

together

a national family magazine



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Together is a national family magazine. It is a monthly, published by the Franciscans (OFM) in India. It was started in 1935 in Karachi, now in Pakistan. It got its present name in 1966.

The magazine **Together** is a conversation platform. Nothing changes until our families change. It is an effort at making worlds meet by bringing down fearful, pretentious and defensive walls. **Together** is a journey, an ever-expansive journey—from me to us, from us to

all of us, and from all of us to all. Let us talk, let us cross borders. The more we converse and traverse, we discover even more paths to talk about and travel together. **Together** is an effort to uncover our shared humanity.

Your critical and relevant write-ups, that promote goodness, inclusivity and shared humanity, are welcome. Your articles must be mailed to editor@togethermagazine.in before the 15th of every month.

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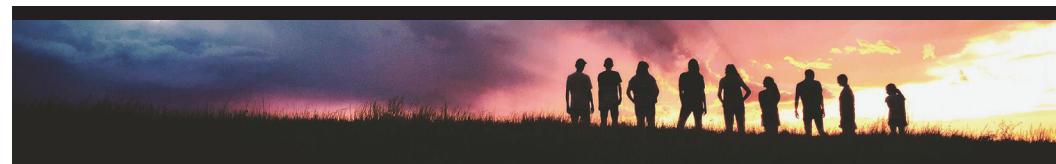
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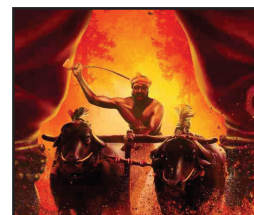


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Mere Authority Does Not Make One a Leader, but Followers Do

Muscular leaders with the support of majoritarian vocal mass of people are abusing leadership for exclusive majoritarian interests. And they perhaps would be the reason for our next mass extinction.

SAJI P MATHEW OFM

A month and a half ago England, after 70 years of Queen Elizabeth's rule, got a new monarch. As I am writing this, on TV the farewell speech of Liz Truss, who had to step down as the Prime Minister of England just after 45 days of assuming power is being telecasted live. These extremes say something about the unpredictable and volatile nature of leadership. With 10,000 baby boomers, who naturally were people who would push themselves to reach their goals and were self-motivated, retiring every day; and as millennials and Gen Z, who are lazy, entitled and narcissistic, taking over the workspace, organisations, and every community on the planet; leadership is becoming as erratic as 45 short days, or perhaps, as unattended and neglected as 70 long years.

Not even one in five organisations and business has the confidence to say that existing leaders are effective enough at meaningfully achieving the business and organisational goals. New studies show that 84% of companies and organisations predict a shortfall of leaders who are capable of driving their business forward in the next decade. Leaders are under pressure to deliver results, but on an average they are getting less than 90 days to prove themselves. Leaders are lost in short-term profitability—be it money-wise, fame-wise, or even aggression-wise, than long-term value and meaning creation. Leaders with no commitment to the long-term future are increasingly becoming disconnected with political, social and environmental issues; and that possess a huge threat to the planet and its inhabitants.

Changing times need new approaches.

Hoary muscular, shortsighted, profit minded leadership styles are bound to fail in achieving meaningful long-term goals. World needs leaders, but as change abounds, leadership styles need change too.

Managers Manage, Leaders Lead

Borrowing the sense and sentence structure of William Shakespeare from his Twelfth Night, 'some are born leaders, some achieve leadership, and some have leadership thrust upon them' may summarise how one reaches the position of leadership, but time and again, the question of 'how one leads' has come under scan. Perhaps the question should be 'why one leads?' Shakespeare was merely emphasizing the unfathomable context and circumstances into which one's life unfolds.

Entrusted, and at times even usurped, authority does not make one a leader. Authority comes from authorship. Authoring is an agonising, patient, laborious exercise. If you haven't authored anything in life, you can only pretend to be an author or a leader, but may never have authentic authority; and most authority-hungry people do pretend. *Everyone is a born leader* is the dumbest thing I have ever heard on leadership.

Simon Oliver Sinek, an international speaker on leadership and the author of the book *Leaders Eat Last*, convincingly states that there are many people at the senior most levels of organisations who are absolutely not leaders, they are authorities and we do what they say because they have authority over us but we would not follow them. (They are just managers: keepers of money, power, tradition, structures

Soft Skills that Every Leader Should Have

Sources: Morris 2020



In this ever-changing and progressive world no leader has all the answers and knowledge; the leader knows it as much as the others perceive it.

and patriarchy.) And there are many people who are perhaps at the bottom of organisations who have no authority yet they are absolute leaders, exercising leadership qualities; and people follow them.

The Birth of a Leader

Let me narrate a parable spoken by Jesus. A father had two sons. One of them persuasively procured his share of the property from the father, left home, and spent all his wealth in despicable and reckless living. Like the modern-day popular recurrent economic depressions, the land experienced a severe famine: the son lost his job; his means of living dried up. Being helpless and defenceless the son remembered his father, and how he treated even his workers at home. 'Let me present my case to him', he thought, 'for he would definitely understand, comfort and help'; he got up and went back to his father. The son did not return to the father because he was his father, but because he relied on and esteemed what his father had been doing. The son became a follower, and the father a leader. The possibility of trust and confidence in the father made the son a follower. Leadership is an inside emotion that strangely connects the leader and the follower. Every father, every mother, and everyone must aim to be leaders. The only thing one needs to be a leader is to have people following. Nobody heartfully follows a tyrant and a pretender.

Muscular leaders, who gain power and retain power through force, might, money, and unchallenged tradition and patriarchy are on the

rise around the globe. Muscular leaders with the support of majoritarian vocal mass of people are abusing leadership for exclusive majoritarian interests. And they perhaps would be the reason for our next mass extinction.

Self-examination

Elections are the accepted means to leadership in every democracy and democratic organisation. A system that does not have objectivity and transparency in electing its leaders is bound to fail; for in the words of Jesus, 'anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber.'

The obligations on people in authority to lead is binding because they enjoy the power to make people think and question for being quiet doesn't always indicate peace, provide vision and direction, and offer comfort and help; and when they do not do it in deed they fail an organisation.

In this ever-changing and progressive world no leader has all the answers and knowledge; the leader knows it as much as the others perceive it. Therefore, it is better when a leadership is dynamic and fluid: let go the rigid unfertile hierarchical structures, and in a case-to-case manner the elected authorities allow individuals with competences and character to come to the fore to inspire, lead, and execute. From a muscular leadership standpoint it may look radical, unsettling and problematic, but it is liberating on multiple levels. Let structures be flat; and leadership too. ■

ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP IS CHANGING

Contemporary advancements has put an end to the hierarchical structure of the organisations bringing in flat structure advocating team structure that promotes a team member to hold the responsibility of leading till that particular team project is completed.

Dr ASHOK H S

The term *leadership* is one of the concepts that has relevance in many of the social sciences originated from various fields of social sciences, humanities as well as in Education and management (Northouse, 2007). Leadership is a process of 'influencing others to

understand and to agree about what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively, and the process of facilitating individuals and collective efforts to accomplish a shared objective' (Yukl, 2002: 3). In another definition, leadership is a procedure of shaping firm from present stage to the height that a leader aspires (Dess & Lumpkin, 2003). The gurus of the executive management and leadership mention that 'today's leaders are those who produce the leaders'.

Today technology has overtaken the responsibility of performing several functions that the leader used to take in the organisations. Sophisticated technology, built in troubleshooting mechanisms, app based solutions are available in abundance which has reduced the leader's function of providing technical support/assistance and guidance. These revolutions has brought down the hierarchical structure of the organisations bringing in flat structure advocating team structure that promotes a team member to hold the responsibility of leading till the team project is completed. His or her role as a leader seizes once the project is completed.

There are seven current concerns that is found to have significant impact on the functioning of leaders in the modern organisations. These concerns have brought about the changes in the nomenclature of the leader. Leader becoming a team leader, manager, coach, mentor etc. The seven concerns are: increasing change, increasing diversity in our daily lives, increasing tensions around value differences, increasing requirement for organisational learning and per-

sonal development, increasing need for a long-term perspective, increasing need for leadership processes that match the complexity of the systems, and increasing power of relationships.

INCREASING CHANGE: 21st century is marked by rapid changes in the various sectors of the economy. Globalisation, liberalisation, changes in the foreign trade practices, etc. has forced the organisations to adopt to these rapid changes. Though change is inevitable the human nature is to resist the changes even if it is for the betterment. It has become the role of the leaders to oversee how these changes are being adopted and accepted by the employees.

INCREASING DIVERSITY IN OUR DAILY LIVES: Urbanisation, increasing rate of women taking up employment, changing structure of family, etc. has added a new dimensions to the world of work namely work life balance, work from home schedules, moon lighting which need to be handled effectively by the leaders.

INCREASING TENSIONS AROUND VALUE DIFFERENCES: Mergers and acquisitions, ego centric career growth perspective of the employees is one of the major sources of conflict of values both at the individual level as well at the organisational level.

INCREASING REQUIREMENT FOR ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT: on the one hand, today's organisations are ever evolving and to keep up with the demands of the circumstances, learning to adopt and cope up with the change becomes the priority. On the other hand retaining the talent within the organisation by addressing personal development of each one of the employee across the organisational hierarchy becomes the responsibility of the leader who is expected to coach and mentor the employees. The leadership challenge is to design organisations that facilitate continuous learning and personal growth.

INCREASING NEED FOR A LONG-TERM PERSPECTIVE: The survival of the organisation is contingent upon the long term perspective. Organisations of today need to derive its vision keeping in view its long-term perspective and making the vision a reality is the role of the leaders.

INCREASING NEED FOR LEADERSHIP PROCESSES THAT MATCH THE COMPLEXITY OF THE SYSTEMS: Today, we need leadership to think far into the future. Increasing need for leadership processes that match the complexity of the systems. Each of the adaptive challenges is a complex system in itself. When these systems interact with one another, they create a large, dynamic, non-linear system with smaller non-linear dynamic systems nested within it.

INCREASING POWER OF RELATIONSHIPS: Leadership will be increasingly defined by the process of bringing people, ideas, and other systemic elements into new relationships; so organisations can develop the strategies to cope with adaptive challenges. Recent studies on the impact of technology on the organisational performance and effectiveness have emphasized on the power of human interpersonal relations. It is the responsibility of the leaders to encourage the employees to come out of their silos.

In addition to the above concerns the pandemic of recent times has reiterated on the role of leader towards facilitating the employees' emotional and affective needs.

THE NEED OF THE HOUR: Organisational leadership today is focusing on practicing transformational leadership, servant leadership, and spiritual leadership as alternative styles of leadership to that of traditional forms of leadership styles.

Emergence of positive psychology and its techniques and strategies are found to be more effective to deal with emotional and affective needs of the employees. The emotional needs arising out of pandemic in terms of anxiety, uncertainty, handling grief of the self as well as the others can effectively be handled by the practice of positive psychological techniques.

