

TEST-7: SECTION-A

Q Do not wait for leaders; do it alone,
person to person

She was trapped. As an
ISIS sex slave, she had almost forgotten
the pride of being a Yazidi woman. These
ISIS men treated her and the other trapped
women like mere animals, depriving them of
any shred of human dignity. No matter how
hard they cried, how intensely they plead,
there was no one to help them. They were
all alone... Until one day, when they weren't.

One of the trapped Yazidi
woman mustered up the courage to
chart her own destiny, out of the
abyssal fate life had wrapped her in.

very
impactfully
written!

This girl freed herself from the
degenerate life of a sex slave, with
persistent efforts and strategic planning.

And one by one, she freed hundreds
of other Yazidi women. Today, along with
human rights lawyer Amal Clooney, she is

a global campaigner of rights and freedom
of Yazidi women from clutches of ISIS.

She is none other than Nobel
Laureate Nadia Murad. A lady who didn't
wait for a leader. First she helped herself
and then, she helped hundreds of others, "person
to person".

Hence we see that it is not
always prudent to wait for a leader to show
the way. At times we need to become our
own leaders. However "doing it alone" always
isn't necessary, as there is strength in numbers.

Thus, the ideal approach is to have a leader
who promotes "self initiative".

Exposé
of
Concisely

In this context, a "leader" can be interpreted in two ways. One is a guide, or mentor, an elected representative, who commands faith & popularity amongst ~~people~~ ^{masses}. Metaphorically, a "leader" could also mean a "bright opportunity", whereas "person to person" could mean "everyday mundane moments". Thereby meaning, one needn't always wait for a "bright opportunity" to take initiative, ~~as~~ every second of every day can be a good opportunity, provided one has the capacity of making the best of it.

Indeed, as the Bhagwad Gita says in the 6th chapter, a person's mind is the most potent tool he possesses. If that mind is trained to be a follower, he'll always wait for a leader.

On the contrary, if that

cont

mind is trained to take initiative,
to treat every second as an
opportunity to do something new; if the
mind is trained to be bold and courageous,
man can achieve any feat and further
the essence of humanity.

The beautiful lines penned
by Rabindra Nath Tagore, captures this
essence, "Todi tor dak shune ken na
pashe; Toke ekla cholo rey" (if no
one responds to your call, if no one joins
you ... keep treading forward ALONE).

Good

cont

but
click

And when one starts
"walking alone", helping others along the
way, the world takes due notice and
supplements his/her efforts. That is
exactly how Mother Teresa was successful
in encouraging the world to help orphans.

That's how Hellen Keller became a teacher for blind children and Baba Amte began his Mission of Helping the lepers, ~~one~~ person to person.

art
counter

However, one must not ignore the fact that though a common man's initiative may help a few people, but to leave a long-standing impact on lives of millions, "doing it alone" is not enough. In such cases, help from leaders, volunteers and community becomes imperative.

But isn't it also true that "Rome wasn't built in a day"?

Small efforts by individuals, on a daily basis can move mountains too. Hence,

while "not waiting for leaders" can be justified, an argument can be built

around attempting to take ^{challenging} steps and decisions in groups, not alone.

Good explanation
The renowned and applauded worthy success of the "Lijiat Papad" initiative; a women led Self Help Group, is a case in point. This initiative was started by a group of women with mere Rs 100 (without support of leaders). Today, collectively their turnover is in crores. Hence, "there is strength in numbers".

apt
Conversely, one can also argue "Too many cooks spoil the broth". Not everyone sees eye to eye in a "group initiative", leading to altercations. The recent disintegration of a tier 1 Law Firm, Luthera & Luthera into Luthera Group and Saraf Group, justifies this.

Similarly, "visionaries" are scarcely found within a group, rather the "build groups" along their life's journey. Jamshed Ti Tata and Chung Yu Tung, the

How
they
did
it?

founder of the Hyundai Group of Companies
are appropriate illustrations. Thereby
once again reaffirming the argument
that taking solitary decisions ^{and} by not waiting
for leaders, ^{we} ~~we~~ can help ^{ourselves} ~~us~~ to help others.

But this is not to
say that leaders don't play a
crucial role in our lives. A leader
"worth his salt" has several profound
qualities, one of the primary ones being,
he doesn't make his followers wait or his
group wait.

The promptness in response
showed by General Washington and
Napoleon towards their people, was indeed
commendable. Contemporary leaders should
follow us.

Explain
it
better

Secondly, an ideal leader should empower his followers or members of his group, to take decisions unilaterally. However the caveat here is, neither should the leader make his team members ^(taking a decision) feel isolated, nor should the leader encourage detrimental or radical decisions, under the garb of autonomy.

For instance, the modus operandi of the Indian government in dealing with the separatist cum insurgency tendencies of the North-east, is an apt example. By signing accords like the Bodo Accord, Bum-Reang accord, the Indian government grants them autonomy to act alone, but puts the over-arching condition of undying loyalty to Motherland's Sovereignty.

