

YEP TALK



Just an Observation

S R Khan

A few years ago while returning from a holiday trip, I noticed the new Board of Investment (BOI) signboard hanging in the immigration section of Dhaka airport. This special section was established to facilitate and ensure the smooth entry of prospective investors in Bangladesh. This is a welcome step, I thought to myself, and would encourage foreign investment. That there was no BOI official in attendance was no real surprise - after all, it takes time for systems to be developed in our country. Nevertheless, the initiative was a correct one and hopefully things would fall into place (I used to be an eternal optimist). But an efficient and hospitable BOI immigration counter is only part of the solution and a very small part at that.

The experience of arriving at ZIA airport is not one that can ever be described adequately enough. One truly has to live it. Nevertheless, let me attempt to do so. First, we have to deal with a grumpy immigration officer who may ask very personal questions. Then, if one is lucky the luggage belt will be operational and we will be able to collect our luggage in say one hour (boy, we are on a roll aren't we). Next up is customs. Oh, I completely forgot, there are days when luggage carts are not available or if there is one its wheels are missing. Usually, the foreign visitor is spared the attention of our diligent custom officials. Their special care is reserved for migrant workers returning home from the Middle East and other places carrying electronic goods like Sony TVs, Philips audio systems, Kelvinator refrigerators and so forth. It is an unwritten rule that the officers must try their best to reduce the returning countrymen and

women to tears and harass them till the proper fees have been paid. That these workers are the largest contributors to the national foreign exchange reserves is surely not good enough grounds for civility. Visitors then proceed towards the exit. On route they can witness hundreds of dehydrated, sweaty, drained faces pressed up against the glass trying frantically to catch the attention of their relatives/friends who have not yet cleared through. Needless to say, this is

How seriously can we take our nation? We are unable to effectively manage an airport, let alone a country, yet we continue to proclaim "Sonar Bangla". Every sector has become an example of inefficiency and corruption. No political party seems interested in bringing about administrative reform or providing constructive leadership.

invariably a futile attempt. The glass structure ensures that the images remain two dimensional, but once this ends we are provided with a complementary three dimensional show where human bodies are flung against iron railings, reaching out with their hands while screaming out names at the top of their voices. A few name cards are waved

around in the hot air conditioned enclosure. We then proceed bravely onwards outside of the airport building itself. There the show is played out on a greater stage. There are people milling all over. Thousands more standing outside the caged enclosed area. Traffic jam. Honking. Shouting. Heat. Humidity. But wait this is not the time to appreciate the sound and thrills of pure unadulterated chaos because the minute we step out of the building there is a steep ramp on which we have to steer forward our luggage carts. The ramp has been designed in a manner that increases the probability of the cart going out of control and ramming into the side-walls or running over a fellow passenger. There is no "proper" system of taxi/car pickup. The security guards ensure that there is no smooth flow of traffic and invariably one has to cart the luggage out into the car park to load into the vehicle. Here, a participatory approach to communal luggage loading takes place. In spite of trying to establish one's self-dependency and refusing to take any assistance, at least ten persons will accompany you to your car. Some of the more enthusiastic ones will load the luggage and then you are expected to tip everyone - even those who merely graced the occasion by lightly touching your bag. Most may call this harassment but in actual reality this is creative use of human capital. Once inside the car, the passenger speeds off towards the capital city straight into a traffic jam of monumental proportions. And if you are truly blessed, the car air conditioning may break down. Of course there are days when arriving at ZIA is not such a chore e.g. on hartals (also known to some circles as environment friendly yet physically dangerous day). WELCOME

TO BANGLADESH!

The Government of Bangladesh advertises regularly in international magazines about investment opportunities in the country. A wide range of benefits is offered. These are no doubt important steps for attracting foreign investment but how effective are these policies and to what extent are

Is there any light at the end of the tunnel? If there is, will it be affected by load shedding? HELP!!!

they being implemented? It is essential that investors be provided efficient service the minute they enter the country, as one never gets a second chance to make a good first impression. Yet, are we doing anything to address this issue? The circus that goes on at ZIA will make even the bravest of investors jittery.