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP: Being connected is the key. Leadership needs to facilitate an environment that fosters individual growth, trust, and organisational learning. Tension is a positive force in organisational learning. Spend time to reflect on the process. Articulate the core purpose and values of the organisation. Finally, but seriously, reward risk-taking. ■

Dr Ashok H S is Professor & Dean of School of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences, Chanakya University, Bangalore.



Leadership Needs Rightful Intention, Energy, Persistence, Values, and Intellect

Positivity is not just about you. It's about everyone around you.

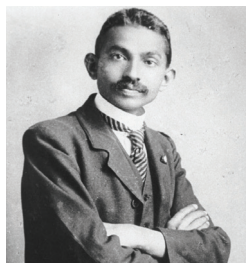
PRAVEEN KUMAR KALAPATAPU

The subject of leadership is multifaceted. There are a variety of personality traits and qualities that make someone a true leader. The best way to nurture these qualities is a topic matter of great debate. But four of them standout to me: righteous intention, energy and persistence to execute, values, and Intellect. If a person is able to possess these four qualities, the other traits will follow.

Born Out of Rightful Intentions

Most of the people often start thinking about Leadership from their perspective 'How do I become a Leader'. This is where failure of a Leader starts.

Selfishness cannot be the foundation for leadership development. The correct motivation, such as 'How I can make a difference' or 'How should I make this happen' or 'How can I enable others to accomplish this' or 'How can improve profitability or gain more business,' is the primary factor in a leader's success. A leader cannot be developed if this essential purpose does not exist. Even if they succeed in becoming a Lead, they are only managing or heading the group; they are not really a leader. Whatever you are thinking and feeling you are projecting to others and impacting them. That's why positivity is not just about you. It's about everyone around you. When intentions are good, it sets base for core values of leadership.



Because of their higher order goal, people like Gandhi, Netaji, Mother Theresa, and others rose to the position of leadership. They never needed to gather disciples since their objective is so lofty. Followers are internally driven to work toward the objective.

Energy and Persistence to Execute

Simply intending to do anything is insufficient. You should have the energy, perseverance, and excitement to carry out your plan and see it through as a leader. Execution is a difficult process. There would be numerous obstacles that may sap the team's and leader's vigour. Here, a leader's enthusiasm helps the team get underway.

Remember when you were feeling a little down, but spending time with an energetic person made you feel more revitalised and optimistic? That's how contagious these positive energy vibes are.

The simple fact is that each day you have a choice. You can be a virus and infect people with your negative energy, or you can infuse them with your positive energy. Either way, you are influencing people, so it's important to choose to influence people in a positive way. Positive energised people, often make you feel safe, happy and relaxed around them. For leadership, people need to be comfortable around him/her. Your energy can determine the success of a meeting, a workday, your home environment or even your overall company.

When success seems elusive, perseverance pays off. Don't give up. No one is to blame. Keep coming with all of your might, like a wave that never stops trying to reach the sky. Perseverance shows dedication.

Remember a time in Gandhi's life when he was in South Africa and vowed to fight local authorities against legislation that stripped people of their rights. Despite the fact that the cops assaulted him, he kept returning to hurl Bill into the fire as a sign of his displeasure. The team will follow him with enormous respect simply for this act of tenacity.

Sustain on Values

Leadership is a journey not a destination. While on the journey, unfortunately there is nothing straight forward in this world. There would be a plethora of choices and directions to be made. As a leader, you would have gotten the team going with the correct intentions and enough energy. However, values dictate the direction. Your values are the things you consider important in terms of how you live and do business. They establish your priorities, and they're usually the indicators you use to gauge whether your life is going in the direction you want it to. If you don't comprehend your direction as a leader, it's likely that neither will the group that works beneath you.

Only when team members see the rationale, which is built on values, they'll be able to appreciate the path. They want to see that your words and deeds are consistent. This means

aligning your habitual practices, routines, and behavior with your core values. They are quick to notice inconsistency and contradictions in their managers and leaders. Being a true and authentic leader is all about alignment. Trust is merely a byproduct of this leadership behaviour.

Rama repeatedly demonstrated these ideals throughout the Ramayan. His father had asked him to abdicate the throne. He did this with smile and he didn't accuse anyone for this. His outstanding moral example made him a wonderful king. These values were foundation for Rama Rajya (Ideal Nation).

Supported by Intellect

When making decisions, intellect is crucial. It compiles all the information that is available, allowing you to decide and find answers for complicated situations. You'll have a greater understanding of situations as a result.

Even empathy, which is one of the important characteristics of a leader, is part of emotional intelligence. Leaders who are emotionally intelligent know-how team members react to different situations and how they deal with them. Leaders know how to capitalise on the strengths of their team. They know how to deviate the team towards their strengths. Intelligent leaders know how to plan and how to build the required support system. Team comes to the leader for a solution, particularly when the situation is complex and they are not able to find the right direction. Their trust of him/her would depend on how well the leader could understand and also find a way out. Everyone understands the importance of confidence in problem resolution. As teams work to overcome difficult challenges, an intellectual leader boosts their collective confidence. The most crucial thing to keep in mind is that the most hazardous thing in the world is pure intelligence devoid of values.

Not merely Pandava valour, but also Krishna's intelligence contributed to the victory at Krukshetra. Krishna guided and plotted it so well that Pandava's managed to win the war against greats like Bheesma, Dhronacharya, Karma, Duryodhana and many others. Krishna, who didn't even have a weapon with him, is the leader in Krukshetra. ■

Praveen Kumar Kalapatapu is a senior principal technology architect and executive committee member of Infosys Bangalore.

Relational Leadership Is Co-constructed

Leaders from this perspective, know that their knowledge is humanly limited, and they are not omnipotent. They don't favour any preferred group as an 'in-group' over the rest as an 'out-group'.

A FRANCIS OFM



The old behavioral pattern of the so-called 'romance of leadership', the term coined by leadership scholar James R Meindl, which placed undue credit on the leader, is not so much in trend, today. The millennials even consider the concept of 'one leader and many followers' ingrained deeply at the heart of the 'autocratic leadership' as largely archaic and harmful.

Going against the conventional human penchant, many individuals today favour the 'relationship-oriented leadership style'. It is a leadership built on meaningful ethical relationships in which the leader and the led work together to make everyone a leader than a follower, as in the words of Tom Peters, the author of the book, *In Search of Excellence*, 'Leaders don't create followers, they create more

leaders.' Factually speaking, leadership experts and psychologists provide us with the data that the most effective leadership style that brings out the best outcome is none other than the relationally-oriented leadership.

Individuals who are raised in traditional communities that appreciate the virtue of blind obedience, just like the herd following the leader even though they don't know where they are going to, find the postmodern leadership ideals—respect for inclusivity, recognition of people's values and emotions, and denunciation of any type of hegemony of one person's superiority over the other—as chaotic and absurd! They hold on to autocratic leadership as much as they romanticise the so-called proverbial wisdom, 'too many cooks spoil the soup.'

To this, the millennials have an unapologetic response: 'If the soup gets spoiled, let it so! We are creative enough to add more ingredients, and make it a pot of delicious soup, like the 'minestrone', (a traditional Italian soup) that has no set recipe! Moreover, our pallets are good enough to appreciate diverse tastes, except that it does not tolerate the gross taste of condescension and control!'

The hardnosed autocratic leaders, many of whom we see around, without any qualms of conscience impose control and condescension on their followers. Such leaders seldom consider the opinions and feelings of others. They have their surveillance cameras all around to watch their subordinates, and have the audacity to present themselves as the all-knowing, omnipotent individuals. A lot of them demonstrate little or no ethics, which makes it easy for them to lie, and treat people as objects, to the extent of calling them as 'liability', and 'useless'. We witnessed the grotesque form of this abominable leadership behaviour, not so long ago from the former U.S. President, who called the foreign nationals with no legal status as 'animals!'

The millennial penchant for the 'relational' over the 'autocratic' leadership can't just be perceived as a haphazard hippie style unrest. It cannot either be dismissed as the 'rebellion' of the youth upending the existing customs, practices, and traditions. It is, in fact, a natural outcome, somewhat an 'evolutionary' phenomenon, of seeking to advance from the circumstance of a debilitating imposition to a transforming experience of growth, connection and relationship. From this perspective, it is a survival necessity, as suggested by Franklin Roosevelt, the former US president, 'If civilisation is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships—the ability of all peoples, of all kinds, to live together, in the same world at peace.'

The Relational Leadership

Although the theoretical model of relational leadership was conceptualised in the latter part of the 90s, human history never lacked

relationship-oriented leaders. Gandhi, King, Mandela are a few towering examples.

It is at the turn of the century, the model actually gained a gliding momentum, particularly with the theoretical instrumentality of relational psychology, feminism, relational systems thinking and intersubjectivity. An equally important component was Daniel Goleman's formulation of the theory of emotional intelligence that provided a new lens to understand people through emotional awareness.

The relational approach views leadership as a co-constructed experience between the leader and the led, working together in trust, respect and mutual appreciation. It is the kind of leadership that highlights people first. People are consulted, valued and respected for their opinions, experience and expertise. Emotional bond, connection and relationship between those who lead and being led are carefully co-created.

Leaders from this perspective, know that their knowledge is humanly limited, and they are not omnipotent. They don't favour any preferred group as an 'in-group' over the rest as an 'out-group'.

Inclusivity and openness are their hallmark; fear tactics are shunned openly at all costs that everyone feels the same sense of belonging, and importance which entails them to be motivated to contribute in accordance with the best of their abilities.

More than all, the relational leader relies on emotional intelligence to understand the feelings and needs of people which this model highlights as a vital component for decision-making. Like the words of Lao Tzu, the Chinese philosopher, 'to lead people, walk behind them,' the relational leader provides one-to-one mentoring, particularly, to those who struggle in their performance; for they believe, as the postmodern theories postulate, in the infinite possibilities of people for change: people are not the problem, but the problem is the problem. Hence tackle the problem and not the people! ■

A Francis OFM is a certified clinician and supervisor in psychotherapy

Breaking Patterns

Essence of Good Leadership

A good leader is able to look beyond what is obvious, be objective about it, and take decisions. Not all decisions are fruitful, but that doesn't make the leader bad.

RANJITH RAO

Leaders are dreamers, who don't just stop at that. They make those dreams a reality.

