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Today I was at the market. I went to buy only tomatoes, [to cook with the] pumpkin leaves my wife had plucked from the maize garden. It was around 12 noon. Lunch hour. I went straight to where vegetables are sold, where there were many women selling the vegetables known as *tanaposi* --in English it's turnips (I believe)-- and some women together with men were selling tomatoes. Fortunately I went straight to buy them to a certain old man well known to me as Kinnilos – I don't know why he's called that (everybody considered the name as a certain late drama actor.) The old man is well known to almost everyone in my trading center, being a business citizen there but never getting improved [better off]. Always selling tomatoes. The man greeted me as I was trying to select small heaps of three small tomatoes. I responded his greetings.

He asked me why I am so scarce and I said I am not, it's just that I've missed him, but every day I visit the trading center and see him but never talk with him. He criticized me greatly and said I am not doing well to be just passing him without ever greeting him, and he made me know that he is and was the best friend to my late grandfather, he said the relationship was of *ponda-apa* (Chichewa – in English I can attempt to translate that to be a foot after another friend's foot, a good relationship meaning walking always together). He said a lot [about the grandfather], like they were going to church together the time he was praying at the C.C.A.P. [Presbyterian] church, his first and relative [?] denomination before [he] himself went to the Islamic faith. I was very impressed [interested] and was paying much attention to what he was saying, for this he asked me to take another heap of tomatoes free of charge, assuring me that he really knows me.

He touches many issues like whether I am now married. I said I married a long time ago and I have 2 children and he asked me from which woman, then before I could answer another woman who sat near him selling tomatoes answered and said: 'You don't know his spouse?' The man answered: 'Yes I don't know her, may be she comes and I see her but I never knew that she is his spouse.' The woman tried to describe her (my wife) as he is white (the whiteness the blacks deserve) and medium short and slim. But still the man was not able to recall and then I was just laughing and I said that 'But my wife knows you and every day when she comes to buy tomatoes I will be sure to tell her to buy from you.' He was laughing and asked why I would always say that she should make sure to buy from him? And then I answered and said 'Because I know that you give surplus to customers' and now he was laughing with the other woman who had commented, there now seemed to be three people in our conversation. Then the man asked why I don't walk together with my wife, I've had three children without him noticing. I laughed and corrected him that its not three children but rather two children as said already. We were laughing.

And then the man said 'It's better and more pleasant walking and laughing with a wife, and said that's what we old people were doing when we first married because then a marriage was very difficult to get because it involved very long and complicated procedures with the parents to get the wife to be yours--as compared to nowadays when people are just taking each other to live as a couple and it takes a long time for parents to become aware of the affair. We laughed and he said 'You should [shouldn't?] be laughing but that's not good, it's because of this system nowadays that you find that marriages don't last long before separating and divorcing occurs. Because they just meet anyhow, for example at the football pitch, and it ends there at the football pitch as well.' We laughed and laughed until the woman in the conversation said I should be going because I may be late with the tomatoes for the wife's preparations to have our lunch in good time even though it [didn't] seems late. I answered by saying 'No! The man is giving me sound advice. My home is not far, I will reach it quickly. Then the man said: 'But the good marriages were of our times, not of these days. Nowadays marriage is materialistic, only for money, not for the love that goes with passion and faithfulness.' I asked why not? The man said 'Do not be surprised, it's because of time, in the Bible, to you who are able to read, it was written that there will come a time whereby a woman could come straight alone to a man and say "I will be eating mine, clothing mine but I should only call your name as my

husband for you to remove my reproach.” And that there could be several women coming doing that, up to 7 women, and do you think could be difficult for the man to get rid [divorce] of them whenever he wants to?’ He concluded saying that ‘Could it be easy for him to get rid of them whenever he wants to?’ He then said it could be easy for him to get rid of them simply in the way they had come.’

We laughed and this time the woman near us but not very close frowned a little.