How seriously can we take our nation? We are unable to effectively manage an airport, let alone a country, yet we continue to proclaim "Sonar Bangla". Every sector has become an example of inefficiency and corruption. No political party seems interested in bringing about administrative reform or providing constructive leadership. And after all is said and done, we accept our situation (this writer included) as our *kapal*. Is there any light at the end of the tunnel? If there is, will it be affected by load shedding? HELP!!!

*The writer works in development.

Leadership: It's Worth Thinking About

SMART Leaders invest time in thinking deeply. To think deeply requires that leaders develop the habit of calling their mind into action. Like a child at play, the mind will at first resist the call to think deeply, but over time - as the habit is developed - the mind will look forward to the intense engagement of deep thinking. Likewise, deep thought requires time - time for focused thinking, time for thoughts to stew and develop and time to record and classify.

Often deep thought is wasted on matters of a trivial nature, therefore, SmartLeaders make a conscious effort to focus their thinking around seven BIG ideas. SmartLeaders think deeply about:

1. Integrity: Integrity is one of the most important personal issues anyone can think about. Integrity is the core of who you are, and all true leadership flows out of integrity. As you think deeply about your level of integrity, ask the following questions: What is the next step in my character development?

Are there clear cracks in my integrity that need to be repaired? What are my positive character traits and how can I increase them? What character traits do other successful leaders possess?

2. Leadership: SmartLeaders are continually reflecting on leadership ideals, examining them from their various sides. One SmartLeader I know collects definitions of leadership and frequently ponders the various aspects of each. Begin to develop the habit of thinking not only about the leadership of others, but where you are as a leader. Ask

yourself: Am I growing as a leader? Is my influence moving people in a positive or negative direction?

Who is influencing me? What are the leadership dynamics I encounter at work, home, play, etc.? What did I learn about leadership today? What are my biggest leadership challenges?

3. Behavior: SmartLeaders are students of behavior. Behavior is the study of why people act the way they do. SmartLeaders work to understand their own behavior and the behavior of others. Look for the drivers and motivators behind your actions and the actions of others. Continually examine which behaviors will allow you to pursue excellence. Ask: What are the systemic causes behind my behavior and the behavior of others?

What behaviors do I need to change or develop? How does my attitude effect the behavior of others? How do other people effect my behavior?

4. The Future: While no one can accurately predict the future, SmartLeaders do spend time thinking about what will happen next. Crystal balls are unnecessary for the SmartLeader who recognizes trends and thinks through the implications of current ideas. SmartLeaders plot possible future scenarios and develop strategies for each. Realizing that tomorrow determines today, ask: What ideas and trends are driving the future?

What are the possible scenarios of my future? How will what I'm doing right now effect my future? Where do I want to be in 5, 10, 15, 25 years? How is society changing?

5. Personal Growth: Personal growth occurs when you grow emotionally, spiritually and intellectually. The leader who stops growing will soon not have to worry about leading. There is a direct connection between influence and personal growth - both grow together. SmartLeaders think deeply about their personal growth by asking: What steps to I need to take today to grow? What is my plan for personal growth? Do I surround myself with people who pull me up or push me down? Who can I help grow? And how?

6. Communication: Communication is a problem for most people. Yet, if you cannot clearly communicate you cannot effectively lead because there is little influence without great communication. Thinking about how to clearly communicate and developing a process to find out if someone heard what you think you said is extremely important. SmartLeaders work to become great communicators and they spend time thinking about how to increase their communication effectiveness by asking: How can I most effectively communicate my ideas? What methods of communication appeal to me? To those around me?

How many different ways can I communicate the same idea? What do effective communicators have in common? What is my most effective means of communication? My least? How often should I communicate goals, vision and ideas?

