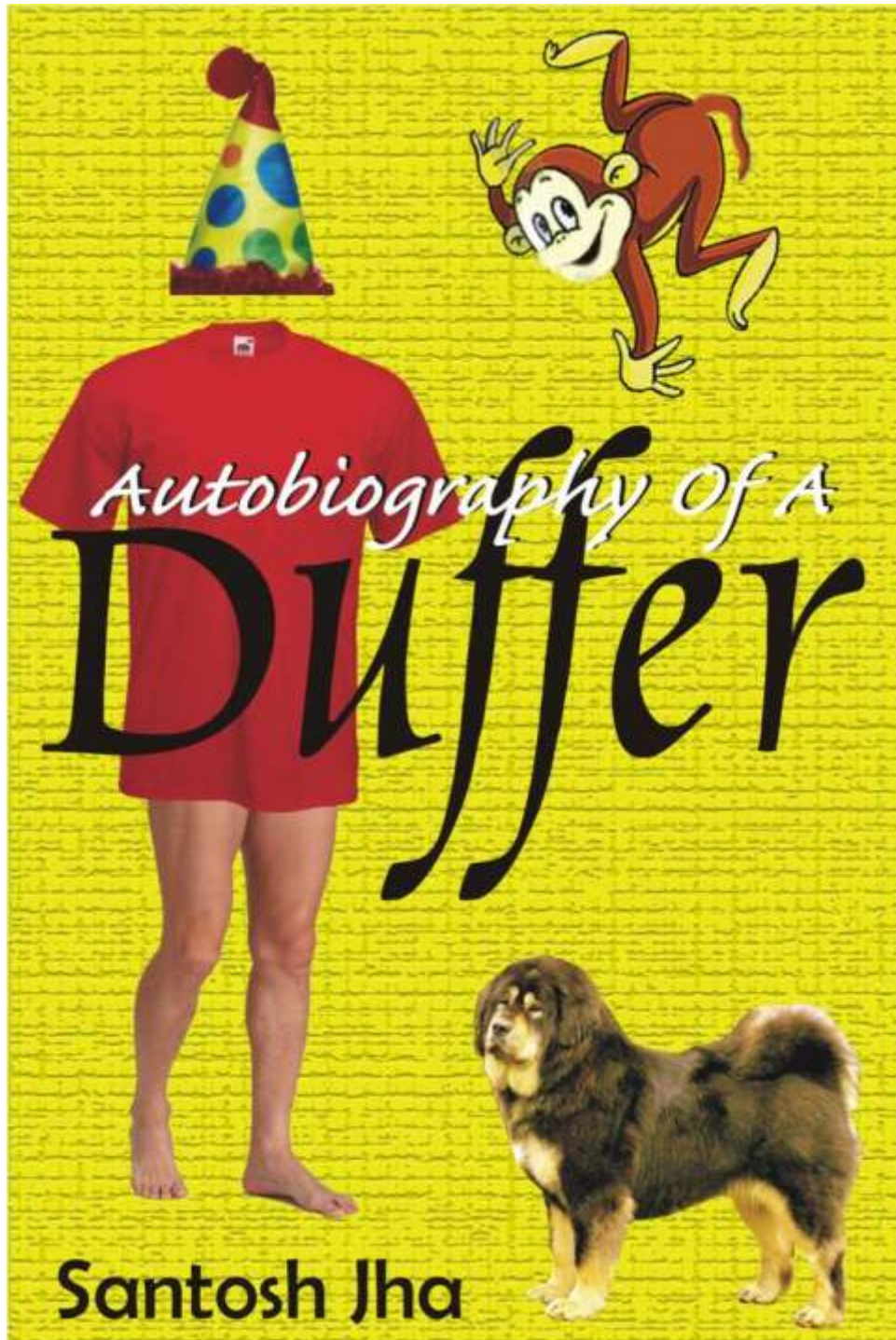


# Autobiography Of A Duffer

By Santosh Jha

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**I**

Honestly, I do not understand how to make a start. Actually, I do not even know, whether this can be said for a start. Unashamedly I can say that I am not sure, nor do I care whether this honesty is what I can pull off as okay and does not matter sorts. The simple thing; as I think I can put it this way is; I have to say things.

