

THEY THINK THEREFORE I AM!

(By S. Jaikumar, Advocate)

"Knowledge is not that what you have, but what others think that you have!"

- **Anonymous**

True! And I myself could be a standing testimony! In a scale of ten, if my knowledge is to be rated in consultancy, I may miserably fail before the luminaries available in the field. But if I am to be rated as to how I have managed to make my clients think and believe that I am knowledgeable and deliverable, then I may marginally pass the test! This theory about knowledge will also equally apply to all other virtues and vices!

Though being a genius is dependent on your DNA the moot question is how to make others recognize that you are a genius? If you are Raja Ravi Varma or Beethoven, your classics would manifest your genius to this world! Or at least, if your father is a Big B or Dhirubhai, you may have the cake in a platter! But for an average template like me, who neither have any Godfather nor have any God as a father, what could be the way to reach the top? Should I pray for a miracle to happen, that someday, when I wake up from the bed, there shall be a celestial announcement and I become popular? With no lifts around, the only way to reach the top is to climb the staircase, maybe holding onto the hand rails!

All these days, I have garnered a criticism that, I market myself and my company, which is unbecoming of a professional, that too, on advocacy profession! May be my critics refer to my artificial celluloid laughter, in this celebrated Guest column! First, I have to admit that, I am yet to mature as a saint, to write in anonymity! Secondly, I have a strong feeling that, in any professional journey, the basic thumb rule is that, however genius you are, you should make people recognize that you are a genius! Otherwise your genius will go unnoticed and unrecognized. Today, be it any goods or any services, one has to package it in such a professional and presentable manner, to survive in the market! To me, today, even if it is an elixir, it has to be packaged in a presentable tetra pack or it will only be junked. There is also another school of thought who criticises that packaging is required only if there is no stuff and the best

ones would always survive without any such frills. I admit that, definitely, I don't belong to that cult.

Coming to criticism, I feel criticism is the spice of any performance and a performer should first learn to tolerate criticism. In fact, it is often said that the best tool to silence criticism is an improved performance! Coming to my tolerance to criticism, though acidic comments give me an alcoholic pep to lift my performance, it is not the case always! Many a times, scathing criticism creates a rush of adrenaline inside me and generates a vendetta against the critic. But, after a passage of time, I understand that it is absolutely silly on my part to have reacted so! After all, only fruit bearing trees will get stone hits!

Basically criticism is of two kinds. Constructive and Devilish. And I have experienced both. My dear friend Mr. Vijay Kumar had been my mentor, in many ways. Like many, his articles in ELT, had been my source of inspiration to write. More than that, he is a biting critic to my writing. In my earlier days, I have had the brunt of his scornful criticisms that, many a times, I used to feel not to write anymore! Once when I sent an article for his preview, thinking that it is my master piece, it came back with a scathing remark, "I could only see an intellectual constipation and an expressional diarrhea!" But, I have to confess that, those scornful thorns are the basic reasons, which has made me to complete around 200 published articles today, in all leading tax magazines of the country! Before writing every piece, I try to religiously remember his golden words, "Always write for the readers and not to exhibit show your language skills".

Coming to the other side of the coin, we had created two characters, namely, Mr. Evergreen and Mr. Nevergreen and we had written some conversational style articles using them. Sometime back, an irked departmental Inspector wrote a piece in ELT, wherein, he mocked our characters and tried to criticise us nastily. There was nothing but hatred present in his piece. Initially we wanted to counter attack but somehow left it as it was not worthy. Days later, a senior advocate ripped him and his article apart, in the Reader's forum, in such a manner that he will never ever lift his pen to write, for the rest of his life!

Likewise, many of our articles have had a mixed bag of criticism. When some hail it as *magnum opus*, some dismiss it as a trash. When we expect bouquets we get brickbats and *vice versa*. In my local vernacular, there is a popular maxim which goes, "*When you find a stone you don't find a dog; when you find a dog you don't find a stone*". This phrase has been thoroughly misunderstood and misinterpreted to mean that, when a person finds a dog in the street, he is not getting a stone to hit that dog and *vice versa*. But that is not the real message behind this maxim. Two persons, one a metallurgist and another sculptor saw a dog carved out in a stone. The metallurgist said, "*Arey, What a stone! It should have been sediment for millions of years*". Meanwhile, the sculptor who was astonished by the art praised, "*Oh! What a marvelous creation! The dog looks so real with its tail wagging!*" So, for the metallurgist, who saw the stone, the dog was not there and for the sculptor who saw the dog, the stone was not there! Same way, if someone sees me a knowledgeable person then my stupidity crescends before him and if someone sees me only as an idiot, all my genius (!) evaporates. **After all, as beauty is in the eyes, knowledge is in the minds of the beholder!**

Before Parting...

A young and a new director, chose to direct a movie based on a Bengali novel. On seeing the movie, the author of the novel got thoroughly irritated and lamented the director, "Stupid fellow! He has just killed my story". The author was Shri. Bibuthibhooshan Bandhopadhyaya. The stupid fellow was Mr. Satyajit Ray. The spoilt novel was "Pather Panchali" and the moral is, "*You can't satisfy everyone!*"