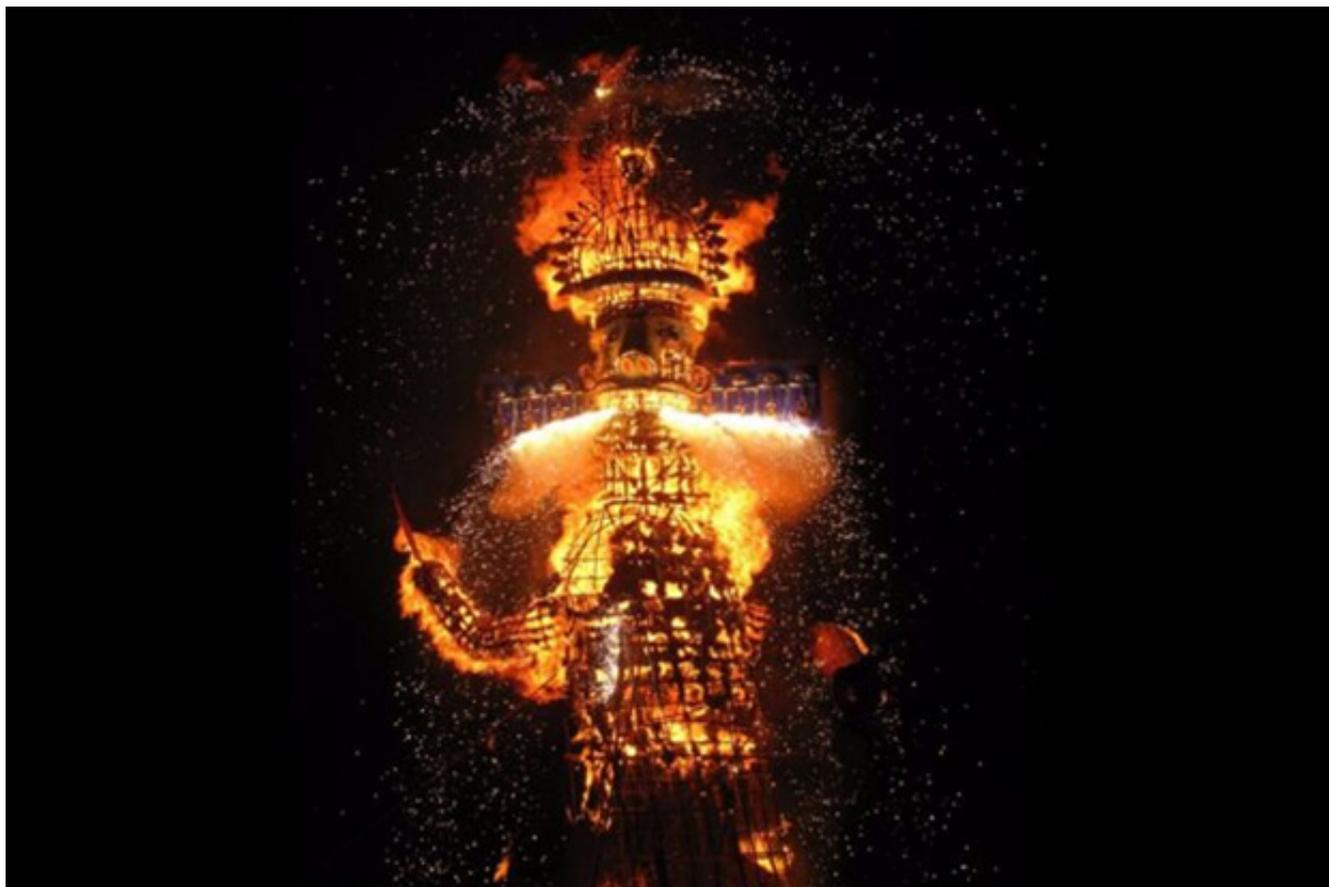

Ravna on "How The World Works"

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Navmi, Friday September 29 ,2017

10 pm

A thick voice boomed over the loudspeaker, some preacher was telling a story:-

Today we will learn what happened two days before the final war between Rama and Ravana. It was afternoon and Rama's army had already landed in Sri Lanka, in enemy's land. They were preparing for final showdown while camping on the sea shore.