What I have to say? How stupid! People cannot even ask their questions in the right order. The first thing should always be first. Why people should listen to me comes first; then only the

questions like why I have to say and why I can say, etc come. What I have to say is basically the last thing in the queue, given that I want to say because I also wish to be listened.

You know, my parents think I cannot even think, let alone think it right. But I tell you; and there is no harm in believing something without questioning; I can think right. That is why I asked myself the first thing first. Actually, to be honest, I asked this to my wife. You know what she said? First, you promise me that you will not laugh. It is bad manners to laugh at a woman, especially when she is not your wife but someone else's. She said, rather, she asked me whether I knew why teams played sports against each other. She said, they did it not to win but to make others lose. People also listen to or read what others have to say not to learn from their experiences but for enjoying their pains from their bad experiences. Sadism is the best joy; she says, not I.

Actually, she may not be completely wrong, even if I discount the fact that she hates sports. I once read a best-paid soccer star saying it about one of his favorite goals. He said he enjoyed it more than sex with his girlfriend. How could he? Can kicking a stupid ball in a wide net be a joy more intense and satisfying than sex, that too with your beloved?

It looks so. I mean, how they throw themselves into wild exhilaration and boisterous celebrations after a goal! I never get such a huge kick in sex to behave uprooted like that. I admit; I am shocked. How demeaning men can be in relating such a divine experience as body intimacies with a sadistic joy of making your opponent one down. I would have understood and even appreciated if someone would say a goal is like a rape, forcing your way to leave someone devastated. How stupid! People cannot even choose their words the right way. On the other hand, do they do sex the wrong way? How can I say, I am not an expert of soccer or sex. I am just a duffer!

You know, I have read that people need to be honest when they write their biographies so I will also be. Honestly, I think my wife may be right this time. Not because she is far more educated than me or because she has read more books than many around me. I admit her sense of righteousness because she is a very smart and contemporary woman and I know, women today know much better about all possible stupidities of this world as they actually face the multidimensional stupidities of people and society. Mt wife has a brilliant sixth sense of sniffing

anything, which may cause her trouble in a decade from now. I usually trust her discretion. I have to, in this case as, I am writing my memoirs only because she thinks I can pull it off well.

I have reason to believe, she is right. Have you been to a crematorium or a graveyard ever? I have been there once. I can tell you; as I have resolved to be very honest; you feel immense satisfaction that death happened not to you but to the close person whom you have brought there. I am talking about satisfaction, not joy. Joy is for conscious self, more surface level. However, satisfaction is very subtle and is in sub-conscious mind. That is why it is not registered easily.

This satisfaction; you can call it joy; after all the common perception of satisfaction is the amount of joy you get in life; is similar to what you get when you peep into the lives of your neighbor and feel good that they are indulging in such foolishness that you would never do.

No...no, please; tell me, why do you all watch the stupid daily soaps on your favorite television channel or the cacophonous reality shows? Ha...ha...gotcha! You all enjoy that the characters in the television serials do those stupidities and horrendous idiosyncrasies that you would never ever do. Taking judgments on other's stupidities is one huge sadistic joy! It is altogether different matter that you all actually repeat the similar stupidities. Your subconscious mind is actually far more stupid than you are. However, the genius of conscious mind is a master of the craft of procrastinating this simple reality. Sorry, why should I say this? If you feel, you can present your truths when you write your own biography. This is mine and I should stick to my honesty only.

Anyway, what I was telling you is that it can be true that people get immense joy in knowing what wrongs and foolishness others have done in their lives so that they could not repeat it and that is why they read what others have to say. Actually, there is no harm in admitting that people usually have a feel good factor, when they read in books about characters and protagonists going through all sorts of silly and manageable conflicts in brilliantly insurmountable ways, to have the pleasant assurance that they are not the only stupid in the world. It is such a relief to know that it is actually okay to be a stupid in this large world. Whether they learn from it, I am not sure. However, I do not think this alone can be a reason why people read others.