Over the years leadership has been defined in several ways. Good leaders are recognised by the difference they make. Historically, leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa and the likes of them have been influential in bringing about a revolution of sorts in their fields or purpose. They are known globally for their vision along with grit and perseverance to achieve what they set out to do. Industry leaders like Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Ratan Tata and others have influenced the way industries operate and have been disruptive in their thoughts and methods. The likes of Hitler and Stalin have been condemned for their notorious intentions and tyrannical methods of leadership. Leaders like Winston Churchill and Eisenhower are admired for their ability to handle adverse situations and provide strategic leadership during crisis. Each of these leaders had very different personalities and unique traits. Leadership in itself is dynamic and subjective. There is no single definition of leadership, and, there is arguably no fixed set of traits or qualities of a good leader. Qualities like decision making, walking the talk, communication, empathy, etc. are more so the bells and whistles. A good leader can have a subset of these qualities and need not necessarily all of them. Then at the core, what is leadership?

A closer look at these great leaders reveals one thing common to all. They broke patterns and stereotypes. Their belief beyond norms in

achieving what they did, made all the difference. A typical social environment like an office, home or a community is governed by rules and processes, sometimes unwritten but existing. Routinely, these groups need to be 'managed' to derive desired outcomes such as meeting deadlines, getting work done, building or creating something, or just maintaining peace and harmony. And anyone in position of authority who does this efficiently is a good 'Manager'. The real challenge however, is when situations are out of the ordinary. Handling crisis, risk management, growth strategies, problem solving, resolving conflicts, making choices (decision making) are some of those situations that are not typical to a routine. That's when an effective leader steps in. The ability of an individual to steer through these situations, whether familiar or uncertain, overbearing or meek, personal or in the larger interest, defines how good a leader that individual is. Education, experience, and intellect may add to better leadership skills, but they are not inherently what makes someone a better leader. A good leader should be able to look at situations beyond what is obvious, be objective about it and take decisions. Not all decisions are fruitful, but that doesn't make the leader bad. In all these situations, one common ability of a leader is to think laterally, which means these are situations that require thoughts and cognition well beyond processes and so called 'patterns' being followed. If there is a need to resolve a crisis, it is important to take measures by challenging the status quo when needed. Similarly, in a social group or a home environ-

ment, a good leader can resolve conflicts, bring in harmony and keep the majority happy and content by managing issues creatively. Planning a vacation, resolving a feud at home, helping friends through tough times, requires individuals to break patterns and bring in aspects probably overlooked before. Unhappy clients, decline in revenues, employee dissatisfaction – all of these require a leader to explore avenues untrodden and break barriers.

And this premise is not in lieu of all other aspects of leadership known to us. But there is a need to factor in lateral thinking and abstraction to be able to use other skills efficiently. As humans, the tendency to find comfort in routine and knowing things are in control makes us happy. Behavioural patterns are formed over years which become muscle memory and we even execute them sub consciously. So, when an unprecedented situation arises, in most cases its difficult for the brain to fathom, and we seek known remedial measures to face them. Good leaders stand out in these situations due to their ability to break patterns and find new

ways of handling them. In today's world, this virtue is taught as risk management, out-of-the box thinking, innovation, crisis management, etc. People are trained to develop a learning mindset and look beyond their education and experience. But in essence, leadership is all about breaking patterns. Essentially the need of the day is to study leadership from a point of view of what can be done differently. While we learn about historic leaders from the context of what difference they made, it will be interesting to understand how did they break patterns from what was existing and what was their thought process. Of course, the toppings of good communication, objectivity, assertiveness, integrity and everything else we learn or have, will always add value.

Go ahead and make that change, be a leader and not just a position or a title. ■

Ranjith Rao is the founder of Ervaring, a company that focuses on consultation, mentoring, and leadership training for corporates, start-ups, and individuals.



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Grief Leadership

'I'm Here for You, in the Time of Crisis'

To look up to the leader for understanding and support is a natural tendency and when it has been unattended to, one feels institutional betrayal, a bitter reaction that the important people in one's life do not care.

DR AKEELA P

When the pandemic hit us, we were all unprepared for the rapid death toll affecting in every household, the onset made us realise our limitation to handle grief among the community especially among the leaders. To look up to the leader for support is a natural tendency and when it has been unattended to, we feel institutional betrayal, a bitter reaction that the important people in our lives do not care and are indifferent for the trauma; leading us to feel a moral betrayal, diminishing the feeling of being committed to; and developing a sense of disconnection towards the system and organisation.

The collective trauma we all faced raised the need of sensitive leadership; often referred as 'Grief Leadership'. 'Often in time of a crisis, grief leadership is, fundamentally, strong people leadership,' said Alyson Goldstein, an organisational psychology consultant and director of development at On the Goga, a corporate wellness company based in Philadelphia. 'Grief leadership is about leading people, whether they're your friends, employees or a nation, through experiences of sorrow, difficulty and challenge.'

Grief leadership is not a new terminology in fact, the term 'grief leadership' was coined by researchers from the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research's neuropsychiatry department. The scientists were studying the after-effects of a December 1985 crash of a military transport jet in Gander, Newfoundland.

The Event that Embarked the Requisite of Grief Leadership

On December 12, 1985, two weeks before the Christmas, families of soldiers were waiting to welcome them at Fort Campbell with a brass-band, however the fate had a

different plan. All the 248 soldiers who were in a six-month peace mission were heading back from Egypt died as a result of Air Crash killing them all including six crew members, which Canada still remembers as the worst air crash they ever witnessed.

Maj Gen John Herrling, 2nd Brigade commander at the time of the crash, though in a shock did something remarkable that stood a witness of healthy grief response. He addressed the family and friends in the same gathering to acknowledge all the brave soldiers who died, and hugged and supported all the members for their loss and encouraged all of them to pick and move forward to make a better community by realigning the shared values of the community. His primary concern was to help the grieving families.

The coronavirus pandemic was indeed one of the vital test for any kind of political leadership. All the leaders were presented the same test, same uncertainty. We all observed how each one of the leader reacted or responded to the same stressful situation, we witnessed their true innate nature to care for people -fake or genuine.

One of the effective leader was Jacinda Ardern, the 39-year-old prime minister of New Zealand. Their country had few death rates when compared to other developed nations, her main priority was to flatten the virus curve with short duration, her style did not indulge in blame game but rather constant Facebook live feed with her citizen, reassuring people with information with a causal tone; it was also noted that she often wore causal clothing during her live feed. That stance of a leader who is grounded, makes her so trustworthy, in fact her approval rating exceeded compare to other world leaders.

Main Functional Roles of a Grief Leader

A grief leader who steps into the role often executes three crucial roles:

1. Providing the essential resources; financial aid, connect to the hospital facility, being in constant touch with the grieving family.

2. They maintain transparent communication.

3. Acknowledge the event, emotions and empathize rather than display of sympathy and advise.

Grief leadership is often challenging to function as it involves blend of being sensitive and ability to take necessary actions for the situation, as grief is very complex there is not right or wrong way to grieve. A grief leader is who allows themselves to be vulnerable, expressing their fears, not caring of being judged. They act in a quest to understand what grieving person needs instead of making assumptions.

Leader grieving is a powerful symbol. They remind us that grieving turmoil is normal, what they give us is a realistic hope that better days will come post the waves of grief, there is no time line for healing for it is an organic process, an assurance one day we will grow out of it as a wise person.

The Guardian Angel Among Us: Anyone Can Become a Grief Leader

Are grief leaders limited to world politics? Or, is it the manager who ensured that all his colleagues, regardless of their hierarchy, travel 308 kilometers and say final goodbye to their colleague who passed away due to Cancer? Is it the Head of the Department who took over her subordinate job role since she had personal crisis at home? Is it that aunt who safeguarded and looked after her nieces and nephew like a supporting mother post the death of their mother? Is it the congregation who prayed and supported their communion members in the time of need? Yes. All these are. Often it is a common person who functions and performs all the requisite of grief leader without knowing it. When the trauma occurs, we do not need grand gestures or an elaborate speech, what we need is a genuine, caring person who stands by us in our worst times, like a saviour and guardian in a common dress, spreading their wings to nurture us to say they are always there for us. ■

Dr Akeela P is an assistant professor in psychology.

Leadership

Moving Beyond Definitions

The spotlight may not fall on you but you are the one enabling the spotlight. There is a certain joy in seeing others do their best.

TENZIN TSETAN



When I think of leadership it sounds like something that I cannot achieve, something that I am not capable of reaching, yet here I am today, writing my experience on leadership. My name is Tenzin Tsetan, I am a Tibetan and the current student union president of Jyoti Nivas College Autonomous, Bangalore. This is my story of how I discovered that leadership meant to grab opportunities that come by, and to volunteer to make small things happen.

When I first started out in this college, I was of the mindset that I would go to college, attend my classes and just go back home. But naturally I volunteered to be part of our college drama club. I was seldom on the stage; I was either behind it or at the wings. I controlled lights and generally helped direct and choreograph the actors. There I realised, probably for the first time, that the play is not just about the actors or the directors but also about those who work backstage; the spotlight may not fall on you but you are the one enabling the spotlight. There is a certain joy in seeing others do their best.

When others begin to notice you for the right reasons, that is the beginning of being a public leader.

When others begin to notice you for the right reasons, that is the beginning of being a public leader. I became the class representative for two consecutive years and when I left the post; I was encouraged to take part in the student union presidential election by my professors. I saw hope in them which I have not seen in myself for a long time. I was overwhelmed by my feelings of insecurities and 'what ifs'.

During my high school days, the word 'leadership' was highly daunting. It made me believe that it is associated with academic achievements only.

When I was not considered as a candidate for my 12th school representative despite being a rank holder, I sank into my insecurities of not being good enough. College elections came like a new chapter in my life—a chapter that I possibly could not have even dreamt about. How would someone like me even stand for such a prestigious post, let alone win? My college proved that neither my ethnicity nor my race mattered as long as I am what I am as a person; that was all it needed. My family feigned normalcy when I stood for the election. They made sure that I knew that they were proud no matter what. To them my comfort and my mental health came first; but I had never seen them express such happiness as when they heard the news that I actually made it.

During my campaigning, I received immense love and support. Without the help of my friends, I possibly would have stood in a corner, struggling to ask people to vote for me. A sense of belonging, acceptance and love filled my soul. It was a point in my life where there

was something beyond winning and losing, a quest in finding oneself. You need not know who you are and what you need to do in life, but all that you see is that you are waking up to tackle each day even when you are plagued by self doubt. What am I doing? What am I compared to them? Why do I have no future plans yet others seem to have their whole life planned out? Are some of the questions that

I ask myself the majority of the days. I still believe that leadership quality is beyond me. I hesitate on public speaking, trusting my own work; but I think as humans they

are usual: even a student president of a college, have self-doubt and do make mistakes.

A leader need not lead someone else but just be there in times of need. People have exceptional skills to make it on their own and sometimes when they get tired, it becomes our duty as a human being to give them a nudge and maybe that is what makes people trust you and in that trust you create the bond of a leader and a follower. Even while writing this I feel strange calling myself a leader. I have been just doing small acts of making things happen: many of which were voluntary, and some even forced on me by others; but in retrospection I realise that I grabbed everything that life threw at me. Nobody becomes a leader by reading textbooks about being one. Maybe that's why we need to have our own definition of leadership—perhaps a definition that moves beyond all given definitions. ■

Tenzin Tsetan is a Tibetan and the current student union president of Jyoti Nivas College Autonomous, Bangalore.