Ravana had kidnapped Rama's wife few months back, and we all know Ravana refused to return her despite Rama's several requests for truce. Ravana was confident that he can defeat Rama's army which included warriors like Hanumana, Sugriva and Rama's own brother Lakshmana. Even Ravana's younger brother Vibhishana had joined Rama with few of his followers.

Rama wanted to do a yajna, a ritual in front of a sacred fire. We all do yajna on auspicious occasions, to say thanks to gods, to take blessings. Rama also wanted to thank Shiva, the supreme God for safely crossing the sea and to take blessings for forthcoming war.

Fire of a yajna is considered to be a messenger to gods. Whatever offerings are made to gods in yajna, it is assumed that fire will carry those to gods. And we all know that the mantras, the sacred verses need to be chanted, rituals need to be done in right way during yajna and for that

we invite learned brahmins.

But there's a problem, there's no learned brahmin in Rama's army. Except Ravana, there's no able Brahmin residing in Lanka also who has complete knowledge of yajna. Even Vibhishna, Ravana's brother who is by caste a brahmin but he does not know all the nitty gritty of this kind of yajna.

There's no other option in Lanka except Ravana. Vibhishna and Rama went into a huddle, trying to find a solution.

Ravana as a brahmin in yajna – it was a wild thought!

Two enemies, who had never met before, facing each other – Rama whose wife was taken away Ravana in disguise of a sage and Ravana, who always seethed in anger whenever he saw his sister whose ears and nose were severed by Rama's brother Lakshmana.

After a long deliberation, Rama's devotion to Shiva won over his animosity with Ravana. He was ready to face him before the war.

But then they thought about Ravana. They knew that probability was low-Ravana was an enemy, they had come to Lanka to defeat him, and this yajna was also being done for Rama's victory. But they also knew that Ravana was as devoted to Shiva as Rama, and it would be difficult to say no to a yajna dedicated to Shiva - they needed to take a chance. They decided to invite Ravana and Vibhishna agreed to become the messenger to convince his brother.

Scene 1, Ravana's royal court.

"My lord, Vibhishana is here with some message"

"Hmm, bring him in", Ravana said.

"My lord, I've come with an invitation from Rama", Vibhishana uttered in a very sheepish voice.

"Carry on"

"As you are aware Rama has crossed the sea and has entered in Lanka"

"Yeah I know it well"

"Before start of the war, he wants to establish a Shivaling tomorrow and wishes to pray for his win"

"Well, that is a great thought, how I can help him?"

Everyone in the royal hall was getting curious with every passing moment. It was a strange response to an equally strange request.

"My brother, we have a problem. We are not able to find a better Brahmin than you in Lanka who will know all the rituals"

"So you want me to act as a Priest for this yajna?"

There was a commotion in the hall. Whether Ravana will help his enemy in performing a yajna that may result in his own defeat.

"Yes my lord, who can be a better Brahmin than you and your devotion for Shiva is also well known"

"No need to flatter me. For Shiva, I can cross all limits and I know my duty as a brahmin. Go and tell your new lord, that I will be there"

As soon as Vibhishna left, there was an uproar in the council. How the king can be so stupid, helping an adversary in a ceremony that may change his fate. What if this was a conspiracy to catch Ravana when he visits the enemy's camp!

Ravana was calm but adamant

"I will go alone and will perform the Pooja, come what may. To serve Shiva and to perform my duties as a Brahmin, I'm ready face any danger", he said.

Scene 2, Rama's camp

Something unusual was happening.

Everyone in Rama's camp was in a kind of rush - calling those out who were still in their tent .No-one was ready to believe what they saw. They thought war was over before it began.

People thought Ravana had accepted the defeat.

Ravana was there, or it was some imposter, in simple clothes. Without his crown, without ornaments, without his emperor-dress!

Life was not easy, nor was it happy, but Ravana never expected life to be so easy or ever-happy.You need to compromise your ego sometimes if you really believe in certain principles.

