

Lead India to Glory

*Yat yat acaratisresthah tat tat evetarojanah |
Sah yat pramanam kurutey lokastad anuvartate ||*

People follow the footsteps of great leaders.
Whatever exemplary acts they perform, the world pursues.
- *Bhagwad Gita, verse 3.21*

At every moment, all of us are at different stages in life. At each stage, we face a new challenge, a new dynamism in life. Not everything is revealed to us. Questions arise in our minds. In our day-to-day life, we approach our parents, teachers, friends, or books with these questions. We demand that they lead us to answers. They do not choose to lead us; but by asking them for help, they are not left with a choice. They become our natural leaders.

In this sense, leadership is a demand. It is not a choice. In present Indian society, it is more so.

From the time I learnt how to form a sentence, all the high school English class examinations made me write an essay. I always prepared an essay on India. Since, the essays were lengthy, as soon as I got the paper, I would write them first. I would always remember the first few lines by heart and would rush to write those without much thought. And it always went like this — “India is a developing country...” and then, I would be possessed writing about the mighty Himalayas, the Ganges, the different faiths, and my heroes Krishna, Buddha, Patanjali, Chanakya, Ashoka, Akbar, Guru Gobind Singh, Shiva Ji, Maharana Pratap, Bhagat Singh, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Gandhi, Tagore, Ramanujan, CV Raman, Hargobind Khurana, and many more.

I always wrote them, year after year. Then, I moved on to higher studies and was no more required to write these essays. Eventually, the stories of my heroes became passive in my mind. I lost myself in daily humdrum. I even forgot those first few lines.

One day, I happened to read about a vision of a man in some article about “India 2020”. He was talking about something strange — “a developed India”. An electric sensation ran through my spine, piercing my heart, juggling all that was going on in my brain; and all I could remember is that a teardrop fell from my eyes.

Writing “India is a developing country...” time and again, year after year had led me to believe that India is *only* a developing country. The thought that if not me, then, one day my sons and daughters may write “India is a developed nation” – put me through immense pain. The fact that I never thought about it, and that I have been wasting my time not doing anything for it. It humbled me to surrender myself to the dream of a great man; and act. It would never happen, if we did not have a leader like Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam.

There are millions in India, lost like me, who need to awake. One billion Indians need a developed India and as the President, Dr. Kalam is wedded to the cause, he could not, but lead.

We need more such leaders' – who could change the mindset of a common person like me and raise the already present, but dormant virtue of real love for my nation. We need leaders so that they can be role models for the children – the future of India. Children must learn from them to become able citizens and move India towards greatness. In the 'Great Dialogues of Plato,' Socrates mentions that in the earliest years of childhood people are most pliable. They absorb what they are exposed to. Thus, in these formative years, let us tell them stories about great people. Lets place solid foundations to make them able and proud citizens of India. Tomorrow, these children will become national leaders in their fields.

We need to understand the responsibility we have towards the future generations and ourselves. Once we become aware and understand it, we also cannot, but lead.

On August 15, 1947, Pt. Nehru made his "tryst with destiny" speech. Today, once again, India is at a point where we should make a tryst with destiny – that we will develop India in our lifetime. We are well poised for it, but we have to generate a final thrust – a wave that will capture the entire nation in one. We must not consider ourselves average and developing; we must instill the vision led forth by Dr. Kalam in ourselves and lead our fellow citizens to embrace it and work for it. We must not wait either. We must lead, now.

Utsideyur ime loka na kuryam karma ced aham/

If I should cease to work, then all these worlds would be put to ruination

- Bhagwad Gita, verse 3.24

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