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Servant Leadership: A Ten-Factor Checklist

L SELVAM GEORGE

Factor	Normal Leadership	Servant Leadership
1. Purpose	To get work done by using people and their capabilities	To develop people's capabilities towards higher levels and to achieve results
2. Focus	Problems that hinders achievement	Process that enables people achievement
3. Competence	Mostly IQ	Mostly EQ, supported by SQ & IQ
4. Thought	Ego driven, self-centred	Service oriented and for common benefit.
5. Feelings	Scarcity due to fear OR arrogance due to pride	Abundance with humility and self-confidence.
6. Approach to feedback	Defending OR rationalising	Accepting, analysing, exploring and encouraging
7. Approach to development	Others can never grow to the level of leader's expertise	Others may even grow beyond the expertise level of the leader
8. Meaning of leadership	Use the authority to make others obey the leader	Serve others to grow and perform
9. Meaning of work	A way to make more money	An opportunity to exhibit God-given talents in the market place
10. Perception of the role	Sole responsivity for results	Joint responsibility for results and people development

L Selvam George is the owner of 5e Serpraise and HR consultant, focusing on corporate training.

Of Thought Leadership and Indian Media

Media acts as the thought leader that drives opinion formation and dissemination.

Dr RUPA PETER

Recently, the Supreme Court came down heavily on television channels for using 'hate and all such spicy things' to increase their ratings especially during their prime-time debates. Terming hate speech a 'poison' affecting the social fabric of the country, the Supreme Court asked, 'Where is our nation headed to if hate speech is what we are feeding on?' Mainstream channels still hold sway and the role of the anchor becomes critical. Media must have freedom of expression but should know where to draw the line, the apex court added.

The Supreme Court's rap for Indian television media comes at the heel of several controversial and often polarising discussions that prime-time debates usually delve into. These vitriolic debates often reach heated heights when communally or socially inflammatory issues are discussed with an eclectic 'panel of experts' who most often out-shout each other.

Media traditionally is called as the fourth estate, the fourth pillar of democracy that is the watchdog of the constitution. Also, media is a big driver of public opinion. Media is what Habermas calls the public sphere, a forum of discussion and debate—the home ground for shaping and re-shaping that elusive but immensely powerful force called as the public opinion. In this way, media acts as the thought leader that drives opinion formation and dissemination. And the opinion of the majority is what propels change—be it social, political, economic or cultural.

In this scenario, a media that has hate speech on its agenda or runs entire disinformation campaigns and at times, even media trials to gain better TRPs and influence a large and diverse population is an alarming trend. The narratives that are put forth in media, quite often, are aimed at creating an ecosystem of hate and extreme polarisation. Often, these narratives are guided by undercurrents of fear towards the other. And the opinions birthed by these narratives are often detrimental to the social fabric and the ethos of the nation state, itself.

Introspection, accountability and greater social responsibility is the need of the hour when it comes to media in India. In line with what the Supreme Court has noted, it is time for the thought leaders to think, introspect and gain a fresh perspective on the path ahead. It would go down well if media gets back to the basics of fact-based journalism and engages in a bit of self-regulation and holds itself accountable for the greater good. This way, the thought leader can actually have the right kind of sway over public opinion and steer a unified nation towards a better tomorrow. ■

Dr Rupa Peter is an assistant professor in Media Studies.

Leadership Learnings in VUCA Times

Experienced leaders need to think young and teach to question, and not just to throw answers; simply because, though the questions may stay relevant, but the answers to them are definitely shifting.

KENNETH LEAN



According to Harvard Business Review, it has become a trendy managerial acronym: VUCA, short for volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, and a catchall for 'Hey, it's crazy out there!'

The world seems to be a rollercoaster ride like never before. The most powerful nations are getting challenged with a dynamism that is forcing long term plans to shrink into very short strategies. Strategists are grappling in the embrace of uncertainty as innovation through technology keeps propping up from unexpected quarters. The opportunities through technology is making entrepreneurship verily possible even in small little sleepy towns.

Every corporate giant is finding a competitor sprouting out from unexpected places. This makes leadership more exciting, challenging and painstaking; which has led to thudding falls of organisations and individuals. The character of leaders in this transformational journey is being tested on a day-to-day basis – even more a reason that leaders learn to let go and rise in their fall. The question that many businesses are struggling to find answers to is, 'Is there a way out without falling prey to these disruptions.' Can organisations build leadership capabilities to lead industry disruptions, than fall victim to it? The only alternative is to be agile and learn from VUCA times, on the feet and on the run!

The learning cycles for leaders are shrinking, and probably many proven management principles are being challenged, and many re-

written. Recently during a coffee conversation, a leader was sharing that his organisation of over 100,000 people has lost about 20 leaders in the last half year. Many of those exiting were shifting career lines, causing panic in the conservative leadership that existed. The current leadership, he believed, was struggling to hold together an organisation that was till recently expected to grow rapidly in the next five years. What could be the reason? The current leadership had not been able to anticipate the challenges from agile and young start-ups. These leaders in their swollen pride have not been able get whiteboards and their grey cells to work for them. Their dependency on their successful past is not allowing them to learn in these falling times.

The number of years spent in doing the same thing is not real experience. On the contrary, just simply learning different ways of rising during the little falls in the pit holes of an otherwise smooth road – is what actually turns experience into value. Never has the Law of Constraints been more relevant. Leaders of these large corporations are well used to being challenged with the constraints of resources like machinery, people and money, but NOW the constraints are of 'ideas'. The tired and old brains camping in soundproof cabins refused to

listen to the changing world outside. The young innovative brains have already shifted the game away from these large corporations, to small garages of ticking minds. There isn't time for blame games here; it is indeed time for learning and listening, and not lecturing. Many leaders keeping talking about their past successes, it is however about time to talk about what one can do of the future.

Most of the jobs and roles may disappear before you can push back the ergonomic chairs and stand up to face the world. The role of chairs has shifted to some garage filled with innovative ideas. Leaders need to take solace of their experience and adapt to these fast-paced changes happening around. That said, all is not well with the new world too, but then these are learners. The solution is in trying to find out where the wise people of the past can add in and rise along with the young generation. Mentorship is important for these young entrepreneurs in areas like mentorship for organisation building, scaling of markets and value creation.

However, adapting to their style of learning is something the experienced leaders need to understand. Classrooms are no longer learning labs, so where does one teach or learn? Or rather, how does one approach learning?

Experienced leaders need to think young and teach to question, not just to throw answers; simply because the same questions may stay relevant, but the answers to them are definitely shifting. Leaders with experience need to learn to re-shape their personality. Some of the things they need to leave behind are their ego, prestige, impulsiveness and authoritative behaviour.

It sure is time to depend on the most tested traits of EQ and be a learner while coaching. Times might look tough but for the learner it is always exciting to explore new paths, re-discover oneself and see every fall as an upward movement. Empathy, adaptability, influence, transparency and continuous learning are traits leaders need to build on to manage these changing times. Oliver Holmes probably stays relevant today when he says, 'Man's mind once stretched by a new idea, never regains its original dimensions.'

If your backpack is equipped with a great attitude and an open mind, the journey will be an educating one. In every fall, there will be a new way to rise up again. ■

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The Western Coast: An Eternal Love Affair between the Mountains and the Sea Waves

SAJI P MATHEW OFM

The western coast of India is a range of mountains and their valleys embraced and washed by the Arabian Sea. The western coast runs between Kerala and Gujarat and extends from the Arabian Sea to the Western Ghats. Its total length is 1400 km, width ranges from 10 km to 80 km, and the elevation (mountains) ranges from 150 m to 300 m above sea level. It includes the **Konkan**, which is the Northern part of the coast that includes Goa and Mumbai and extends from Daman to Goa; **Kanara**, which is the central stretch of the coast that comprises three coastal districts, Dakshina Kannada, Udupi

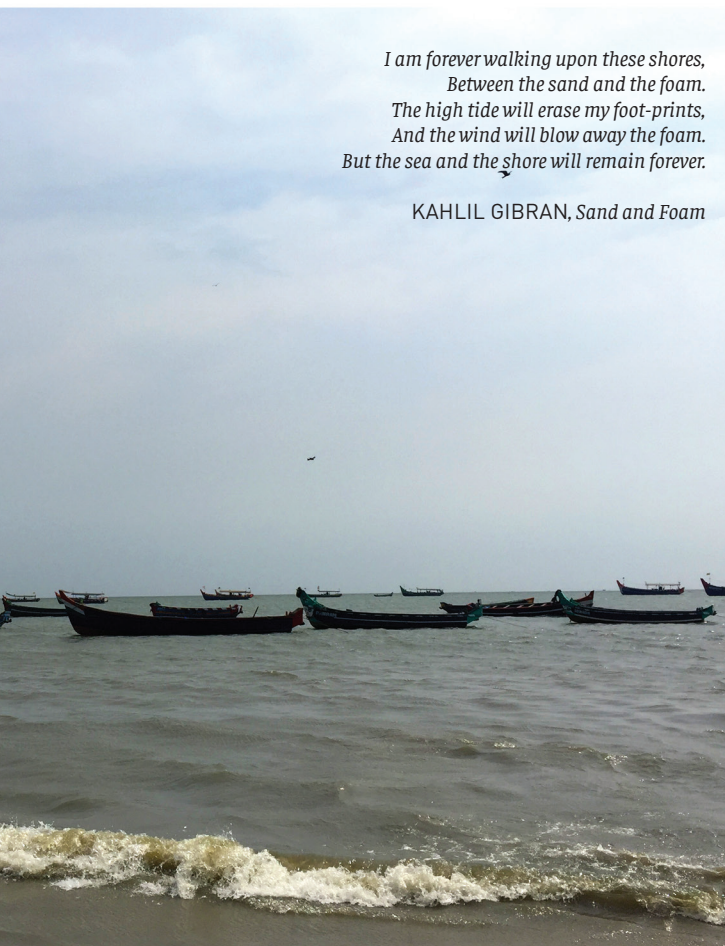
district (South Canara), and Uttara Kannada (North Canara); and the **Malabar Coast**, which is the southern stretch, a long and narrow coastline that extends from the South of Goa to Kanyakumari.

For the people of inland India the sandy beaches of Western Coast is a haven of entertainment and rejuvenation. Take a road trip from Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu to Bhuj in Gujarat: you will stand in awe at beaches and mountains; majestic forts and palaces; temples, churches and mosques; ports and fishing harbours; backwaters and waterfalls; and culture, food, and more. ■

Pictures taken at
Bhatkal, Karnataka;
and Ezhimala, Kerala.