And the man said ‘It was indeed written and this is the time, not in our old days. Indeed my young fellow, you are born in a difficult time, difficult times indeed, so that even hard- working farmers are exhausting their power cultivating for nothing, they are cultivating a very vast field and they harvest a handful (he said *mudzanja* – in a handful). Life is so hard, not like the past.’ He said many things about the past and some more until I asked a question about marriages back then. He said marriage in the past was not as of today and the woman was now busy selling his tomatoes and moved to try find a change from a nearby salesman and then the man said ‘Today’s marriages are of today because of democracy which is destroying [things], because a tendency came of gender-- a woman doing business, a man doing house chores and a wife supporting the whole family’ and he ended laughing. And I asked him: ‘Is it not good for a marriage?’ The man answered that ‘Yes indeed it’s not good, because even in our past days when a man was found or fond of cooking *nsima* himself for no good reason, they were taken as sissies and silly, and was very difficult for them to get married, for women would tell each other and it would be well known in the village compounds that you sweep, cook, etc and you would be a subject of their talks or their songs when they were pounding and they would be laughing’. And we laughed. And he said, ‘And nowadays you find a man is cooking while a woman has gone to the market for business. And not only one business but two, they add a business of moving around, and you find that she doesn’t collapse down fast in terms of capital. Because they are given [capital] by other men who sleep with them. I have moved (the man went on) talking a lot and seeing different people. The end result is the woman comes to be challenging the man’s power and all the efforts he has done for the home and a man criticizing them and not trusting them (their spouses) very much. But when given a responsibility (meaning given power) they [women] come to wear the trousers (mocking, I believe) and challenging you! And the end result is that both of you will be coughing because the wife hunted *kaziwotche* and gave it to her husband and they will be pining away and leave the money behind to others rather than using it as planned to improve their life status economically. Because women of nowadays are not faithful enough compared to ours of the past.’

And I asked him what the name *kaziwotche* stands for? (By this time the business woman had already returned from getting change). The man said *kaziwotche* is the same as saying that it’s AIDS.’ (NB – To my understanding *kaziwotche* is a Chichewa term and means “fire on yourself or lifting oneself.”) And I asked ‘But there are some women who really faithful here I believe!’ He said ‘Of course there are, but if there are then they should be very very few and not only those women doing, for example, these simple businesses.’ [unclear] And I laughed.

And he said ‘Don’t laugh, I tell you the truth, even men are very very unfaithful and whenever they have money then it’s worse.’ We laughed and then I decided to be going home. Nearby I bought bananas for the children, I ate some and shared some with him, and I asked him whether he knows anyone, maybe his best friend, who was faithful? He began talking about his friends, some of them were going with partners instead of leaving the issue of going for partners to their children and retiring to be living [with a wife] and looking after each other as you get old. And he asked: ‘Fancy at my age to be going for partners? Wanting what? Trying to take AIDS while old? That’s bad, this disease is killing those who are deaf to the daily messages from this radio (this was a radio near where he sat) making them aware or warning them that the disease is dangerous and has no medicine, what kind of disease is that which has no medicine? In the past there were other dangerous diseases like *chitayo* but they and others had medicine, not like this one.’ And I asked why these people think of this disease? He said ‘People think that because it is a global crisis and has spread worldwide then it’s indeed a disease which the Bible has written about, *kaliwondewonde* (Chichewa--My understanding is that it means getting thinner and thinner.) And I said ‘What do they do, if anything at all, considering that partners they go for might have been infected with this disease?’ He said ‘I believe some people are clever, when they notice that his/her partner has started showing signs like the radio says—pining/becoming thinner and thinner, coughing persistently and hairs becoming scraggly and soft--the clever partners leaves or divorces the partner or the spouse no matter how good and powerful she

or he was, in order to avoid contracting the disease.’ I asked: ‘Really, they divorce each other?’ The man said ‘Really clever people do that but foolish people stay together and they both die of AIDS.’ And I asked: ‘But clever ones divorce their spouses to avoid contracting the disease?’ The old man said yes indeed. And I went on asking, I was not tired [or ready] to be going home for lunch- because I meant to find more in order to learn a lot information to fill my diary. I asked him, ‘Old man (He is an old man but because he is short and fat he seemed to be powerful enough and strong) can one find a faithful person?’ He said ‘A partner?’ I said ‘Yes, a partner indeed.’ And he said, ‘Remember I already said that nowadays it’s very difficult to have a faithful wife, more difficult than for us in the past, because it’s its time. The words said in the Bible must be fulfilled, they can’t be left unfulfilled.’ And I said ‘But really nobody, for example here, claims to be faithful?’ Then the old man said ‘There are some but very few indeed, the majority are unfaithful.’ And I asked ‘Why aren’t they faithful in this time of AIDS?’ He said ‘Its because of what I have said, that some people just think, because of their stupidity, that because the disease is global and worldwide, and because of the notion of saying it’s God’s crisis, they say that it can’t be avoided, that everyone, no matter what, will catch it.’ And I asked him: ‘Do you believe them?’