Ravana had not come alone. He had Sita with him as a company!

This was like the time when you feel no-one is breathing, the hour of disbelief, a time when many fears are born and even a ray of hope looks like a mirage .Everything got transfixed, only the light moved.

For long the two enemies looked at one another, Ravana shuddering slightly, and Ram with a strange smile upon his face!

"Welcome priest, the biggest devotee of Shiva, the mightiest brahmin of this yuga. We all feel honored by your presence." saying this Rama touched Ravana's feet.The expression of wonder on his face was adorable.

Lakshmana stood still, not knowing what to say or do, shaking, taken aback. Hanuman, Sugriva could not believe their eyes. Everyone was left guessing –who was surrendering to whom!

There was silence - so freaking loud silence!

"My brother, I had only asked for you ! Why mother Sita is with you? "a bewildered Vibhishna asked.

Ravana just ignored the one who had ditched him in his hour of need-Vibhishna.

To him, he represented nothing more than an illustration of ingratitude, insolence, disloyalty, ill-will, and selfishness.

"Rama, I hope you know that no yajna is complete without a wife. Let her get ready and till then let me see if something is missing in the preparations "Ravana addressed Rama.

"I can't thank you enough, you're the most learned Brahmin on this planet, no-one can argue with you on dharma and its rituals"Rama could not say more.

Yajna was completed, Sita and Rama touched Ravana's feet.

"Vijayibhav, victory to you", said Ravana and started walking back towards his palace.

"Why don't we catch him and keep mother Sita with us? God Shiva has blessed us with a favorable opportunity" whispered Vibhishna in Rama's ears.

Rama looked at Vibhishna, always amused at the vulnerabilities of lesser souls.

" Ravana kept his dharma (duty) as a brahmin) & I need to keep my dharma of a Kshatriya. My dharma is to fight & if gods are on my side, I will win and Sita would be back with me" and with these words this he said good-bye to Sita.

Everyone is clapping, even I clapped. But no one would hear the sound of my clap, nor can anyone see me! I'm a soul, Ravana's soul, wandering around this world, looking for some answers.

Today is Navami, last night of Sharad Navratras, the nine holy nights. Also it was last night of Ram-lila - a dramatic re-enactment of the life of Rama.

Lila –a depiction of story of Lord Rama who went to forest for 14 years, along with his wife Sita and brother Lakshmana, to obey his father's promise to his step-mother. My sister tries to entice Lakshmana and her ears and nose are severed, I try to take revenge by kidnapping Rama's wife Sita. And in the end I'm killed by Rama's army. A short story but is presented over nine days.

Rama is a hero for this continuous nine- days-play and I'm projected as the biggest villain. I don't have complaint with this, I understand. Rama was a great man , or he was God, a God playing the role of a man, setting standards for others!

And who does not love heroes, and who does not need heroes !Every group, every organization and every society needs role-models, needs heroes. And it's not that just children need heroes in their fairy tales, but society as a whole needs to invent heroes and villains. A society needs to sell the values it requires others to follow, to market the behaviors it wants the commoners to exhibit.

A society needs heroes to give hope, to give hope to the people to sail through the tough times by constantly reminding them that even heroes had to endure rough weathers. And sometimes we need heroes to encourage others to sacrifice their rights, their lives, by denigrating the achievement for self and glorifying the sacrifice for larger society.

I knew what was coming next in the play, this leela about Rama –they will show my stubbornness, my egoistic attitude, my demon like behavior and my defeat. Half lies and half-truth – even the costumes of the actor playing my role would be black in color –projecting me an evil, a black-hearted monster.

Like I said, I don't have any problem with Rama being hero, my issue is with me being chosen as a villain? With so many murderers, rapists roaming around, freely! Well, let me not lose my sleep over this!

Currently my issue is with this loud loudspeaker, it's not letting me rest, and not letting me contemplate in silence.