Okay, I love my wife but this does not mean I should accept whatever she says and never allow other perspectives. In fact, I have never really understood how people read such bulky books of hundreds of pages. I always feel and I have actually seen it; people have so much trouble in their

lives, they have so little time for even themselves and above all, they otherwise look so unconcerned about anything but self. Why then they read books. My Mom always has a thick novel in her bag and she buys so many of them. Even her ipad has over 50 ebooks, she buys from online stores; but I wonder she has the time to flip even five pages. It is altogether different matter that whenever she buys a new title, she updates her status at Goodreads and Facebook that she is reading it. However, this cannot be the basis of my conclusion. I only know my mom well; cannot say about so many others, who buy books. I surely needed an answer before I could write my biography.

I must say I am not very inclined to do what I am doing. I am just 23 years old and all I can garner, as my achievement in life is my class 12 exam, which I passed against the wildest expectation of my family and friends. Yes, my life has been full of unimaginable stupidities but I cannot accept my wife's suggestion that people would be interested in knowing about them and will derive the sadistic pleasure that they were not as duffer as me.

I have my truths; I have my life experiences and my revelations, which my stupidities and that of others' bestowed on me have made possible. However, I am not confident people will even accept them. Acceptance is not the contemporary intellectualism; I have seen it all through my life. In Twitter and Facebook, everyone is out to prove other wrong. Rejecting and rubbishing innocence has come to be recognized as highest intellectual pursuit and the social networking sites are the best place to see it happen at its worst. Even on television, anyone can see how every panelist pounces upon the simplest of assertions of others. If you are an intellectual, the first thing you must do is say, 'I beg to differ' even when you do not actually know why and what you differ.

My wife has told me, 'why would anyone listen to you if you are not different' and she seems to be right as being different has become the core creed of intellectualism. But then, the question is, why anyone shall be interested in my stupidities? There are already so many around! Actually, all human stupidities and idiocy are primeval and all pervasive. I am not saying this; the whole world around me is out to prove that there are so many stupid politicians, bureaucrats and silly middle class around, who are making life hell for others. And, as aping is first instinct of humanity, everyone feels so happily inclined in adding loads of repeat value to these

foolishnesses, which they decipher in others. Why should anyone be interested in my own, when mine are definitively anything but different?

You know, confidence is not always a winner; not even an asset if you do not have the obduracy of arrogance to put your foot down and say, 'yes, I will, come what may'. I have had answers to many questions in my life. At times, I was even confident I should go with my own answers even if it meant trouble for me but I was never allowed. Actually, to be precisely honest, I never had the courage of arrogance.

That is why; I finally accepted others' answers as the right one for me. I think, I have the answer for this question also, as why people read books. I am 23 now and I have seen enough in my life. I have realized that people have problems only with people. They do not have problems with aliens, devils, ghosts and zombies. They love to know about them, read books a lot about them and delectably watch movies made on them. They do not have problems with dogs or even cats; rather people love them more than fellow humans. I have seen all this in Animal Planet television channel. It is what you can call intra-species rivalry. A tiger cannot tolerate another tiger in his territory, even his own mother or siblings. It can however tolerate and accept hyenas and leopards around. Humans are similar. They cannot tolerate another human if he or she happens to be outside their symbiotic beneficiality.

My dad never had time for my dear grandpa. He did not like him; I know that. However, now when my grandpa is dead, he has got a huge portrait made of grandpa and often quotes his words as ultimate wisdom. He religiously changes the rose garland on his portrait every Sunday. Books are also non-competitive like a dead man. It is like a portrait of a dead reality, which nobody has problem in accepting and even garlanding.

Dead persons cannot speak back and are amenable to any interpretation like a book. A book is a non-animated utility, in the probabilistic domain of potential wisdom, like my dear grandpa and his personality. Moreover, books do not beg to differ. However, it is my view. This however is available for selective aping.

My wife however, dutifully says, 'I beg to differ'. She insists I should accept her viewpoint that people would read my biography, as they would enjoy my stupidity and relish the ultimate joy of

life, the sadistic pleasure. I have accepted her answer. I told you, I do not have the courage of obduracy of arrogance to stick to my ephemeral confidence.

My grandpa, whom I loved the most, had once told me, 'don't get stuck to a question and move ahead. If you do not find the right answer, it does not mean there isn't any. It does not seem coming to you right then, may be because, you are not ready for it. It shall come, when you are set to receive it.' I accept what he said. I must move ahead.