7. Wisdom: Wisdom are those pearls of thought that have stood the test of time and translation and continually prove to be true and right. Wisdom is more than a pragmatic answer to an immediate problem. Instead, wisdom is

eternal truth that is applicable to temporal issues. Realizing the value of true wisdom, SmartLeaders serve as collectors and connoisseurs of wisdom. When wisdom is discovered it is pondered, polished, practiced and promoted. Wise leaders ask: What does the Bible say about this issue? What have others said about the issue I am facing? What is the eternal perspective on this situation? What quote, story, proverb did I hear recently that I need to think through and apply?

Investing time in thinking deeply around these seven areas will reap great dividends. A large part of leading is learning how to think well. Centering your thinking around these ideas and working to apply what you learn, will allow for greater success in every area of life. As you think, you must develop a system of thinking that works for you, many SmartLeaders have found it helpful to:

- find a quiet place that you consistently use as a place to think.
- use pencil and paper to record and direct your thoughts.
- discover creative ways to express your thoughts.
- set aside a definite amount of time for intense thinking.

Thinking time is never wasted time. It stretches you and allows you to grow. Very few people take time to think. SmartLeaders not only take time to think, but they focus their thoughts around seven BIG ideas. Thinking deeply will allow you to grow deep, stand tall and lead well.

"SmartLeadership Magazine, University of Maryland, USA.

The Need of the Hour

Syeda Nasrin Akhter

*"To Mercy, pity, peace, and love
All pray in their distress;
And to these virtues of delight
Return their thankfulness"*
— William Blake

ALL human beings pray to God for help when they are in trouble. In fact, in praying to God people simply pray to the godly qualities possessed by men and when they get relief, they offer their thanks to these very qualities.

We are deeply in trouble. To whom should we pray? Should we, like Blake, believe in the divine qualities of men that can get us some relief? Or we are to wait for an uncertain period for the revival of the very humane qualities

Once elected to power they will only work for their own interest, by any means they will try to cling to power, claiming they are the one and only patriotic party, others are traitors and if they are destined to be in the opposition, their each activity will be destructive to the country, they will never sit together for a compromise and mutual understanding, let the country's interest suffer, their only aim is to reach power, they have no mistakes, no self criticism is ever possible, they will simply oppose for opposition's sake.

like compromise, responsibility, unity, cooperation and tolerance in our leaders? To which virtues should we pray for resolving the country's fundamental problems? None of our leaders seems to realize that at this moment the most urgent piece of work is to make a united effort disregarding party to resolve national problems. Rather we notice extreme disunity and serious conflict in them. The government and the opposition is only busy in blaming each other, abusing each other, invoking the bitter past. None is realizing that the basic problems will never be solved the abusing each other or shifting all the blames on others.

We want to know from our leaders whom we have voted to power of the govt and power of the opposition.

It seems that the leaders have resolved that either they will be in power or they would be agitating in the streets, creating chaos and uncertainty everywhere for crippling the administration. Once elected to power they will only work for their own interest, by any means they will try to cling to power, claiming they are the one and only patriotic party, others are traitors and if they are destined to be in the opposition, their each activity will be destructive to the country, they will never sit together for a compromise and mutual understanding, let the country's interest suffer, their only aim is to reach power, they have no mistakes, no self criticism is ever possible, they will simply oppose for opposition's sake.

How long this is going to be continued? We simply do not know, but our troubled souls cry for a solution. We want to know from our leaders whom we have voted to power of the govt and power of the opposition - why do we feel so insecure in our own places, why can't you be aware of the need of the hour?

*"To the sense of responsibility of our leaders
We pray in our trouble;
And only to this humane quality
We will remain ever grateful."*

And when the countrymen, who are voters as well feel grateful, they can and will reward you in time. The need of the time for at least one of our leaders is to take initiatives for negotiations. We believe, those who are politically ambitious can not afford to ignore the voters.