He said: ‘No! Totally I disbelieve them – this AIDS can be avoided, but only by avoiding what the radio says.’ I asked what does the radio say? He said ‘The radio always says that the only way to avoid HIV/AIDS is to avoid having sex with anyone apart from your spouse.’ And I said, ‘And you trust the radio?’ He said ‘Indeed I trust it’, I asked ‘Why?’ He said ‘Because it’s not the radio case itself but people working at the M.B.C. [Malawi Broadcasting Company], they are intelligent and educated and whatever is said by them is always true.’ And I said: ‘What do you think are other ways of avoiding this dangerous disease?’ He said ‘The only way is to avoid having sexual partners apart from the spouse and nothing else, or when you see that the partner is not moving well leave her or him to avoid contracting the disease.’ Then I asked ‘What about those who are not married?’ He said ‘Those unmarried, the only way to protect themselves is avoid having casual sex and continue schooling for it’s their future, not like it was for us in the past when there were no such things as this free schooling system and money for paying fees was very scarce. They should wait to get married until they finish schooling and find a job, but nowadays it’s not happening, instead you find many dropping out of school because of early pregnancies which are very premature.’ And I said, ‘Should the unmarried get married to avoid contracting AIDS?’ Then the man said: ‘Yes indeed they should get married if they want to avoid dying with AIDS.’ And I said ‘What about those taking early pregnancies, don’t they know the importance of condoms which the radio always announces [should be used] to avoid contracting the disease and pregnancies?’ The man said, ‘About condoms I can’t say anything because I don’t see their importance. It’s a long time indeed since they started to be manufactured but yet a lot of people are still dying and the mortality rate is higher and the population still increases, it’s not like the way we were in the past. That’s why goods were cheaper then than nowadays, because there was more [land] and people were very few and food was sufficient and people did not scramble to get food as is happening nowadays at B___ [the grain marketing board], people in the past, we could live from our maize granaries, even needing a new granary.’ I asked ‘Indeed a [new] granary?’ He said ‘Yes, but I mean the maize in the granary, of course, [the old granary still has maize and the new one is for the] the new harvested maize of that year – which can not happened nowadays, because people are breeding so much.’ He laughed and I laughed too.

And he said ‘What’s the use [of condoms]? Had it been I was a youth I couldn’t have had been using it because I read a certain verse, I believe it’s in Genesis, which forbids the rise of outside ejaculation like what happens when you use the condom and says it’s a sign of killing. ‘If I do that it’s better I stop immediately because it’s a sin towards God.’ And I said to him ‘Ever since condoms were manufactured I never attempted to use one.’ (I was cheating him). He encouraged me not to attempt it and emphasized that it’s a great sin towards God.

Then I asked another question and I said but really, doesn’t he have a [faithful] friend-- even not a village mate nor from a neighboring village, either a man or a woman? I added that it’s impossible, I believe, that in the whole M___ area including the trading center , there isn’t anyone being faithful. The man said: ‘Oh! Yes indeed it’s true [some are faithful], but I only had [one?], a certain friend, also an old man like me, and we both married in the same year and both migrated from A___ and he stays in N___ village. That one, when I see him and his spouse, indeed he is faithful, more than anyone here I believe.’ I said ‘How old is he?’ The man said ‘I can’t know his real age but he was born in the same year with me because we are the

same age, even though I forgot the year I was born.’ (In my opinion the respondent is 70-something). And I asked what domination does his friend in N__ village belong to? He said his friend belongs to Roman Catholic church and is a church priest there. And I said why is his friend faithful? He said, ‘My friend is faithful and even I myself am faithful also.’ (I laughed) and he said ‘you are laughing because I said even me “I am faithful?”’ Then I said ‘No! not that (and was smiling).

And I said ‘I am faithful, even my wife is as well, because apart from getting older it’s also because I was born in a poor family where no-one can help me if I do mischievous things like going for other sex partners and I take a disease there, for example the one which has come nowadays that we are speaking of, AIDS, and suffer with that. No one can care about me and I will die badly. As a result I just decided myself without being told by anyone to be faithful and fortunately my wife was born faithful already.’ And we were amicably laughing. And then I asked why his friend is faithful (that one living in N__ village.) And he said, ‘My friend in N__ was born faithful and even his family – I know his family quite well, as I said we both migrated from A__ – his family was a respectable one and even his late parents were quiet and faithful as well and I think he had derived his heart from his parents for it says clearly that [faithfulness? Good behavior?] begins at home. And I asked whether people in N__ village or other villages admire his friends faithfulness? He said ‘People admire him I believe, I have never heard anyone talking about admiring him but I believe they admire him.’ And I asked ‘And people don’t take or consider him as foolish?’ And he said: ‘Ah! I don’t think so, maybe there are but about this then I can’t say much.’ And I asked him whether people admire him (my respondent) for his faithfulness? He said ‘I don’t know anything about what people think of me but they know indeed that I am faithful.’

