

Music on Train

Last week, I was travelling to Chittagong from Dhaka with my family and relatives. It was a late night train and since I am not used to sleeping on a chair, I decided to stroll to the next compartment. Suddenly I heard the strums of a guitar, playing somewhere nearby. I walked out of my compartment and found a young man playing the guitar and singing a well-known contemporary band song of Bangladesh. He was occupying the small space linking compartments together, which is used by the passengers to move from one bogie to another. My younger brother and cousin were thoroughly enjoying the song as well. Even though it was 3 am in the night, nobody seemed to be disturbed. Rather, it felt really good to hear some music on the train in the middle of the night. I guess there is something to train rides after all!

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HOMAGE TO A PHILOSOPHER

During my secondary school years in the early sixties, I remember reading a text in our English book, titled, "How much land does a man require?" by Leo Tolstoy, the legendary Russian novelist and socialist reformer. It was an extra-ordinary story about high morals and educative values. Since then, I had been very fond of Tolstoy and even today read his classics with great interest. Very often, I would have discussions about Tolstoy with Professor Dewan Mohammad Azraf, who is also a relative and a close friend of mine. During his time, National Professor Azraf was also a renowned writer, philosopher and a legendary personality. He had inherited lands and wealth from his forefathers who were zamindars in the ancient days. One day during a friendly conversation, he suddenly shared with me the top three writers, according to him, in the world - Rabindranath Tagore, Leo Tolstoy and William Shakespeare. He went on to speak further about Tolstoy. It seems that during Tolstoy's time, who was also a zamindar of sorts in his part of the world, he would distribute his lands to his subjects and the poor peasants. With grief, Professor Azraf shared his deepest sorrow of not being able to do what Tolstoy did when he was a zamindar in the early years of the Pakistan rule. With these words he looked at me and strangely enough, I could see the tears rolling down his eyes incessantly. I would never forget this memorable incident.

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The Young Attitude

The other day I was going to Azimpur from Mirpur by bus when at the Science Lab junction, a group of young teenaged boys stepped inside the bus. Their attitudes and the language that they used shocked me and I am sure the rest of the passengers as well. They were joking around with each other loudly and in a very crude manner. They were also moving about the bus like it was their very own drawing room and they could do whatever they wanted. They seemed to ignore the other passengers completely. They were also using a lot of abusive words in front of the elder passengers. Is there any way to let these young people know that what they are doing is not 'cool' but extremely immature?

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