*I am forever walking upon these shores,
Between the sand and the foam.
The high tide will erase my foot-prints,
And the wind will blow away the foam.
But the sea and the shore will remain forever.*

KAHLIL GIBRAN, *Sand and Foam*



Grappling with Envy: The Enemy Within

MONICA FERNANDES

William Shakespeare coined the expression 'green eyed monster' to describe envy in his play Othello. Othello wrongly suspects his wife Desdemona of infidelity, and kills her in a fit of jealous rage. He eventually commits suicide when he discovers his Himalayan blunder.

Envy has been called one of the Seven Deadly Sins because it is the root cause of many crimes. It is a negative force that prevents positive forces from entering into our thought processes. Psychologists believe that when we are envious, we perceive ourselves as lacking another person's qualities, wealth or achievement. We also wish that the other person be deprived of it. Envy comes as a package deal of emotions including hatred, anger and resentment. This gives rise to various psychosomatic illnesses such as hyperacidity and increased blood pressure.

Dr. Uma Ranganathan says that envy stems from the feeling of insecurity we all have of living in a highly competitive world. It's all about one-upmanship, and only a saint could truly say that he/she is above envy. According to Dr Ranganathan, envy sometimes originates when parents thoughtlessly compare one child adversely with another. Teachers are also unwitting culprits when they compare a dull child to a clever one. The result of these comparisons is that the child craves for getting the parents' or teachers' approval, and is envious of someone who gets that approval.

Prem Nirmal narrates an interesting case. Neha (name changed) was a student in a computer college. She exhibited a deep-rooted, uncontrollable, and illogical behavioural pattern of envy. A classmate was showing off

her new acquisition—a fancy mobile phone. Neha surreptitiously took it away, and threw it somewhere, because it was a possession she herself lacked. Further investigation revealed that she followed this behaviour pattern at home as well, and had thrown her sibling's prize-winning painting into the dustbin.

Nirmal first set about bringing self-awareness in the patient. The next step was to remove the old negative behavioural pattern, and replace it with a positive one. This lengthy process is called repatterning. After many sittings, Neha's story had a happy resolution. She was taught to replace envy with appreciation. She began to appreciate her sibling's artistic talent.

Janis Joplin belted out a rather amusing song where she asked God for a Mercedes Benz because all her friends drive Porsches. Psychologists term this behaviour as a Comparison Complex. Nisha thinks, 'Asha is a lucky woman. She stays in a posh flat.' Asha is unhappy in her gilded cage where she is totally dominated by her in-laws, but Nisha does not have a sympathetic thought for the hapless Asha. She fails to see the complete picture.

Class envy is the product of man-made differentiation. The poor and less powerful criticise the rich and powerful. Have you noticed the perverse pleasure urchins derive in scratching a swanky car?

Uma feels that envy is not a disease that can be cured. Though envy is happening all the time, everywhere, society frowns upon an envious person. Hence we tend to go into denial mode, and refuse to admit that we harbour this emotion. What the psychotherapist does is bring out the demon lurking inside. He/she



Once we shun envy, we will find that we are able to sincerely compliment even a competitor when he/she has performed well.

tries to find out where and how envy originated in the first place. The psychotherapist then gradually starts building up the person's self confidence so that the insecure feelings gradually diminish.

Now let's see the other side of the coin. Being the target of envy is not an enviable situation. We have to listen to veiled and direct insults. This robs us of some of the joy of achieving something or possessing qualities such as good looks or talents. These fault finders are only to be pitied because they have low self-esteem. We should not permit others to take away our happiness. Why should we take on the burden of another's lack of self-confidence?

Uma cautions from getting into a tit-for-tat situation, as it leads to unpleasantness and unnecessary tension. She recommends that we do not react to someone passing snide remarks at us. If the comments are vicious, then we should respond in a cool and rational manner by telling our tormentor that his/her remarks are uncalled for.

It sometimes helps to try and understand why an individual displays envy towards us. I once attended a party where my rendition of a song was appreciated. Celia was envious of the fact that I was the centre of attraction, so she zeroed in on my clothes! She picked up some minor defects, and felt very pleased with herself. I have known Celia for years, and was aware that she had a permanent chip on her shoulder because she had lost her parents when she was quite young. So I decided to let her remarks pass.

At times, a genuine friend could simultaneously grudge us our happiness or accolades. Jaya was getting on in years, and felt that she was on the shelf. Her colleagues were often at the receiving end of her sharp

tongue, but, strangely enough, she would lend them a helping hand whenever needed. To her good fortune, and that of her colleagues, Jaya did eventually get married. She was a far more pleasant person after that. It is pertinent to mention that while we have little or no control over the emotions of others, it is possible to control the monster within.

At the outset, we should cultivate a sense of pride in ourselves—our appearance, our talents, our material possessions, our faults and our good attributes. Why should Terri be concerned because, unlike her friend Sweta who is a successful model, she lacks the height? Terri is, after all, intelligent and proficient in her studies. We should accept qualities that we cannot change. We are all differently abled, and have a role to play in society in our own unique way. The managing director of a company has the overall responsibility, and has to ensure that the company is a profit-making venture, but the company also needs the worker on the shop floor to do his bit. We have four fingers and a thumb on each hand. Each is differently shaped and sized, yet all are needed in order for our hands to function effectively.

Be grateful for your blessings instead of constantly counting the blessings of others. My wise Nigerian friend Adeola once said that we take so much for granted. Even such a simple act as holding a glass of water, and drinking the contents, is something that the disabled are not able to do.

Once we shun envy, we will find that we are able to sincerely compliment even a competitor when he/she has performed well. We will discover that our circle of friends expands. As our envy quotient reduces, our happiness quotient increases. ■

A Government Obsessed with Image-making

It is a culture developed by the powerful, thus undermining the marginalised and forgotten humans.

GERRY LOBO OFM



Swachh Bharat Abhiyan,' 'Yoga Divas,' 'Har Ghar Tiranga! And what not..! Sounds nothing but patriotic balloons in the air! Don't be fooled by these colourful balloons. They are nothing but concerted campaigning for a narrow stripped nationalism rather than the needs of human citizens served. In order to monopolise the issue of nationalism and build a strong image of the ruler, our honourable Prime Minister goes all out as the main actor to do his part on the stage of the lives of millions today. Whether these millions have their right to their existence without fear, whether they languish in the prison of injustice, whether these humans have a square meal and decent walls around and roof over their heads and whether their children are fed with nutritious food, these are not the immediate concerns of the main actor. His job is to act with coloured clothing, with poetic verses from the ancients to mesmerise the listeners with his voracious speech, and fool the spectators to gain their admiration and popularity which would eventually prolong his position on the stage. The country's prospects are not boosted, but helped in deepening the feelings of nationalism and the party's image with the self on the centre-stage. However, the image-making of the Prime Minister of India has attracted the world rulers on his overseas tours. Even if his own citizens spawn his shows, internationally his image stands sticking out in the sand! The past eight years of the majoritarian government at the centre has definitely succeeded in image-making rather

than building hearts and homes, providing jobs and health and creating harmony and peaceful co-existence among the varied religions which our country homes.

According to a recent expression of Rahul Gandhi, uttered at the commencement of the Bharath Jodo Yatra, there seems to be a 'bankruptcy' in the present government. Obviously it has run out of fuel but obstinately dragging the vehicle of venom to gain mileage in its hunger for establishing Hindutva domain by flushing out the critical thinkers and well-minded citizens. The voices of dissent are constantly undermined both in the parliament as well as outside its walls. What must be taken seriously is that, 'India is a Conversation. This conversation is completely broken down' (Rahul Gandhi). Well said; India is a 'Conversation' as no other country in the world with its religions, traditions, cultures, languages, modes of living, art, music etc. The conversation is broken down by obstructionist jibes and play games played by the policy makers. Bankruptcy is manifested in their focus-less projects and aimless jargons. Perhaps the Hindi dictionary might be expanded and fattened by new vocabulary mouthed by the Prime Minister indicating a clear sign of image-making rather than condemning the injustice done to Bilkis Bano, a woman of our nation, still knocking on the doors of justice. Whereas, the eleven convicts who were released on the law that permits remission were felicitated as heroes, better than those who fight on the frontiers of our national borders, suffering all they can suffer to save their motherland. 'Felicitation normalises and weaponises gang-rape,' stated Mahua Moitra in an interview on *The Wire* recently. The country knows for sure that our ruling leaders, including the Prime Minister, spoke not a word about this poor mother whose solace rests only on a few critical thinkers and some social activists, even though he trumpeted from the Red Fort on August 15 the honour and dignity our women owe. It is also quite shameful about those women parliamentarians who are protected in the majoritarian government at the head, who never stood for Bilkis Bano, a woman of dignity. One wonders, in despair, how much more 'perversity our nation can endure' (Peter

R. DeSouza). For sure, if these women stood for the victim, the image-making process would collapse with a slap on their face!

The citizens of our country would agree that our political leaders from the Prime Minister onwards are men and women of photographs. Large-size photographs placed on buildings and street corners offers them identity and importance even if the service they are obliged to perform may be kept aside. A photograph on the public domain enlarges their ego to an elephant size and their image is bolstered. The Finance Minister of India, during her visit to a certain town in Andhra Pradesh recently, did not hesitate to fire the District Collector of that station for not placing a large photograph of the Prime Minister on the ration shop which disburses free ration, a supposed project of the benevolent Prime Minister. Photograph is all that matters to image-making politicians. Hence on educational certificates or vaccine certificates, a picture of the Prime Minister is more important than the person who bears the name on those certificates. This is a clear sign of political leaders who sustain their positions by image-making while at the same time they acquire honour from the public. Once again this is an indication of bankruptcy in the politicians, whether they are in the ruling class or sit in the opposition. It is a culture developed by the powerful, thus undermining the marginalised and forgotten humans. A lot of national wealth is pumped into image-making strategy in our country which is particularly obviated by the on-going structural mega projects initiated by the present despots. The image-making is done at the cost of those who often are not able to provide for themselves the basic necessities of life.

Changing of names of cities and streets which are impressed already on the minds of people for ages on, is another image-making gimmick. The prime reason for this futile exercise is nothing but to suit the ideology which has enslaved the majoritarian parliament. What's in a name? Just imagine that Rajpath in New Delhi is erased and renamed as Kartavya Path! Why? For the Prime Minister who has christened it, Rajpath has meant a symbol of slavery, and a new history has been created by him in the form

of Kartavya Path, 'duty road.' This is considered as the biggest transformational project in the country. Admirable in itself, does it transform the mindset of the image-makers? Kartavya Path is a very creative name, no doubt. By naming it this way, however, the citizens are not going to be nationalists as those who named it would wish they become, neither the entire populace would be walking that path. Name changing is obviously image-making. In his inaugural speech at the newly baptised street the Prime Minister stated that until the slavery mentality is abandoned and the goal of freedom of mind and spirit is achieved the journey of determination will continue. However, one quickly realises that the freedom of mind and spirit are not curtailed by George V of the British Raj but by the present dispensation which aims at the creation of one-party state following one religion and one credo. By replacing statues of history and erecting sky-rocketing ones does not enhance freedom of mind and spirit. It only, on the other hand, promotes image-making by those responsible. Today the country does not need statues of whomever it might be, instead respect, acceptance, freedom from tyranny, socio-economic equality and harmony among all irrespective of religious traditions, languages, castes and

cultures. The country truly needs 'conversation' that emerges from dialogue.