Loudspeaker is really an ingenious device – binding thousands ears to a single mouth-mesmerizing them by invented truths, trying to change their opinions by booming one –sided facts .The facts, those would be repeated again and again by many newspapers, TV channels and radio .People will get impression that they have access to infinite data ,endless opinions. A common man will never discover that reality is just the other way round, the speakers everywhere are just amplifying the prevalent opinion, either by conviction or under coercion. I understood this game very well, I've been a hero myself, I was a hero for my people in my kingdom. I knew how to sell what you want to sell, I know a lie becomes truth if it is repeated time and again, commoners are so gullible.

Anyway I lost this game.

One mistake and I've become the biggest villain of the civilization, at least in this part of the world. Well that's other story.

Currently I'm getting exhausted and numbed by the constant noise of this loudspeaker. I need to go to some temple at the outskirts of the town ,faraway from noise of these loud-speakers ,where I can sleep.

Yeah a temple, temple and cremation-grounds are the most peaceful places during night, no one visits them and everyone is welcome there – a saint or a sinner, rich or poor ,dead or alive-these places are great levelers- doors are open for everyone , no questions asked.

Hopefully I will sleep in peace. I need to wake up early, every morning my companion, my eternal companion becomes visible to me. She comes every day, coming since last many

centuries, stays with me from dawn to dusk.

She is my soulmate, a soul's soulmate! People think that a soulmate is someone who's a perfect fit for them. But it is not true. A true soul mate is like a mirror, it shows you what you really are, no pretensions. A soul's soulmate! Sounds funny! Isn't it?

Oh, you may wonder who she is! Who can accompany a villain in this society in broad daylight! Well, I hate suspense- neither have I liked the people who keep it nor I like to keep any. My eternal soulmate is my shadow. You may wonder how dead can have shadows!

Think again, you're wrong! Everything has a shadow-clouds, stones, mountains, everything around us! Sun is not biased, it treats everyone equally. Sends its rays to accompany everything, everyone. It does not want anyone to feel lonely.

Sun cares, it doesn't take chances! Many a days, you may have no-one else and you need company, nothing is better than a shadow!

Shadow- an accomplice when you err, a partner when you win ,and invisible when you plunge in dark .A shadow never asks anything, never complains, never puts conditions, at least I think she can be the best buddy for everyone. Sun cares!

I've named it Chhaya and it seems to love her name although she has never said anything about it.

Oh, I can see a temple here. With a statue of Eklavya on the top of the gate. It seems it belongs to some tribal community staying outside the town. I'm too tired to write further. Let me rest for sometime.

Dashami, Saturday, September 30 , 2017

10 am

The clouds make me crave for the Sun. Chhaya loves brilliantly clear days, with no clouds in sight.

With Chhaya hiding, I will be lonely for some more time. I love Chhaya and our never-ending debates – about life and its contradictions. Both of us enjoy our roles – a soul of a dead man and a shadow –nothing to do, no responsibility, nothing to be happy and nothing to worry about. Sometimes I wonder, why I was not sent back to earth in the form of a human or some animal to complete my life-cycle. The other option was to keep me either in hell or heaven!

But all gods are confused till date. The god for keeping records of humans' actions on earth, Chitragupta, went through my books several times. Unable to judge himself, he referred my case to Brahma, the final authority. Chitragupta can decide himself to send someone to hell, heaven or earth. Yes , few of the dead are also sent back to earth , to give them extra chances to improve their resume for entry in the heaven .

They said my case was special, with no precedent. Several factors made me eligible for heaven. A savior of life and pride of my own tribe, an avid reader, an ardent devotee of Shiva, a lover of science and an able administrator etc., list of my good works was lengthy one.

Bad deeds were insignificant as compared to substantial amount of good work. But the problem in my case was that my image in this part of Indus valley was dented, I was branded as a villain even before my death.

I think this image played in the minds of Chitragupta and Brahma. Sending someone to heaven, with an anti-hero image, may set a wrong precedent. They did not want to make a wrong role-model out of me .

But the quantity of good deeds was working in my favor, it was not a black & white case. To weaken my case, they shifted the focus of debate to few of my bad deeds!

They could not justify based on quantity of good vs bad deeds, they changed the whole narrative towards quality of deeds !

Quality of bad deeds? Sounds absurd?