You see, honesty is no static virtue. People my generation should not accept it as a talent. Rather, it should be treated as a smart craft. It is something like being unapologetic about others' fallibility and sound concerned. People anyway are honest only about others. It comes easy and what essentially comes easy is what humanity accepts as 'pragmatic intelligence' and what stands as tough and difficult, is labeled with due respect as 'virtue'. Pragmatism always comes handy to us and that is why, it is a pragmatist's call to be practical about virtues in life.

My dad is very knowledgeable. He has taught me many smart ideas like these. He says, honesty is useless without faith, it is futility's ultimate utility and faith is a loser's last consolation. It is such a waste for those who want to win. He makes me believe that winning in every possible ways is what an individual should do because, it is the only thing he or she can do. When success is in your side, it is for others to decipher and assign virtues or vices to it. If you do not do what is your part of life, others shall never do their part and this way, you are out of the picture and focus of society. And, nothing has any worth if it is not weighed up well and enough in societal marketplace. I need to believe him as my dad is hugely successful man and has hordes of people, who both love and hate him for what he is.

You know, dads are strange. I think I can say that dads are the avoidable link between a grandfather and a grandson. They actually spoil the legacy of a grandpa. Even the law says grandpa's legacy goes straight to grandson and not to the son. Dads always whine that their dads never cared to respect their point of view in life but when it comes to their own sons, they love to do similar mistakes. That is exactly why I said, aping is first instinct of humanity, and everyone feels so happily inclined in adding loads of repeat value to predecessor's foolishnesses.

I must tell you, I am 23 now and it is not necessary to accept all what dad says. Still, I am not relying on my honesty when I am writing my biography. My grandpa had said, 'honesty is not

public virtue, it's your soul and you don't wear your soul on your sleeves'. I must say, I am always more inclined to having my grandpa's legacy directly, instead of it coming via his son.

I admit, there is no need to feel great about being honest. Nevertheless, you at times need it for very practical reason that there are truths and people should know them as they are. I do not feel the need to sound virtuous when I tell you that I have been labeled retarded and ridiculed by all, including my parents for being a duffer and a laggard since I was born.

However, I can tell you that it needs a lot of courage to admit that you are a retarded guy. A handicap is an honesty you do not love to wear on your sleeves. However, I do not claim virtuosity for my courage. Essentially, a retarded has claims only to his fallibilities. And I truly believe my fallibilities are my assets. And I am not saying this with a sense of virtuosity. It is a simple thing like the ambient air.

My fallibilities are my assets, not because this is only what I have. Not because they occasionally retrieve compassion from others for me, especially from those I love. Not because it makes me compassionate, about others who do wrong against me. Not because my stupidities make others and me learn. Not because they are best means of what, my wife calls sadistic joys. Not because they protect me from many undue performance pressures that the normal people are overburdened with.

Assets they are because, my fallibilities have led me to the discovery of the most precious treasure of our mortal life – the sense of humor. You become a humble owner of this treasure only when you have the courage, the courage of innocence to laugh at yourself. I am 23 now and I can tell you it is not easy. You have to be absolutely honest about and with yourself, your own fallibilities and stupidities and above all, your mortality. It is surely not easy for normal people, who are culturally trained to accept only winning as a self-worth utility.

You have to constantly and emphatically tell your highly inflated self and ego that look; you are nothing, a poor mortal thing, full of fallibilities, a non-entity, just a second away from being a nobody and a definite past, at any stage of your life. It is a very painful process before you can actually understand and acquire this treasure of humor. You need to have the innocence to accept and ingrain the consciousness of mortality. With mortality comes humility and it opens the door



for humor. I have chased death multiple times, till the last door and there stood my humility. I came back to life with the treasure of humor.

A smile, a hearty laugh is priceless, if you can give it to others. Even God cannot make you smile. He rather makes you cry. He took my grandpa away. God's faith can give you the strength to get out of your pains but only people can give you joys and smiles. It is such a cruel world. I know that. And I know, how even a tiny bit of smile from a person, whom you even do not know well, makes such a huge difference to your wellness. It takes innocence to accept it. Sadly, people do not put innocence upfront; they instead choose to display their intelligence.