The ongoing 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' (Unite India March), of one hundred and fifty days, initiated by the Indian National Congress, as reminiscent of the long March which Mahatma Gandhi undertook, can also turn out to be an image-making gimmick. Perhaps there are voices which belittle this programme as a desperate gamble to save the party and win the upcoming National Elections. There are also, on the other hand, who consider this as an audacious experiment at national renewal. If it truly aims at countering the 'division across the country' (R. Gandhi) and destroy 'religious polarisation' (J. Ramesh) and unite all people, then a 'conversation' will return, since today one experiences no conversation but walls between people, distance between religions and animosity between political parties. Whatever way the political leaders undertake projects, the self need to be effaced in order to create a healthy space for the struggling humanity. The image-making obsession by those who govern and the efforts that go with it need to be sacrificed in order to build the 'image' of humans, establish constantly their dignity and vitalise the conversation that will unite a nation of stupendous grace and enormous resources. ■

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ACTUAL IMAGE OF THE HOUSE



WHAT KIND OF A LEADER ARE YOU?

SINCHANA SHETTY

THE BOSS WHO MAKES IT TO YOUR GUEST LIST

This kind of a leader has made it clear that they're not superior to you (while making infinitely more than you). They are friendly and are considerate of your suggestions. They hang out with you after work and you tell them about your neighbour who wants you to keep your volume down. There's just the perfect balance of personal and professional and you are grateful for this camaraderie.

I'M CLUELESS!

This kind of a leader walks into the room as nonchalantly as a kid who put his hands on a Monet painting and ate clay for breakfast- entirely unaware of the consequences of their actions. Sometimes you wonder how they ever got the role or if you'd be a better leader than them. But they rank above and so you, sulking, heed their decisions.

THE CORPORATE NAPOLEON

This kind of leader wants to conquer deadlines, achieve goals, make newer ones and finish all 12 hours worth of work in 6. They have ambitions beyond rationality can permit and push everyone to strive for the same standards as them. They are perfectionists who micromanage. Suffocatingly so, you learn to be a better leader from them.

If you identify any of these to best suit the leaders in your life or are one yourself, good luck dealing with the guilt. It is true that with great power comes great responsibility; and the Peter Parker principle has never really been falsified. ■

While one might think it is easier at the top, one would be none the wiser to assume they all lead the same. There are as many leadership styles as there are leaders and here's a scientifically inaccurate albeit fun list of different types of leaders. I've endeavoured to keep in mind all kinds of leaders from the diligent ones who wrote 'names' in big bold letters on the black board in grade 6 to the ones that single-handedly contribute to 75% of coffee consumption in the country. Pick your poison!

WHEN LOGAN ROY MEETS MIRANDA PRIESTLY

This kind of a leader will sooner have you annihilated than have you question their ways. They've made it to the top from the bottom-most circle of hell so excuse their old fashion ways that will budge for none. You have to prove yourself worthy for them to notice you but rest assured, once you are under their wings, you're bound to learn more about life than work.

THE DEVIL WORKS HARD, BUT I WORK HARDER

If you ever walk into the office on a Saturday at 4PM to retrieve some of your forgotten goods, you'll notice lights flickering in the corner cabin. Slowly as you walk further along to inspect this paranormal activity, you'll notice your boss alongside a coffee molehill. This kind of a leader is overcompensating Monday to Friday, on weekends and on holidays working at what could only be dubbed an uninspiring French Revolution.

The Land of the Lost Mothers

Tulsi was not alone, there were many others like her who have children and grandchildren and yet have to spend their days alone.

JOSHUA BEN JOSEPH

Countless chants and prayers welcomed the rising sun on the banks of the river Ganga. Hundreds of devotees had gathered around to offer their respects to the venerated river in the city of Varanasi. The crisp morning air was chilly yet welcoming. Traversing the narrow lanes of the city it wasn't hard to notice countless women clad in white, holy ash and vermilion smeared on their foreheads. Hands folded in prayer they spent their days in devotion and penance. The holy city housed thousands of such women, the orphaned mothers of Varanasi.

The drab bylanes of the city housed several ashrams or hermitages which these women called home. Official numbers say that close to 42,000 widows reside in such ashrams across Varanasi. These dilapidated structures were secluded and rarely crossed the minds of the policy makers. At the entrance of one such ashram Tulsi Devi was busy arranging the diyas or clay lamps that she had painstakingly crafted. A hobby which she had once picked up to forget her sorrows had now become a source of a meagre income for her sustenance. The octogenarian had been a widow since the age of twenty one. "These walls know me more than anyone else. I have everyone, yet here I am. But what could I do, I am an inauspicious burden to the household," she said. Her feeble eyes becoming an aperture to her tiring spirit. Tulsi

was not alone, there were many others like her who have children and grandchildren and yet have to spend their days alone. Orthodox hindu code has always promoted a patriarchal system and reduced women to a second class stature in society. Their lives were rendered meaningless after the deaths of their husbands. They are made to discard the attire of a married woman and don the dreary and unembellished white garment that marks them as widows. Heavily ostracised by their families and society and considered inauspicious, they were considered as insignificant members of society with nothing worthwhile to contribute. Treated with disgust and turned away from any propitious ceremony held in society. They are left to fend for themselves in a wicked and arduous test of fate. Many of them resort to begging in hopes of securing at least one square meal a day. Desperate for survival many stray into prostitution, often falling into the traps of pimps and prostitutes. Many of the older widows earned paltry alms by chanting the holy scriptures in temples. Through all this hardship they always have one prayer in mind, their plea to their maker, 'Death with ease, a life without miseries, unshaken devotion in you—give me O Kṛṣṇa!'

For countless centuries people have come to the city of Varanasi for one reason, to die. It is said that the person who dies on the banks of the Ganga would attain Moksha or liberation



Official numbers say that close to 42,000 widows reside in such ashrams across Varanasi.

from the cycle of birth and rebirth. Many widows await their ends on the banks of the holy river, hoping for an eternal escape from their despondent lives in an unloving society, while praying for a liberation from the next. But for many this wait has been cruel and unending. 'I have no desires left in this life,' Tulsi said. 'My heart is one with my Lord. All I do is chant his name and await his call. How long do I remain a burden.' The regressive norms of the orthodox she grew up in were planted in her long ago, that the roots of the self blame for her current state ran deep.

Tulsi started walking towards the riverbank to sell her wares. As she hobbled down the ancient steps on the banks of the Ganga, one can't help but ponder about the depth of her perils. Her deep desire to be loved and cared for, something a lot of us take for granted. Of the many

widows in this city wrecked by an advancing age and a backward society, reduced to dry flesh and bone by hunger and poverty, what remained at times were just countless unheard voices.

'May you stay married for life' A blessing given to a bride on the day of her wedding has turned into a curse for these widows. A phrase which has in fact become an imprecation of sorts when they outlive their husbands. Varanasi, the holiest of the seven sacred cities is considered by many as a gateway to heaven. But for these forgotten mothers it has become the gateway to hell. Regardless of it being a haven or an abyss, it is the only place these widows can call home. ■

Joshua Ben Joseph is a combat sports journalist with EssentiallySports. Here he writes in gonzo journalistic style.



The Lines between Leper and Clean, Pagan and Jew, Have been Breached

Dr MARIANNE FURTADO DE NAZARETH

The story of the ten lepers in the Gospel of St Luke brought to mind the wooden box carts, in which lepers were pushed by their fellow sufferers, begging for alms at the traffic lights in Bangalore. We would roll down the windows of the car and gingerly drop coins into their fingerless palms, feeling pity wash over us, seeing their noseless and deformed faces. In the past, people infected with the skin disease called Leprosy were treated as outcasts. There was no cure for the disease at the time, and it gradually left a person disfigured through the loss of fingers, toes and eventually limbs.

Those who had contracted leprosy, had to leave their homes and families and live together with others with the disease on the outskirts of the town. They could not work and therefore, would have to scavenge for food.

Since they were forbidden to have any contact with people who did not have the disease, they had to ring a bell and shout 'unclean' if anyone approached them. Of course they could not go to the shopping areas and were forbidden to attend any sort of religious service with other members of the population.

If anyone had a skin disease from which they were cured (which was unlikely in the case of leprosy), Jewish Law stated they could not re-enter society unless they first went to the priest to be checked before receiving a

certificate to say they were now 'clean'. Sounds a bit like the Covid pandemic we have just been through and the fear of infecting one another, hence the masks firmly in place and we have to produce certificates proving that we have been vaccinated—not once or twice but three times with the booster jab.

Going into the history of the region, it's interesting to know that Palestine was divided into three regions: Galilee, Judea and Samaria. The Jews hated the inhabitants of Samaria who were known as the Samaritans. In the past, their ancestors had married foreign invaders from a non-Jewish background. Since then, the Samaritans were treated as an inferior race as they were not 'pure' Jews.

According to the Gospel of St Luke, on the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. And as the story goes—as he entered a village, 10 lepers approached him, and keeping their distance, they called out, saying, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us! The ten men with leprosy stood at a distance as they understood the law forbidding them to have contact with people who did not have the disease.

But what's interesting to note is that Jesus does not immediately heal the lepers, but tests their faith by asking them to go first and meet the priests in the temple. As the story goes—Jesus heals them on the way there. However, it is only one of them who returns with gratitude in his heart and who shows the most faith and thankfulness towards Jesus.

We do not know how many of the men were Samaritans, but it is significant that the only one to return was a Samaritan. Jesus commented, 'Why is this foreigner the only one who came back to give thanks to God?'

This miracle shows Jesus' attitude towards people who were marginalised by others in

society. Jesus shows no prejudice between races towards the lepers and heals them as a group. But He does make it a point of praising the Samaritan for his faith.

This interesting story also alerts us to the fact that the 10 lepers, comprised of a group of people excluded from community life because of their medical condition and one leper was considered to have been doubly excluded, because of his ethnicity as he was a Samaritan.

The lepers who were, 'keeping their distance,' call out to Jesus, not specifically to heal them but to 'have mercy on us!' Their call for mercy, though, indicates a desire to be healed of their affliction. When Jesus sees them, he sends them to the priests, who will determine whether they have been healed of the disease. What a marvelous gift for the men to find themselves suddenly 'cleansed' and whole again, while on their way to meet the priests.