Anyway unable to reach at a conclusion, my case was kept in suspension and I was sent to earth to introspect, to gauge the hate against me and me being projected as a role-model for behaviors not to be followed .

Today I plan to spend some time in this temple only, I will to the town in the evening where they will burn my effigies, it has become an annual ritual for me.

It was not the same 200 years back. But now they have made it in a big festival and it also has a name , Vijaya Dashmi . The name has a tag-line too , victory of righteousness over evil so that non-one misses the message. And I am the evil of this tag-line! Evil-the adjective may sound hurting if someone is alive but to me, it does not matter.

I've lot of time to kill there's no-one here to talk, let's see if the clouds go away and Chhaya comes back!

Let me see if I can find something to read. I had read all the Vedas and most of the Upanishads when I was born as Ravana, it is not because I was a brahmin, most of the brahmins don't read they just follow rituals without understanding. I read all those books because I love reading and those were the only books available at that time.

Oh, I can see some books here. Here's one on Eklavya. Hope you know about him. A tribal boy who wanted to become an archer, went to best of the Gurus for coaching but was refused as all the Gurus of those days would only teach upper castes.

Someone had misled him to believe that one can't learn without a Guru .When he failed to convince a real guru, he made a statue of a famous guru of his time and started practicing in front of it. Eklavya was passionate and became master of the art in no time. But one day, that Guru found him and was amazed by his archery skills.

But more than being amazed, Guru got worried !

This tribal boy could beat all the kings and warriors and some of his own disciples. He asked Ekalavya for his gurudakshina (the gift that a guru receives from his pupil). Ekalavya was prepared to give anything.

It seems that this book is about him. Let me open it at some random page. These days I don't judge the books by cover. The covers can be misleading, so I always try to peep inside.

"Eklavya, give me the thumb of your right hand"

For a moment you stood silent. Without your thumb you could never shoot arrows again. Then, without the slightest hesitation, you drew out your knife and cut your thumb!

Every moment is the paradox of now or never, and that very moment history changed.

If you had refused as your Guru had refused when you went to him for learning, when you begged to become his disciple.

Alas! You got trapped in his devious designs.

You were not one of them, they never treated you one among them.

You were not bound by the rules of their societies,you were not under any obligation to pay guru-dakshina to a guru who had slammed door of his on your face.

If on that day you would have kept your thumb, history would have happened somewhat differently.

There are certain moments upon which the whole of the future course of one's life might turn,

world may change.

The moments that leave one with no time to consider or engage in a reasoned debate with oneself.

Eklavya for your integrity and humility of that moment cost us dearly. We, the local tribes, the outcastes, are paying the price till now. You could have emerged as the greatest warrior of your times, you could have become a king and the tribal and outcastes would have gained a different status.

Think about it, Eklavya! Your one mistake in the heat of the moment !

One has to make a split second decision, and sometime much depends upon a moment.

Perhaps everything!

Wow! Eklavya's story is similar to mine on many aspects. He was a tribal boy, me too. He made one blunder and I also made one mistake in my life. And we both have paid hugely for that one mistake , a mistake done under highly emotional moments!

Oh, but you don't know my real story! You may have seen it on TV or in Ramlila or you may have read a book named Ramayna. But my full story is not told anywhere. I don't blame anyone, who would like to write an epic about a villain and who would read it? The world runs on money, no writer will put efforts and would take pains for something that does not help him to make some profit.

Anyway most of you come to know about my character when my sister is mistreated by Lakshmana and in revenge, I kidnap Rama's wife Sita. In the end, I'm killed along with my family except one of my brother Vibhishna, who switched sides before the war. But there was more to it- my childhood, my youth, my struggle, and many more things.

Well, my mother was the daughter of a local tribal lord, living somewhere deep in forests near the sea. There came a time, when our forests were taken over by some foreigners. They were fairer in color, had better weapons and different way of living. They called themselves suras, some type of gods and because tribal people were not like them, they named them asuras. Everything was fine between suras and asuras till the time suras didn't disturb original inhabitants of the forest i.e. asuras.