I am a bloody retarded waste. I am not complaining; even for normal people things are not easy, I understand that. They do not smile, cannot have a hearty laugh quite often. I always smile; all duffers like me smile all the time. I can make others smile and laugh. Not all duffers can do it. Because; not all duffers have a grandpa like I had. He taught me to smile and also make others smile and laugh.

As I told you, God cannot help you much. Only we can help each other. This world is a very cruel place and if you do not have somebody, who can take your hand and lead you to sanity, you will end up knocking all wrong doors. I took to drugs and almost killed myself. I committed suicide and survived. I could have tried it again but my grandpa led me to the right doors. He told me that God always sent his angels on earth with a mission to gift smile and laughter to the troubled humanity. These angels were made to be born as humans and had special abilities that other humans did not have. They are different and their mind programming is also very distinct. God intentionally loads them with all fallibilities to stand them as best qualified for the treasure of humor.

I accept his word that I am God's angel and it is my duty to spread smile and laughter to the troubled humanity. That is why I am writing my biography. Though I know; and I have learnt it from my own experience that even my best efforts can make smile only one in a million. Smile needs the navigation of innocence of first order but this cruel world prefers intellectualism over innocence.

Grandpa said it right, duffers like me are angels as only angels always smile. The intellectuals will make a dead face over the best of humor and say with a grave tone, 'I beg to differ'. My dad

never smiles. I have seen him laughing only once; it was when my mom divorced him and married his junior.

My wife works in publishing industry. To be very honest, she asked me to write my biography and even assured me that she would push it through to the bookstores. She has advised me to ‘make it fully loaded’. ‘If you can rake in un-patterned madness and patterned sex in your book, you may even find a publisher yourself; otherwise I am here for you’, she has told me. She is only three years older to me but always bosses on me. I am not sure what she means and what I can rake in. But I am not stuck, I move ahead.

## II

I am very reluctant to say all this but he made me do it. I cannot talk about my patients and reveal facts about them. However, he insisted that I had to write a chapter in his biography because of two reasons – first, his wife asked him to make his biography different and second, he believes, I am the most eligible person to write about him as he has spent the most time with me after his grandpa. Had his grandpa been alive, he would have written it all but now I have to do it.

He is right. After the age of ten, when he was first brought to me for treatment and counseling, he has spent hours with me. He has been in all sorts of trouble and his parents felt, he needed psychological help to have a semblance of a normal life. I must accept, I have earned a fortune from his parents for hours of counseling and treatment I have done for him as my patient. He accepts me as his most trusted friend. He has assured me that he would ensure my anonymity. I seek apology for doing it but I cannot say no to this marvelous duffer.

The only thing he has done well before time is what he cannot take credit for. He was born almost three months before time. There was little hope for his survival but then; his grandfather was probably right in saying, ‘goodness must come early and should always go late’. This adorable duffer really has come with multiple lives; he has survived thrice. However, he is not born with multiple abilities. That is probably why he smiles all the time. His singular possession

of innocence has loaded him with an ability, which most multi-ability persons do not have or they squander it. His innocent humor has the magic of purity God labors to preserve.

His mother was actually very happy that she would get rid of her pregnancy three months early when the doctor, a friend of mine told her that the baby was not growing in her womb and she would need to go under the knife. He was virtually created in the incubator and till the age of 12, he had to undergo innumerable small and big operations to make him a livable human. However, we doctors created and shaped only his body parts. He was born with a date with life and packaged with a zeal for it, which made him go through all his troubles with a smile, which is this duffer's signature on life. I also must admit, we doctors only undid, which his parents consciously and unconsciously did to him. However, what made him is something, he was born with and what his brilliant grandpa very carefully chiseled out of him.

I am bound by my professional ethics not to reveal anything about the treatment and physical status of my patients. That is why I shall stick here to his personality and uniqueness of character. What I shall tell will be a friend telling about his dear friend, though I am more than his father's age. He has given me the liberty and I truly wish to use this opportunity to tell things, as a common human being, which I could not as a doctor.

The first thing I wish to say is about the idea of abnormal and disorder. This boy was brought to me at the age of ten with his parents seriously complaining about he being abnormal and having disorders. All over the world, people are paying and psychologists are raking up fortunes treating people for abnormalities and disorders. The weird and somehow stupid element of rigidity about normal and orderly in our culture is landing so many people over the fence and they find themselves on our doors. I need to talk about it then only his readers can decide whether he is a duffer or what! Also, they can then decide who is actual duffer.

