motivate other people to come forward with kindness. Today, I can help one poor family. Together we can help millions. We don't need all the wealth in this world to help the underprivileged, we just need to be kind enough to come forward.

That's when I knew that I don't want to leave my country. I knew that I have to be here and try my best to build a society full of kindness. And to accomplish that, I have a long way to go.