Then it started, suras started destroying the things asuras worshipped. They started uprooting the trees to make their homes, started mining our revered earth in search of iron and other minerals to make their weapons. This disturbed asuras elders, asuras had lived in the forest for generations and treated it as their home. Destruction of forest by foreigners was considered to be an attack on their home.

They knew that they could not stand to fight against suras with their old peers and arrows. A guerrilla –war started, a kind of hit & run warfare . Tribals, oops asuras knew the jungle well, and they used it to their advantage. Suras were not losing, but they had to deploy lot of resources to keep the tribals in check and at the same time it was great distractor for them, a diverter from their other ambitious plans.

A peace proposal was sent to asuras, Vishrava, the brahmin king of suras would marry one of the daughters of tribal-lord. The offer was genuine, suras wanted to asuras to leave their nomadic life and wanted them to become part of more advanced society.

And that's how I was born. My mother, a daughter of tribal-lord got married to a brahmin king, Vishrava. So I'm half brahmin and half asura due to my DNA. Things settled down well for

some time.

They say, nature has its own plans. My father, Vishrava had an earlier marriage also and I had an elder half-brother named Kubera. He never liked asuras, as per him we were outcasts, not worthy to be treated equal to suras. Everything was under control till the time my father was king. My father was old and wanted to spend his rest of life as an ascetic in the forest. He gave up his kingdom in favor of the eldest son, Kubera.

Kubera kicked us out of the palace. I was just 10 years of age, had to move to forest along with my mother and my younger siblings. And it was only us who suffered, Kubera's reign of terror went further. Asuras were thrown out of town, and king's army started hunting them in the forest too.

We lived in dire poverty. We grew up poor, obscure, plain. And one of the things that I hated was poverty. Some people hate cockroaches. Some people hate lizards. But I hated poverty, I couldn't stand it.

My mother was a wise lady. She asked us to go an old teacher. She wanted us to understand the importance of developing our mind, building a character, learning some leadership skills. She had seen suras way of life and how they put so much weight on these things.

We hated our teacher, we hated spending time with books. Our friends were always playing, they will make fun of us. We made several pleas, cribbed about wastage of time. But our mother won't listen

My brother was too lazy and sister was always busy in finding ways to look good but after some period I started enjoying all the learning. I began to see that what happens to you in life, only you're responsible for that. You make choices. You decide how much effort you want to put behind that choice. I began to see that I can control my life. And I came to understand that I had control of my own destiny. And I stopped hating poverty, I knew it was temporary and if I made right choices, I would come out of it. And I also began to see that I can help asuras, our problems were momentary.

I started taking interest in our community matters. All of my knowledge helped me, I could see that my voice was being heard and respected by others. It further fueled the fire with-in me to learn more. People started coming to me take advice, and I became a role-model for their children. As the time passed, people started treating me as their leader.

Suras were busy expanding their empire. We had no choice but to live in hiding and to keep low. All of us had an anger simmering with in us, we were kicked out of our own homes, and we felt cheated because of violation of peace-treaty. We wanted back our land, we wanted our forests back.

Some of the suras also joined us, the suras who were banished from Kubera's kingdom for one or other charge. They taught us about the modern warfare and making new kind of weapons. They had the techniques and we had passion, passion to take revenge.

It took us twenty years to gather our forces and attack Kubera forces. They were taken by surprise as Kubera had written us off. It's difficult to face a sudden attack, difficult to face an army that is fighting for honor, with soldiers who have grown up dreaming vengeance whole of their life.

We won and I was crowned as an emperor of Lanka. On that very night, my mother died, it was like she was born to see that asuras get their due. She was very happy for me but too much concerned about my ever sleepy brother and spoilt sister. That night I had promised myself that I would leave no stone unturned to keep them safe and happy. That would be my gift to my mother, who had not only given birth to me, but gave it a new life.

Again my learning of childhood helped me. I tried to establish a rule where everyone was

treated as equal- sura or asura. I tried to create a land of equal opportunities for everyone. I didn't want repetition of what had happened with Kubera. Kubera had his positives also. He was a finance wizard, state coffers were always full during his reign. And he was passionate about science, had developed a prototype first flying machine. I wanted to continue with his good practices and efforts.