Let us first put the straight question – what is 'order, or 'orderly'? What precisely is the criterion of the term order? Technically, an order is a condition of logical-methodical or comprehensible-prescribed arrangement, the established system of social organization, a sequence or arrangement of successive things, a customary procedure, an authoritative sanction of a prescribed model, etc.

In simple words, it is easily decipherable to anyone that definitions of 'order' are expressly collective, societal and authoritative. Order and consequently, disorder shall also remain an

interpretation of the collective will of a contemporary society and culture; that too at a point of time and keeps changing.

To make it clear; disorder is essentially a cultural benchmark, mostly enjoying the authoritative sanction. An individual positioning, as often, may stand in complete or partial contrast with the established norms and benchmarks of 'order' and lead to a stand which may sound like a 'disorder' but only by the established societal pathology. An individual might always say, 'he is right and in perfect order!'

An extreme of this may be an individual, or a small collective labeling the benchmark of order of the authoritative collectivity as a 'disorder' itself. It is already happening globally, as newer generations are reluctant to go by established norms of order. The technology is helping their flight of fancy and every day, new trends are emerging, which challenge established orders. It has always happened in the past too but in very small measures. It is so strange. At a time, when the fine line between normal and deviant has almost lost its existence, it is somehow a misnomer to accept the age-old benchmarks of a person, whom we can accept as psychologically a perfectly poised and normal thing.

All rational people in this world have always respected and even welcomed individual perspectives. Revolutions, which bring about refreshing changes in societal-political order, have always germinated from individual initiatives or from a small collectivity, which initially were butchered by the established order. All definitions of 'order' and 'disorder' are bordering beyond what may be termed as authoritative. What authoritatively is 'orderly', may well be a 'disorder' in popular perception and the vice-versa. Old benchmarks of authoritative and societal-cultural order and pattern are in for a toss. The new benchmarks of 'order' are more on the wrong side of popular perceptions. It is truly difficult to say what should ideally be the 'order' of the day!

The word 'disorder' is a generalization, which is less specific than the term 'problem' but often labeled as if it were a trouble. There are psychologists who are campaigning for acceptance of the word 'Mind Issues', instead of the term mind disorders. Certain mind positioning may not be problem for others but may not be conducive to long-term mental health of the individual, in the contemporary socio-cultural milieu he or she lives. Therefore, psychologists wish to make a larger perspective of widest possible mind issues.

What I mean to say in easy sounding words is, we humans are essentially culturally inclined minds. There is a straight line drawn for all of us and we all are expected to follow it. Anyone, expecting to experiment willfully or wavering away from the line because of some other idea or attitude is a sure case for a psychologist. The terms normal and order are very much cultural perceptions and they keep changing. Therefore, the idea and benchmarks of normal and order also get altered with time and space. In a contemporary culture of instant-self-gratification and cult of trigger-happy consumption and fun, a teenage boy or girl talking of purity and virginity is promptly labeled abnormal. A few decades back, the reverse was abnormality. A young boy keeping away from girls and showing little joy in wild sexual and other adventurisms of modernist culture is taken to a psychologist by parents. Few decades back it was essential character need for a good boy. Few years back, psychologists would do counseling for people who had, what their closed ones labeled as abnormal sexual orientation. Now they do not come to us as larger society has now accepted them as individual choice. Every small and big benchmark of normal and abnormal is in for a toss in modern world. Already, the old label of deviant and taboo is the new style statement, especially if they come from celebrities and pop icons. As new trends shall get established in society, the new culture shall keep redefining benchmarks of normal.

This duffer friend of mine was also brought to me again for the same reason. I found him otherwise healthy and fine. His father however confided in me, "If I had so many lovely chicks in my school days, I would have made half of them pregnant but this stupid son of mine seems allergic to them. His teachers complain of symptoms of exclusivity and withdrawal. Hope his thing is working fine!"