But sadly only the Samaritan turns back to praise Jesus and fall at his feet and thank him. Jesus asks them curiously, 'Were not 10 made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Were none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?' This line of questioning by Jesus is not for the missing nine or the Samaritan, but probably for Jesus' disciples and curious onlookers. How many of us ask of a favour and then forget to thank our benefactor once it's achieved?

The boundary lines between who might be saved, leper or clean, Samaritan or Jew, have been breached by Jesus. The Samaritan's return gives Jesus the opportunity to demonstrate that no one, not a leper, nor a Samaritan, is beyond God's mercy. Anyone can experience God's salvation and shout with joy and praise God for it and then try to walk along the same road that Jesus is traveling, spreading the good word. ■



together on the web

Website



Instagram



Twitter



Facebook



The Mela of People, by People, and for People

Rediscovering the values of our democracy at the grassroots.

ROSHAN LOBO OFM

Garo dokan—a small market where I live in Bongaigaon district of Assam, provides all the things necessary for sustenance of life. Life here is uncorrupted by rampant consumerism or mall culture. Buying and selling happens in a simple manner. Scouring for things in the market is not difficult because unlike a mall or supermarket, choices, which create needless anxiety and drain time, are limited. Organic and fresh vegetables brought from the field are sold, fresh fish from lake intrigues, tasty *singras* (samosa) with a cup of tea is a delicacy.

At a little distance from the market, there's a funfair where people throng to savour sweets, shop and more importantly offer homage to the deity installed in a little corner.

The months of September, October and November usher in a time of festive jubilation in India beginning with the Navaratri, Dusshera and culminating with Diwali. Festive occasions are a time to forget the mundane and indulge in little pleasures. Here in Assam too, in this time of festivity, *Melas* happen in different corners. If a celebration at home is important, what is even more vital is the coming together of people from a locality belonging to different tribes and languages. Any *mela* here is just the right platform for that! There aren't expensive things sold here. We find fresh and hot jalebis, instant snacks, games for children and adults, cutlery and music. For many folks here, the *mela* provides a leisurely break. Apart from all the fun, what we notice evidently is the mixing of people from diverse backgrounds for the sake of doing business. *Mela* provides an opportunity for people to do business. Here there is no distinction based on caste or creed.

The coming together of people from diverse walks of life in any *mela* or religious gathering is not a new thing. It is an age-old practice.



A peaceful co-existence of people from all religions and classes is necessary for the smooth functioning of society. Religion and economy act as backbone for this, and are interlinked.

However, the recent events of vendetta politics played in the name of communal polarisation calls for serious reflection. A peaceful co-existence of people from all religions and classes is necessary for the smooth functioning of society. Religion and economy act as backbone for this, and are interlinked. Just as religion brings spiritual solace, so does the economy. Festivals contribute in many ways for keeping economic figures up. India has seen sharp growth in inflation but it has not affected the way we celebrate our festivals.

The looming threat of nuclear war, sharp decline in global spending, shrinking economies around the world etc. have not deteriorated our spirit of celebration. Reuters reported that in the peak festive season during which online shopping platforms entice people with lucrative offers ranging from cars to earrings or TVs to garments. The post-pandemic online sales doubled to \$27 billion in India. No matter how badly our economy may perform, we do not see its impact on our consumerism.



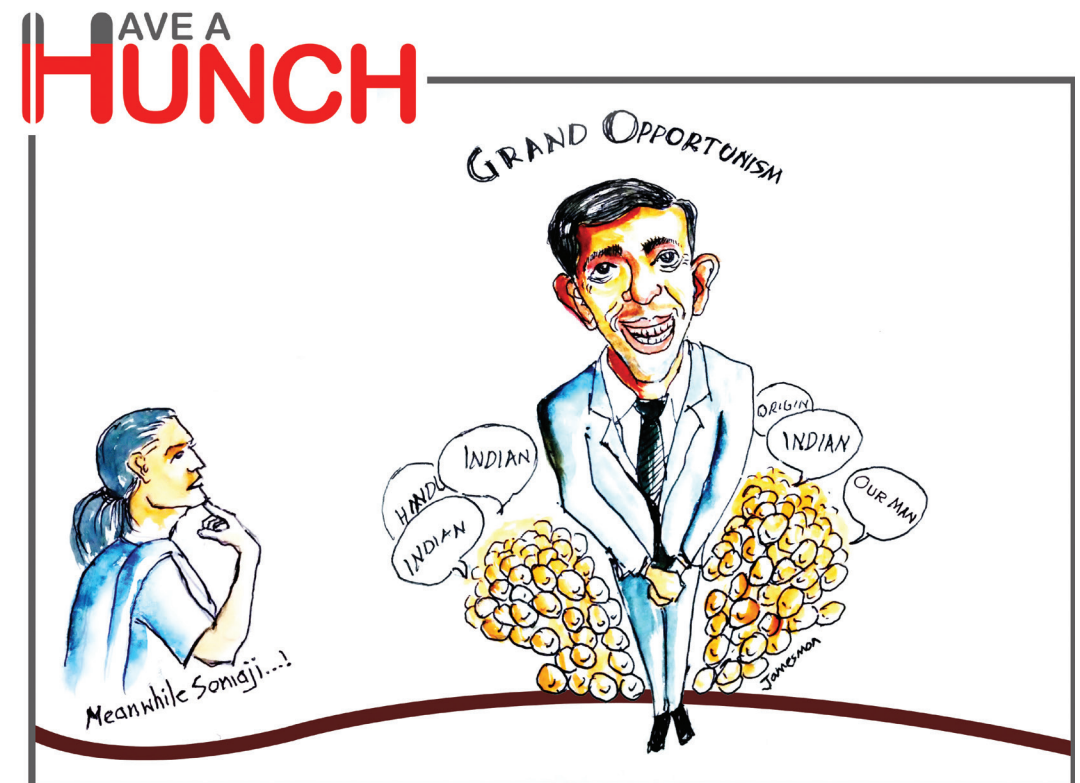
For a harmonious existence, members from diverse strata of society collaborating with one another is of paramount significance.

'Boycott culture', which is dogging new releases in Bollywood, is the latest entrant to the arena of business and religious politics. An article in *The Newsmint* reported as to how Coastal Karnataka, a place of peaceful coexistence has become a hotbed for divisive politics and communal polarisation. In Kapu of Udupi District in Coastal Karnataka, where for 1,300 years, Muslim traders, who took part in the annual festivities of the shrine dedicated to deity Maari, have been targeted by Hindutva groups and barred from doing any business in and around the temple premises. Similar is the case in rest of the country.

Irrespective of caste, creed or religion, everybody benefits from business transactions. For a

harmonious existence, members from diverse strata of society collaborating with one another is of paramount significance. In such a scenario a call for boycott, certainly affects the livelihood of the victims of boycott.

The adage 'United we stand, divided we fall' is very crucial to our understanding of the political and social reality of today. An earnest and soul-searching fact-check may help us to see where we stand as a civilised society and in which direction we are heading to? What does a simple festive gathering of people or *Mela* can teach us all? We need each other. We cannot boycott one another. Our survival depends on the fabrics of unity and peaceful co-existence. ■



Good and Bad Power

RICHARD ROHR OFM

Despite the many abuses of power documented throughout history, power itself cannot be inherently bad. In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit (God) is described as *dynamis*, which means power. Jesus tells his disciples before his Ascension that ‘You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.’ Once that happens we become living icons of true, humble, and confident power. We no longer need to seek ‘power over’ others, because we have discovered the ‘power within’ and know it is a dignity shared with all of life. This is ultimately what it means to be a well-grounded person.

I want to repeat that power, in and of itself, is not bad. It simply needs to be redefined as something larger than domination or force. If the Holy Spirit is power, then power has to be good, loving, and empowering, not something that is the result of ambition or greed. In fact, a truly spiritual woman, a truly whole man, is a very powerful person. If we do not name the good meaning of power, we will be content with the bad, or we will avoid claiming our own powerful vocations. What is needed, Martin Luther King Jr. wrote, ‘is a realisation that power without love is reckless and abusive and that love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice.’

King further wrote, ‘If we want to turn over a new leaf and really set a new humanity afoot, we must begin to turn humankind away from the long and desolate night of violence [caused by domination and power over others]. May it not be that the new humanity the world needs is the nonviolent human? This not only will make us new people, but will give us a new kind of power.

It will be power infused with love and justice, that will change dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows, and lift us from the fatigue of despair to the buoyancy of hope.’

Growing in Power

If we watch the news, work on a committee, or observe some marriages, we see that issues of power have not been well-addressed by most people. When we haven’t experienced or don’t trust our God-given ‘power within,’ we are either afraid of power or we exert too much of it over others. Enduring structures of ‘power over,’ like patriarchy, white supremacy, and rigid capitalism, have limited most individuals’ power for so long that it is difficult to imagine another way. Only very gradually does human consciousness come to a selfless use of power, the sharing of power, or even a benevolent use of power—in church, politics, or families.

Good power is revealed in what Ken Wilber calls ‘growth hierarchies,’ which are needed to protect children, the poor, the entire natural world, and all those without power. Bad power consists of ‘domination hierarchies’ in which power is used merely to protect, maintain, and promote oneself and one’s group at the expense of others. Hierarchies in and of themselves are not inherently bad, but they are very dangerous for ourselves and others if we have not done our spiritual work. Martin Luther King Jr. defined power simply as ‘the ability to achieve purpose’ and insisted that it be used towards the growth of love and justice. He wrote, ‘It is the strength required to bring about social, political or economic changes. In this sense power is not only desirable but necessary in order to implement the demands of love and justice.’



There’s no seeking of power over in the Trinity, but only power with—a giving away, a sharing, a letting go, and thus an infinite flow of trust and mutuality.

Dominating Power

Contemplative teacher Beatrice Bruteau (1930–2014) understood domination, what I’ve referred to as ‘power over’ others, as the cause of much of the world’s suffering. Here is Bruteau’s description of domination: The theme that I believe is basic to many of our political ills is domination. We are all familiar with domination. We see it in the way decisions are made in our families; in the way orders are given at work; in the way social life is structured in our city by gender, race, and wealth; in the way our industry or profession relates to its competitors or its market or its clientele; in the way governmental agencies function. Domination is a relation that does not work the same in both directions. One commands, the other obeys. One shows respect, the other accepts it but does not return it. One gains privileges from which the other is excluded.

Letting Go of Power

In her book *The Wisdom Jesus*, Cynthia Bourgeault describes how Jesus modeled the path of *kenosis*—it means to ‘let go’ or ‘to empty oneself.’ Jesus’s life on earth was a purely kenotic, downwardly mobile path. Jesus as God could have been a prince on a throne, holding power, riches, and every kind of privilege. Instead, he denied it. He let it go. He consciously

chose a path that assured suffering, humiliation, desolation, and finally death on a cross. None of this was an accident or coincidence. Jesus entered as he did, where he did, doing what he did, because God needed us to finally comprehend the truth: God is not a sky king who heads an empire; God is the love that gives itself away for the sake of more love. Jesus could only communicate that point by standing outside the power structures and inviting disciples to join him and discover new life with him on the margins.