And we chatted and chatted and then finally I thanked him for our long discussions and he thanked me as well. By this time the woman who sat near him had already gone to stay somewhere near a shop, seeking refuge from the bare sun light which was severely striking on the bare ground where they sat selling their tomatoes. And I sat with the man near a tree called Ntindowoko which had germinated near the place we sat at the roots of the tree – roots which partly protruded from the soil-- and we were listening to the radio as well as frequently and fluently chatting.

I said farewell to the man and the last words he said were that the world as it is will come to an end because of AIDS and it’s better to live, careful and faithful. And he advised me to remain faithful to my wife since there is an incurable disease which has come nowadays and not to trust condoms, they are made by men even though they are manufactured by a machine, but they cannot really help and one can get the disease because it’s God who made the disease and can conquer the condom. The virus can only be avoided by being faithful to each other as a married couple and satisfied with what you have, not looking for other partners as well.

And it was a very long conversation indeed and then I departed running home and my wife was furious because I was too late, later this time than most of the times when I go to the market for urgent issues like I went today, and she said she will not boil the vegetables and instead we would eat them at supper time for the time for lunch has gone and indeed it was 2 o’clock when I arrived back home. And I convinced her that every time is lunch time and said I was chatting with Mr. Kinnilos and he was talking a lot for my research purpose. And she was laughing and said ‘You always run there for diaries, you say [that] whenever you come home late, cheating me while you were with another wife.’ I laughed. And [she?] asked why I was laughing? And I [said I] was just laughing and she was laughing as well and then she went to boil vegetables. The end of the whole story.

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There was a ceremony in our village, especially the compound of Maliro. The ceremony was going to the graveyard to clear it for cultivation by cutting down any tall grass. The custom is that after work it is advisable to assemble after a prayer at a certain *kachele* tree, a very big vegetative tree near which the ancestors, especially of the Maliros, settled when they first migrated from A__ very long ago. The parents say the ancestors stayed under this *kachele* tree until they built their thatch huts or rather shelters, and lodged there until the first families became many and began to colonize the vast area were by which parents

especially of the Maliros when they migrated from A___ very long long ago, firstly come to stay. When coming from A___, parents say the ancestors first came to this area and stayed at the bottom of this *kachele* vegetative evergreen tree. And they were staying there until they built their grassy huts or rather shelters and they lodged there up to the time the first families became many and begun to colonise the vast area beyond this tree. Therefore every year [this ceremony is performed] by the Maliros, the Bakili—another name well known to this family—and migrants from other areas who had come to stay where the Maliro or the Bakili colonized and asked land from them for cultivation. A good example of the migrants is “us”, coming from C___ in 1975. There is a community graveyard. It is cleared by using hoes and sweeping with brooms made from uprooted plants called *tsake* (Chichewa). Every year, parents remember to inform every member who belongs to this Maliro graveyard of the date of the ceremony so that the people concerned (we all) all) should get prepared. Some women prepare *masese* (traditional beer) and each individual woman makes *nsima*. We all, as usual, went straight after work, as a respect to ancestors to celebrate. Food was cooked and we ate in groups, communally, each group comprised of three men or three women. After eating, *thobwa* and *masese* beer were distributed, and we were merry drinking.

We were merry indeed drinking and then a friend, Moyo, said, ‘This beer is what makes me search for a certain girlfriend. She always cheats me that she loves me but whenever I tell her that we must do sex she refuses while laughing.’ And another friend Joe said ‘If she refuses while laughing it means she loves you indeed. You know ladies, they boast first and then they are shy while wanting to be sexed (fucked).’ We laughed so much. And I reminded Moyo, saying that ‘You remember you told me about Stella Enesto, your other girlfriend apart from your spouse?’ (I had already written about the particulars of this story in one of the diaries I had sent by surface mail to you professor). Moyo said: ‘Oh! Yes indeed I told you, that one Stella is my fiancé but I would like to taste this one from H___ village also. She is very beautiful my black beauty. I have to meet her today and I will persuade and force her by any means to sleep with me.’ Joe said, ‘And with the beer effect I believe you will indeed persuade her and she will surrender herself in your hands and definitely you are to have sex with her.’ Then we laughed and another friend, Jason Maxwel, said: ‘I wonder what happens when one has taken beer and wants to propose ladies--when proposing them they don’t rebuff you, it is like beer is a medicine for ladies.’ We all agreed and were laughing and concluded saying that because of the beer effect it is true that the lady doesn’t refuse because you are not shy when proposing. Another factor which make the lady reject a man’s proposal is [if he is] afraid and shy, ladies are clever enough at noticing a man’s eagerness or shyness when proposing her. We were laughing and Moyo said, ‘I am not afraid but today she is going to know that I am a man.’ We laughed and laughed and Joe added that ‘Then it’s vice-versa with me because now I am looking to have another extra marital affair and she should not be a black one but rather white in complexion because what I have, including my wife, are all black ones.’ We were indeed merry chatting.