Good example

likewise, as shown by
the Buddhist philosophy of "Bodhisatva",
leaders often prioritize the well-being
of their subjects, recognizing their capacity
of doing greater good. To illustrate, the
way Dr. Vikram Sarabhai mentored Dr. Nambi
Narayan ~~& founder of~~ Vikram Sarabhai engine, without which
neither ISRO's Mangalyaan or Chandrayaan would
be possible.

A similar role was played
by Gandhi Ji during the Bardoli Satyagrah,
when his role as a guide and mentor
helped the younger generation consisting of
 Sardar Vallabhai Patel help "person to person".

Thus we see that ~~some~~ ^{not all}
leaders make their followers or supporters
wait. Rather an ideal leader is a

facilitator of action. As Lao Tzu had said, "A true leader is ~~one~~ ^{one} who does all the work in such a way that people wouldn't even know his name and feel that they themselves had done it".

But what happens when leaders themselves feel alone?

Yes, several leaders like Abraham Lincoln have spoken about ~~this~~ ^{his} solitary and challenging journey towards becoming the US President. Perhaps every ambitious and visionary leader goes through bouts of loneliness.

Yet, the mantra to escape from the mental limbo of loneliness is the same, as is for a common man. He needn't wait for external support, or an opportunistic moment. The way forward is the Japanese philosophy of "Kaizen". Taking

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Good

additional dimension!

slow, but steady incremental steps,
every day, to show monumental
progress eventually. That is exactly
how Japan rebuilt itself after the
Hiroshima-Nagasaki incident. Today, it stands

at the arena of resilience, grit,
determination of "doing it alone", not waiting for
others.

Thus, to sum it up, we
need to reflect upon the strength of
the adage "Time and Tide Waits
for No Man". Every second ^{parts} is an

opportunity of growth and reformation,
which should not be ignored, by
either waiting for leaders or the
"perfect opportunity".

On the flipside, some leaders
are worth waiting for. Specially those,
who build our capacity and empower
us to take autonomous decisions, like

Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam

Surge, same - keep his balance
against the wave

Scuba diver -> deep without
any turb

Yet, in this journey of life,
there is a lot of noise around us,
which makes taking decisions alone challeng-
ing. In such cases, we could reflect
upon the difference of surfing versus
scuba diving. Surfing makes us dance ac-
cording to the rhythm of the waves. But
when one goes in for a deep sea
scuba diving, the turbulence of the top
gets lost in the stillness of the moment.

We too need to train our minds to go in
for bouts of scuba diving. Only then can we
realize "when to wait for leaders" or "when to do it alone"

Good
Conclusion!

Q6. The flower which is single
need not envy the thorns that are
numerous.

Harper Lee, in his book
"To Kill a Mocking Bird" beautifully
captures the essence of how challenging
life becomes, when we choose to prioritize
"the flower" over that "thorns".

good
hook

The "flower" is symbolic
of the protagonist's honest efforts to
defend a slave's right to freedom. The
"thorns" stand for the easier option
chose by millions of others, who endorsed
the institution of slavery. But at the
end, no matter how arduous the journey

is, the world bows down before
the majestic scent and beauty of a
"true flower".

Hence we see that by a
~~the very nature~~ of a flower, by its
very nature is lesser in numerical
strength when compared to the thorns
around it. Here, the flower could
personify an individual on his challenging
journey, while the thorns represent the common
ers choosing the easier path in life. Likewise,
a flower versus thorns could also refer to
paths of honesty, truth and hardwork, as opposed
to one beset with deceit.

In this contextualization, it's
crucial to note that there maybe strength
in numbers, which a thorn enjoys. But at
times, the radiance of a single flower can
overshadow the numerous thorns. Likewise,

very
good

Impactful

flowers and thorns need not exist
in a mutually exclusive relationship
and can embody the beauty of companionship.

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Thus, "envy" is a futile
emotion. It has often been regarded
as the "black sheep" of the family of
emotions. The genesis can be traced
to feelings of insecurity or lack of
confidence about one's current status of
being.

apt
analysis

Prima facie, why would a
majestic flower like rose ever have to
feel envious of the thorns, if the rose
were truly aware of its grandeur? Hence,
most feelings of envy and jealousy
arise when people feel that "the grass
on the other side is much greener".

But ^{stakeholders like} Rabindranath Tagore have explained in ~~his~~ works like Gitanjali ^{that} ~~someone~~ ^{someone else's} bounty might seem lucrative, but might not ~~be~~ ^{be} the right fit for ~~us~~ ^{someone else}. For instance, movie stars like Kajol, Anushka Sharma have often complained about lack of Privacy, which commoners enjoy. But would ~~anyone~~ ^{anyone} of them ever want to trade lives with the rest of 1.3 billion unknown Indians? ^{could have} ~~chosen a better~~ ^{example}

Hence, "envy" doesn't really serve any purpose, unless one can channelize it ^{positively} and work-hard to improve his status quo. This has been re-iterated by Gautama Buddha who said that negative emotions like envy, anger, revenge are like poison $\neq$ which kills us first.