Granted, this is a very non-American way of being. Think of the phrases that shape our national identity. We assert our ‘right’ to ‘life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,’ which means we are free—and even expected—to organise our lives around our own individual desires. So much of our American story consists of groups of people protecting themselves and what’s theirs, with a gun or a flag or the cloak of racial, class, or gender privilege.

In this moment, as we reckon with the limits and consequences of self-centrism, domination systems, and the church’s capitulation to empire, we could lean into the Jesus way. We could reclaim *kenosis*, or perhaps claim it for the first time. When you take something you possess—your bread and power, your abilities and identities, your comfort and control, your treasured structures and even life itself—and release your attachment to it and make it useful to God’s movement, you are practicing *kenosis*.

Brené Brown writes wisely about vulnerability and power. She observes that ‘The phrase power over is typically enough to send chills down spines: When someone holds power over us, the human spirit’s instinct is to rise, resist, and rebel. As a construct it feels wrong; in the wider geopolitical context it can mean death and despotism.’

There’s no seeking of power over in the Trinity, but only power with—a giving away, a sharing, a letting go, and thus an infinite flow of trust and mutuality. This should have changed all Christian relationships: in marriage, in culture, and even in international relations. Instead, we continue to prefer kings, wars, and empires, instead of an always leveling love. ■

Good Will Hunting

Psychological Interventions Matter

LEKHA RAMYAA R

Good Will Hunting is an American film directed by Gus Van Sant, which got released in the year 1997. The film revolves around the protagonist Will Hunting, a 20 year old chap, who's enormous mathematical and logical reasoning skills are observed by a Mathematics genius, Professor Gerald Lambeau, in the university where Will works as a janitor. The story is set up at South Boston, USA. Prof. Lambeau notices Will's natural flair and takes up an expedition into his social world to try and help him resolve his aggressive and anti-social behaviour in the process of building him as a noteworthy individual in the field of Mathematics. With the help sought from Psychiatrist Dr Sean Maguire in changing the maladaptive behaviour of Will, there are numerous approaches that Dr Sean deploys in achieving the desired objective.

The field of psychology has seen tremendously beneficial over the past decades thereby fetching new perspective and methods in dealing with psychological and relational issues of individuals. The therapeutic interventions exhibited in this film marks a phenomenal breakthrough in coagulating the real scenario of the therapy sessions and has shattered various misconceptions of Psychotherapy. A few instances from the film that depict the process of different stages of therapy sessions are elucidated below.

In the first two sessions of therapy, Will is seen to be reluctant towards Dr Sean and avoid

interacting with him, and Will uses aggressive means to instigate Dr Sean. This can be termed as 'resistance' in psychological terms, which is a common phenomenon in Psychotherapeutic settings. An iconic scene where Will keeps silent for an entire one hour session of therapy depicts the level of patience and perseverance a therapist needs to develop in order to acquire information from the client even when he is not ready to open up.

The third session of therapy is when Will talks about how all women around him are imperfect and he opens up about his date with a girl named Skylar who according to him is unlike other girls and seems to be perfect. Dr Sean discloses a little bit about his personal life and throws light on how imperfect his wife was, which does not matter much now, as he misses his wife who is no more. The psychotherapeutic process of 'Consciousness raising' is depicted through this scene.

Now that Will has made himself comfortable in sharing his personal experiences with Dr Sean, he opens up a little more about the complexities of his relationship, and how he finds himself moving away from his loved one because of the fear of losing her. The notion of 'regret' is discussed in detail during the ongoing sessions. Dr Sean, yet again shares his personal experience, which makes Will ponder on his inner needs and the mask that he needs to wear out. This scene reflects the defence mechanism of denial that Will has been exhibiting to avoid



Good Will Hunting not only portrays the importance of therapy and mental well-being in an individual's life but also shows that human beings are capable of being decisive in their life's goals which could have the potential to change the course of their future.

getting exposed to his repressed emotions from his childhood days which is yet to get uncovered.

Will, comes to the breaking point where he is emotionally intrigued by Dr Sean when he says, 'It's not your fault' after talking about his own father and the bitter abuse that he had been through. Being in touch with his repressed feelings from the unconscious mind a cathartic cry leads Will to resolve his inner most conflicts and search for what his soul really wants. In a Psychotherapeutic process, the end marks an important phenomenon known as 'Termination'. The therapist must make the client understand that their professional relationship has now come to an end. This is beautifully depicted in the scene where Will Hunting addresses Dr

Sean as his fatherly figure; yet, Dr Sean declines it and tells him that he can meet him anytime in future related to any issue that he may stumble across.

As a conclusion, the movie ends with Will Hunting goes on in search of his girl Skylar, and he realises that becoming a renowned mathematician was not what his inner self sought after. This masterpiece not only portrays the importance of therapy and mental well-being in an individual's life but also shows that human beings are capable of being decisive in their life's goals which could have the potential to change the course of their future. *Good Will Hunting* is surely a film that is made a mark on the hearts of many audiences across the globe. ■



Where Is Freedom?

Roy M Thottathil SJ

*A world not free from wars,
Conflicts never end within.
Free we are, we say,
Our land is free, we acclaim,
But chained with un-freedoms,
Legs heavy and tongue in bondage.
Ear dumbed with the storm of words,
The hammer of power over our heads.*

*Many in the desert of afflictions.
Treading through the wilderness,
Gallop on the horse of desires,
Under the scorching sun of hope,
Gasping through the waters of wisdom,
Towards the mirage of freedom.
A plant of solace from the inner-scape
The wings of soul await,
To awake into that 'heaven of freedom'.*

Roy M Thottathil SJ



Kantara Is a Must Watch

A sight for sore eyes, the film explores folk traditions of coastal Karnataka

SINCHANA SHETTY

The film *Kantara* has become a box-office phenomenon since its release. Everyday the movie receives higher acclaim and I'd be lying if I said I don't feel proud as someone from Mangalore. It is refreshing to see a movie so authentically represented in all its facets (owing to the fact that it is written and directed by someone from the land) as opposed to the stereotypical, comic-relief representation of characters from the coastal belt so often seen in other movies.

Rishab Shetty's *Kantara* follows the story of Kaadubettu Shiva and his villagers who have to navigate the DRFO who wants to make their land a reserve forest and the village landlord, Devendra Suttooru, whose real intentions lurk below his do-gooder persona. The central plot also includes recurring dreams that Shiva has been having of the deity.

The story is fraught with culture, myth, and folklore but also has the underbelly of fatalistic humour that is evident so innately among those from Dakshina Kannada (I attest).

The actors bring to the table a feast! With the film's cinematography by Arvind S. Kashyap so stunningly crafted; and score by B. Ajneesh Loknath, one needs to embrace the auditory overload. The visual and the aural come together to deliver a breathtaking experience

which the 9.3/10 IMDb ratings concur with.

Kantara adds to the narrative of oral tradition. As seen in the film, many regional customs like the worship of the Daiva (an animist form of spirit worship) and Bhoota Kola, a stylised dance held in the honour of the deities where the God possesses the body of the performer are shown. The vanishing of the performers at the end of their act creates an aura of myth that when you dot the i's and cross the t's will make you realise all connect to the overarching theme of storytelling. Additionally, having seen multiple interviews of the actor-director, the film is a testament to how cautious he is of this representation of folk traditions.

However, women characters are cast aside in the film. There are scenes where Leela, the female lead's consent does not seem to matter. Unwittingly or not, these are common tropes that exist across Indian cinema. While a review is not going to solve the problem, being proactive is key.

In conclusion, Rishab Shetty's directorial skills are at par with his acting and the story is as entertaining as it is necessary to shed light on these folk customs that are slowly fading. The movie is a must watch and is bound to strike a chord! ■

WEB SERIES

Why You Should Watch *Little Women* A Korean Drama on Netflix

SONU FAKIHA

No, not the *Little Women* Louis May Alcott wrote about. However, there are mild references to the Little Women story by Alcott. The uniqueness of this drama lies in the themes and genre it is built on.

Generational trauma and survivor's guilt are something that is often associated with wars. Casualties of war aren't limited to infrastructure catastrophe but it extends to psychological scars as well. The scars are so deep that it passes on from one generation to another. The story uses the participation of the Korean soldiers in the Vietnam War (a three-decade war) as a base to build the story.

The orchid is potentially the drama's protagonist because it symbolises intergenerational trauma caused by the war. It also becomes a thread that weaves every character because of its hallucinogenic nature that leads to introspection and self-reflection.

The Oh sisters in the drama have a similar situation to the March sisters from Alcott's novel. They are poor and one of the sisters is an aspiring artist (painter). The situation where these stories diverge is parenting. Unlike the March sisters, the Oh sisters have neglectful parents.

Parenting is one of the crucial topics most of the K-dramas touch upon. Parenting styles affect one's personality. An example of this would be the character Won Sang-ah. She also embodies and carries the theme of intergenerational trauma. She is a prominent figure in the drama. Even the Oh sisters have bitter parenting experiences.

The economic divide is very well illustrated in the series, the contrast between the rich and the poor is depicted through the friendship of Oh In-hye and Park Hyo-rin. Upperclass folks (the higher authorities) have everything in their control. People in power use folks from the lower class as their pawns to stay in power, this is also one of the themes the drama highlights.

Special spotlight on Oh In-kyng because she embodies true journalism (very rare these days). She is feisty and doesn't hesitate to speak truth to power.

Overall the drama is a good mix of thrill, murder and intense psychological and social themes. There are some triggering and gory scenes but reality must be depicted. Seems like the only way to make the audience/people think is to make them a little uncomfortable. ■

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The Foundation of the Institute of the Sisters of St Joseph's of Tarbes (SJT) is in France.

On 15 August 1843, God gave six young peasant girls of Cantaus, Diocese of Tarbes in France an experience of His Trinitarian Communion. Each of the girls relished this experience, discerned it, and was spontaneously drawn to share it with one another in simple faith.

A Sister of St. Joseph of Tarbes (SJT) is called to:
Gather the scattered; Unite the divided with the motto: 'GOD ALONE'

In and through: Prayer, through her service to the young—in schools and colleges; to the sick—in hospitals, clinics, rehabilitation of leprosy and HIV/AIDS patients; to the aged, orphans, women in distress, the poor and the needy—in and through the social-service ministries.

Dear friend, do you hear this call to reach out?

The Lord Jesus is calling you dear friend, to be part of the SJT family.

Do you hear the call of Jesus? COME AND SEE!



CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH'S OF TARBES

The Lord is inviting you, dear friend, to be part of our family.

May they all be one.
JOHN 17:21



For Further Information

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