I always feel, if we did not live our lives in societies and cultures, we have created for our so-called brilliance, we humans could have surely done away with hundreds of phobias and thousands of disorders. People go to the wilds and even see the animals in zoo and appreciate the stupidities and weirdness of their action-behavior. If humans do the same, it is a case for psychologists. The simple reason is; human culture has its own copycats of what animals do in wild stupidities and if someone does not follow them, he or she is bound to be labeled abnormal. You name anything a human can do with its heart on it, it becomes a syndrome and an attitude problem. Moreover, we have a culture where markets and enterprises have to sustain and make

profits. That is why there is a medicine and a medical treatment for anything, which strays away from the straight line of cultural benchmarks. You have low libido, there is a drug for it. You have high libido, there is psychological help and rehabilitation programs for it. Somehow, if you are curious as what is actually the benchmark of a normal libido, experts would never give you a fixed answer, as they do not have any. They will say, “it depends, people come with different libidos and it is all about how you feel about it.”

And how one can feel about it? You actually do not feel anything independent of the culture within you. So, you look for discussion forums on the internet. Someone boasts of 87 sex partners in the last 11 years and you feel, oh god! I am such a poor thing with only five in whole of my life! Surely, there is something wrong. You come to us and we have a living to make. Who does not love extra fortune knocking his doors! The psychologists would suggest you constant counseling and some populist practices, which shall enhance your sociability, so that you could have greater chance of getting to the marketplace benchmark of 87 sex partners! Then, there are best sellers for your special needs and help! Psychology is the most popular toy for all of us as it is highly suitable for twisting to personal attitudinal needs. People just love psychology in its new and pop star avatar and treat it as celebrity stuff. Everyone has loads of celebrity elements in their consciousness and psychology is somehow a license to all attitudes of personalized will.

This duffer friend of mine is essentially an animal in the zoo, which his parents love to watch and feel great about. They are highly successful people and their position in the society and culture is benchmarks for others. This simple and always happy boy actually never ever had trouble with whatever he was and whatever he did or didn't. He never complained of any trouble and awkwardness. Every time, either his father would bring him to me or his mother. They never came together for any of his so-called abnormalities and disorders. It was in his parent's view that he needed help from me and together, we enjoyed mutual benefits. He was happy being with me, as I could understand his mind and I was happy getting the money his parents took pride in giving me. His mother used him and his 'handicap' as an emotional lever to get support and push from others in her career. His father proudly told people that he has a million buck son as even when he was just ten, he had spent one and a half million bucks on his treatment. This duffer showcased his money power and influence in social circuits. It was a win-win situation for all.

He was happy being away from his parents, the parents were happy seeing him treated for his ‘handicaps’ and I was happy getting part of the millions.

However, the million-dollar question is – what actually was his handicap or disorder, for which his parents were worried and they made him come to me? This need to be told in this duffer’s autobiography. He was born out of a conflict, which sealed his fate. His mother was not willing for babies. His father wanted it desperately. His colleagues had started to create jokes about his impotency as six years after the marriage; there was no ‘good news’. His mother finally agreed to one baby with a condition that she would not be bothered about its daily care. He agreed that he would personally do it. As destiny had it, he arrived much early. His mother was free of his care as doctors and nurses did it for almost a year. Later, he was thrown to the care of maids. When he was one year old, he was hailed as the most brilliant baby as he always smiled and never bothered to move out of the place where he was put. He would be left in his room peacefully for whole day and he would never bother anybody. This suited fine for his parents as they were busy with their careers; left home early morning and came late evening. His mother would dutifully spare ten minutes of her time in the evening and then he would be back to his maids. The parents were happy that their child was so good, well behaved and a true gentleman! However, this same trait, which hailed him as a good kid, became the complaint number one. He was always confined to his room, with no one ever talking to him or taking him outside to make him see the world. His grandpa once suggested that he should be occasionally sent for a month to live with him. He could see the trouble brewing up. His mother revolted against the idea and even his father did not like it. They were against the idea as his mother felt; he would pick up bad manners, wrong middle-class traditions and useless old ideas from his grandparents. He grew up a loner and was very happy with he being perfectly fine with his gadgets and toys, which were crammed in his room.

The trouble started when teachers complained that he did not speak to his classmates and did not pay attention to whatever was going on in the classroom. He always remained talking to himself silently and as the talk inside was what he was happy with and enjoyed, he felt no need to talk to anyone else and get involved in anything outside.