This indicates that self-

good
awareness is the cardinal step in life, to rise above petty emotions like envy. ~~At~~ Such self awareness transforms perspectives, from one of "complaints" to that of opportunity.

A case in point is a discussion by Barack Obama, ~~trying~~ to convince his family that he wanted to run for re-election in 2012. Contrary to outward appearances,

choose
a
better
example
he explained, being the First Family of the US meant being under a constant microscope of media, which takes a toll on mental health. But the Family seized this opportunity to maximize the outreach of being "the flower", by visiting War Veterans, campaigning for healthcare for all, ~~and~~ raising funds for AIDS victims etcetera.

Thus being "single" was a flower is, isn't half bad, is it? A flower enjoys the centre of attention, it is powerful and influential. It has its other "flower-friends", with whom it can share its feelings. Above all, ~~it~~ a flower enjoys the strength, protection and support of the thorns too.

very good

History is a testament to such scenarios. Napoleon Bonaparte's popularity amongst the French citizens was commendable. So was the support received by Julius Caesar by the numerous Romans. However, this same popularity and confidence ^{of the thorns} which a flower enjoys needs to be strategically guided too.

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For instance, had it not been for Mark Anthony's emotive & persuasive

speech at Caesar's funeral, the
numerous Roman citizens would go on to
believe that Julius Caesar ^{against common} was a dictator
^{Romans} who deserved to ^{be assassinated} die. But Mark Anthony
led the masses to believe that Caesar was
a "true flower", a patriot.

But sometimes the strength
shown by "the thorns" is too much
to be ^{rightfully} ~~rightly~~ commanded by the flower.
This is so because at times, "quantity"
^{well said} overwhelms "quality". At times, this feeds
into a good cause like masses overthrowing
dictators like Mussolini and Gaddafi. But
at other times, it results in chaos and
bloodshed. Be it the Chauri-Chaura failure
in Gandhi's freedom struggle or the ongoing
Kuki-Meikhi crisis in Manipur.

A similar condemnation is faced by honest, upright and integrity filled citizens, who are treading the path of truth, where the "thorns" put up obstruction in form of political pressures, threats to life from goons etcetera. A case in point is how Mr. Satyendra Dubey, the whistle-blower in the Golden Quadrilateral issue, was murdered. P. Srinivas

But as Robert Kennedy had said, "Fear not the path of truth for the lack of people walking on it". The thorns might choose the easier option. Some might be deceitful. Majority might commit the even bigger crime of "being silent", as Plato had noted. Yet, those "flowers" who speak up bear courage to fight against

like Mr. Anna Hazare
adversity have the sense of prudence

to be "responsible for their actions" and

share credit for success with the numerous

thorns like Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Dr. Vikrami
Sarabhai; such flowers remain immortal
in our hearts.

Hence, despite the path
being arduous, beset with challenges
and thorns, a "flower" should keep feelings
of envy far away. The thorns ^{or challenges} can
often be the stepping stones to success. For
Einstein had said, "Failure is success in
transformation. Those who have never failed, haven't
succeeded much in life".

Likewise, if viewed in the
pragmatic perspective, support of the

Very
good

Thorns ensure the sustenance of the flower. In the literal sense, a thorn preserves the ~~fat~~ flower from harmful preys, but facilitates entry of honey bees and other insects, which ensures pollination.

apt
but
write

conclude

Likewise, metaphorically, the support and acceptance shown by multifarious ~~clouds~~ thorns "aka" "people" "the common man", ensures wide-scale spread of a novel idea or a novel work. To illustrate, initially the discovery of the IVF technology was disavowed by the scientific community. But its subsequent acceptance amongst the masses led its founders to win the Nobel Prize in Physiology. Thus, instead of being envious of the thorns, a flower should actually be grateful to the thorns.

In any case, it is not

good necessary for the flowers to exist in isolation, at all times. Strategic grouping amongst like-minded flowers ensures greater longevity of their sustenance and acts in their best interest. To illustrate, India aligns its national interest, with the eastern bloc via the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and with the West, via Quadrilateral or QUAD group.

good But the key takeaway is the kind of flower India perceives itself to be. As former Ambassador Shyam Saran writes in his book "How India sees the World", India views itself as one of the four petals of the lotus "Tambudweep".

Such a perception ensures an environment of leadership without

exclusivity and creates an environment for "shared growth and prosperity", both for other "flowers" and "thorns".

Hence, in conclusion, we see how an ideal situation warrants a good synergy between "a flower" and a "thorn", as opposed to viewing them as anti-thetical elements. What matters more

is how a "flower" views itself, which further moulds its perception of the surrounding thorns.

Uniquely enough, our life has its fair share of flowers or roses and surrounding thorns. Corollarily, at times we ~~too~~ ourselves play the role of a flower, as head of the family, an organization or country or simply by being in the limelight. At the same time, we are "thorns" when we perceive our situation from a global perspective. Thus, it all boils down to how our "Minds" process and perceive the roles we play and whether we look at life in "silos" or in "continuum".

Ans

Good Conclusion!