Oops, it is 7:00 pm already and I'm busy writing these memoirs. I'd to go to my effigy-burning ritual. I enjoy that, more than a ritual it is like a festival. Everyone enjoying the crackers-show that are put in my effigy, Ravana having ten heads, two very big protruding teeth! Showing me as a demon!

Do I've a problem with that? Oh no, losers can't complain and I was the won lost the war with Rama, this is the price I would keep paying for one big blunder committed during heat of the moment!

Anyway I'm in no mood to write further today. Need some fresh air, need to go for a stroll.

Sunday, October 1st , 2017

Chhaya:" Hey Ravan , it's 10 am .Time to wake-up!

Oops it's a sunny day , Chhaya, my shadow is back. Yesterday night I had slept in open ,it was not so cold. Weather has changed a lot since my time centuries back, people talk a lot about global warming these days.

"Hi", I said ,still feeling sleepy.

"So was the festival yesterday? You enjoyed you being celebrated so much!" she was joking or taunting, I could not make out. Shadows don't have faces.

"Oh I could not go, but I'm sure it was as usual, statue of me with ten faces and two protruding teeth . I fail to understand why they need to make me this shape?'

"Ha, ha! They project you as a villain, a demon .And a demon needs to look scary".

"Do you mean a person with good looks can't be bad?'

"This is how the world is, people having good looks are trusted more."

"But that is not true. Looks have nothing to do with the character of a person" I knew we all know this but given a choice, we tend to prefer a person who is comparatively better looking.

"You're right. Looks can deceiving, people say that but their brains are more biased towards fair & tall people"

"You mean that tall and fair people have advantage over others"

"Yeah, if everything else is same, a fair and tall person would win over other"

"But that is so irrational"

"Who said, this world is not rational, my friend!"

"So they make these extra heads, extra long teeth to make me look vulgar, hate worthy?"

"Yeah, they won't make you a look-alike of Sharukh Khan, then no-one will believe that you were as bad as they want to project!"

"Well, that makes sense. And I think that it is due same reason they dress me in black" I had concede that Chhaya had a point.

"You're smart" Chhaya tried to make me happy.

"Oh, I'm not. Who wants to be known as a villain?"

"Oh it happens, sometimes we can't control destiny."

"But I made just one mistake, abducting Sita! That too because Lakshmana had cut ears and nose of my sister"

"Rome was not built in a day ,but Hiroshima and Nagasaki were destroyed in one hour"

"What do you mean by that?"

“It takes a long time to build a reputation but it is so fragile, it can go in few minutes”

“That way Rama also had his share of faults, but he is a hero”

“Are you referring to Rama sending Sita to forests when someone in his kingdom questioned her sanctity?”

“Oh, there were many! He killed Bali, brother of his commander Sugriva by hiding in the bushes. If he was so strong why he didn't fight with him face to face? Yes I understand, he wanted friendship with Sugriva to defeat me and that's why to make him king, he killed Bali but that was not a fair way to fight”.

“That can be justified, what else?”

“And why they severed ears and nose of my sister? It is equivalent to molesting a woman!?” I know how angry I was when I had heard that news. We were asuras, so called outcasts for suras but still we treated the women at par with men. That's what led me to kidnap Sita in that anger.

“Mistreating your sister can also be justified, some say she intentionally provoked two brothers to misbehave with her so that you become angry and get in war with them”.

“Oh, this is something new to me, why she would do that?”

“Remember you got your sister's husband killed?”

“Yeah her husband was a bad man, he was drunkard, would always mistreat her”

“But she loved her husband. People say that to take revenge from you she orchestrated this war where you got killed”

“Oh, it is not true. I think people made this story to rationalize Rama's act. Anyway even if it is true, even if she was trying to provoke Rama and Lakshmana, they could have restricted themselves, they called themselves men of virtue!”