His first nomenclature of duffer came from his class teacher, who thought, kids are born to learn whatever teachers ask them to. His persistent refusal to fall in line with the teacher’s ways made

the teacher shoot off a long complaint in his diary. He was finally fetched to me at the age of ten, when his parents too felt; he was beyond their marvelous intelligence, which made them successful. They accepted the label of duffer and added the label of 'abnormal' and 'disordered' on him and dutifully handed him over to me.

It is somehow strange. Old wisdom says and even today, all wise people admit that it takes a whole society to make a child and grow him as a good person. Evolution is one such remarkable history of humanity and its struggle to create a milieu, which ensured excellence to individual in a collective space of society. The cultures were designed to suit this individual growth, which could in turn engender collective utility.

However, modern contemporary culture has evolved an ideal, where it is accepted that a child is parent's sole responsibility and nobody else has any role in it. Finally, it is now restricted to one single woman, who has to grow the child completely on her own. The parents believe, growing is a natural and automatic function. Even weeds and a silly plant grow in a small pot! Like a plant in the pot, they think, a child shall automatically grow well if it is regularly given water. They pump in all resources and think; the child shall grow out of his or her own energies. If it does not, there are schools to do it. The schools too have become smart. They do not throw it back to parents as they charge huge amounts from them to make their kids cultured. They now have their own psychologists and counselors. In any case, they finally land with us with the expectation that we have a magic potion and a wand, which can settle everything. It is somehow true about all doctors. People do all sorts of stupidities with their body and then land at a doctor, expecting he or she would make them back in perfect shape.

It is so strange that now, the belief has come to be accepted that the state knows it better than parents and society as how to raise a child. There are rules for parents and state is on the vigil to crack its whip on erring parents. The parents do not have the time and inclination to enrage the state power and it is only convenient for them to send their 'abnormal' kids to us. We actually get moneys to save them from society as well as the state. This arrangement is fine with contemporary culture. People have loads of money, they do not however have any time for anything other than their own personal attainments and gratifications. The markets and pop culture keep telling them that money can buy anything and if it cannot buy that thing, it is not worth a penny.



If you ask me, what is wrong with my dear friend, I would say, it is almost impossible to say. Most part of his troubles is actually cultural. Medically too, it is difficult to say, what his troubles are as medical science is still not sure about brain functioning. His troubles may well be in-built, because of his troubled birth or may be; most part of it, his environments cultivated and cultured in him. His brain does not seem to respond to emotions and ideas in motor-action terms. A usual brain is instinctively action-reaction mechanism. It responds to a stimulus in action terms, enabling the nerves controlling the motor muscles to act. He never reacts to anything promptly. The second important thing is, there seems to be little culture in him. May be part of his brain has not grown the way it does in 'normal' people. His brain processing is very simple and he takes ideas very much in terms of their face value. He does not involve the emotional conflicts in anything. He does not admit any cultural practice in his decision-making. His thinking and emotions are very linear and deep. His decision-making has loads of his grandpa in them. His grandpa instilled in him a sense of right and wrong. He usually associates all his decisions as per the benchmarks decided by his grandpa. If he has to decide something on his own, he just looks at the element of comfort in it. He does not like sex, as it is not a comfortable thing in his decision-making matrix. To him, it involves a lot of uncomfortable action. He enjoys love and intimacy. He loves hugging you and remains hugged. He loves to talk and laugh for hours. His grandpa also has lot to do with his choices. He told him, "all joys, which you create just being you and not involving others for its utility are the real joys. If this creation extends utility to others, it is the test that your joys are good and worthy." He accepts only those things as true, which his grandpa said.

### III

Well, before I tell you more about my life, I must tell you that whatever my dear doctor friend has told you earlier are more of a friend's words for me than a psychologist's. I have no problem accepting that I am not normal and have disorders. It is not good to label a whole bunch of people and your society wrong to show yourself as right. It is wrong to stand your so-called virtues on the pedestal of vices of society. My grandpa had told me once, "It does not take someone to be wrong for other to be right. People can be right in their own right and a good society is one, which respects all rights and is compassionate to all wrongs."

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