Then I brought the subject to my research purpose. And I said, ‘Nowadays the world is dangerous with AIDS. We men, we need to be careful with this disease or rather we need to rely on condoms.’ Moyo began to laugh and said: “But as for me I can’t use the condoms and if I have the disease there is nothing I can do but rather I will try to spread it. And indeed if I have it means I have really spread it, especially during the past hunger months – because I slept with many girls and was giving them K10.00 fancy! [The kwacha was about 72=US\$1]. Women are sometimes stupid even though they start boasting when we propose them.’ Joe added ‘Indeed, and to drunkards like us, when we are drunk it is very difficult to use the condom because we tend to forget that there is this dangerous disease.’ Moyo said: ‘No!’ As for me, even drunk I don’t forget but the fact is that I don’t want to use condoms because when I proposed her I really meant to get her be using because when proposing I really meant to get her, no playing with her and using condoms, which would mean you are not so serious about her and it’s a waste of time and power.’ We laughed a lot. Vito said, ‘Indeed, using the condoms you can’t feel sweet. And nowadays, don’t be cheated, almost everyone has AIDS. For example, AIDS came to Malawi a long time ago, and by the time we had begun to realize that there is AIDS it’s too late, people had already taken it and already spread it rapidly, and because we did not go for a blood test we are just assuming that we are free from it, while we are not. It’s better to just be going plain.’ We were laughing.

And I asked, ‘What can you do if you have heard that your spouse, for example, has this disease?’ Jason answered that ‘If my wife has that then it means I have the disease as well and according to the way I think marriage can end because I will know that one among us has taken the disease somewhere [and brought it] into the family and I will be suspecting her always [even though] maybe she is not the one but myself.’ Joe

and Moyo continued saying 'But as for us, the marriage can continue because we would know that both of us have AIDS , because of the movements we men do we would know that it's me the man who brought the disease into the family.' And I asked 'Can you be living happily as before?' Joe answered '[Yes], happily, because not many will come to notice about this for it's very confidential, only a wife and you plus the doctor could know about the results.' Moyo said 'And then is the time I would be dressing attractively so that women would admire me greatly, and I would have no choice but to be sleeping with them, even the married ones, in order to further spread it.' And I said 'But that's very bad and a sin towards God, and God will write a sin upon your [name] for killing the innocent.' And friend Moyo challenged me, saying 'Even though it's written a sin, a sin is a sin and everyone has sins in this world and we will be punished together on the judgement day.' We were laughing. And I asked Joe and Moyo, 'You said you would continue the marriage using condoms with the spouse?' Joe said no use. Moyo said no use as well.

And I asked, 'But what do you think other people men or women say about the chances of contracting AIDS?' Joe said as of now everyone thinks that it's 99% (he said 99% in English) chances of contracting the disease while 1% not. This is because some people protect themselves while they have already got it, therefore wasting time for nothing because it's [only] wise to protect oneself when you know you haven't got the disease. Moyo commented the same as Joe said. And I went to Jason once again. (At this time there were only sounds of merriness, others could not catch our conversation we sat a bit isolated from the group assembled together drinking, away from the women). Then once again I asked Jason why a marriage can end because one spouse has AIDS? Jason said, 'It can't be good to be living together while knowing that a wife and me [both?] have the disease, and to avoid to be depressed it is better to divorce her and live alone.' And I asked 'And can you marry another one?' And Jason laughed and said 'Of course I can marry another one, one who is healthy.' We chatted and chatted and everyone went on saying that we shouldn't be cheated, everyone has HIV/AIDS and more especially we married people because we just marry anyhow without having a blood test.' We chatted and chatted until we were all drunk and changed the subject. We were indeed drunk but Moyo never missed the aim of meeting his extramarital partner.