“Come on Ravana! Everything about them would be justified”

“But why not about me, why my act of abduction of Sita can't be justified. I didn't do it for no reason. I was an emperor, my sister was mistreated, I wanted to give an exemplary punishment to violators. If I'd have kept quiet, people would have laughed at me and I would have lost my moral authority of ruling them”.

“Ravana, this world is an illusion. People live in the world of perceptions. Impressions and images are made and destroyed not on the basis of reality but on the basis of how people perceive things”.

“You're saying it doesn't matter whether you're good or bad”.

“It matters if the someone is extremely good or extremely bad, but border-line cases are most vulnerable”.

“So mine and Lord Rama cases are borderline cases” I wondered whether Chhaya was trying to be considerate towards me.

“Let's play a game”

“What kind of game?”

Something was happening, Chhaya, my shadow was trembling whereas I had not moved an inch. It is my shadow, it should move as per my movement. It is something I've never seen. Oh, now it has become stable. May be she was stable, may be my old eyes were having some vision related issues. Oops she was writing something on the ground.

“Suppose you've to choose your successor and there are two candidates. I've written the names of two people with their qualities, which one you will choose” Saying this Chhaya revealed two names on the ground.

Kirti : Conspirator, Gambler, Warrior, Leader, Strategist

Minit: Strategist, Leader, Warrior, Gambler, Conspirator

“I will choose Minit, it is so easy choice”

“But why”

“Because Kirti is a conspirator and gambler”

“Same is true with Minit also”

“But Minit is a strategist also and warrior too. Yes he is gambler also .Sometimes he may need to take risk, a good strategist and warrior has to gamble sometimes”

“ That’s what happen in real life”

“What”

“How we come to know about a person’s qualities, the sequence!

“If we first come to know the negative traits first , we tend to reject positive characteristics of that person if we come to know about them later. We simply can’t delete their first impressions from our brain”

“Oh, and if we come to know about positive traits of a person first and if we start liking them ,we will justify their negative traits also”

“I told you you’re smart” Chhaya said trembling, Something was going on with Chhaya, she could feel it , she didn’t have any human senses.

“So what words you think come first to people mind when they think of you?”

“May be a kidnapper!”

“And what about Rama?’

“An obedient son”

“That’s how the sequence got established, you as a kidnapper, demon, egoist, learned, warrior “

“And Rama sequence is like obedient-son, benign- king, tragic-hero, not-so-good to wife etc etc .So people get carried away by positive traits and they either don’t care about negative things or they find a way to justify them! Interesting”

“Now you know, other thing about Rama was tragedy , a prince who had to go exile , a prince whose wife was abducted by a demon. Great heroes stories need tragedy, adventure and winning over adversary with limited resources or half their greatness goes unnoticed. It is all a part of a great fairy tale, all these things make it believable” Chhaya voice was fading and coming back. Think some clouds were floating in front of the sun.

“But I also had a tragic past, I was also a prince who was kicked out of my home, lived in forest in poverty, gathered an army and defeated a strong emperor “

“But no one knows that “

“But we know it is true”

“But we also know that you lost the war, there was no-one left to write a story about you”

“So winners decide the history”

Who was it? Have I seen him before? The chariot had landed in the courtyard of temple. Sky became cloudy, dark or rainy, I could not make out.

I could see Chitragupta coming towards me, with few bright and beautiful spirits accompanying him who danced and scattered flowers, I could inhale their smell. There were few musicians too, playing some heavenly music.

“Your time is over here” unseen lips said, “Your soul is now above hate and love, above fear and greed, above ego or pride. Your place is in heaven, you don’t need to be in this land where people judge you with their limited abilities, and you need to come out of this world of illusion”.

I don’t know where I was, I don’t know when it happened , I don’t remember whether I visited earth or not, I don’t even know whether it was my dream or someone else’s dream, there was no shadow, there was no Ravana , there was no me.

Thoughts are the shadows of our feelings, but whose feelings and whose thoughts. We all are living on a tiny dot called earth on this planet, on a particle of dust, ending up in dust and

coming back again, in an endless cycle, who cares!

May be everything is a dream, an illusion -you, me, hell, heaven, gods, demons –leaving an echo of our words behind.

Pran Arora