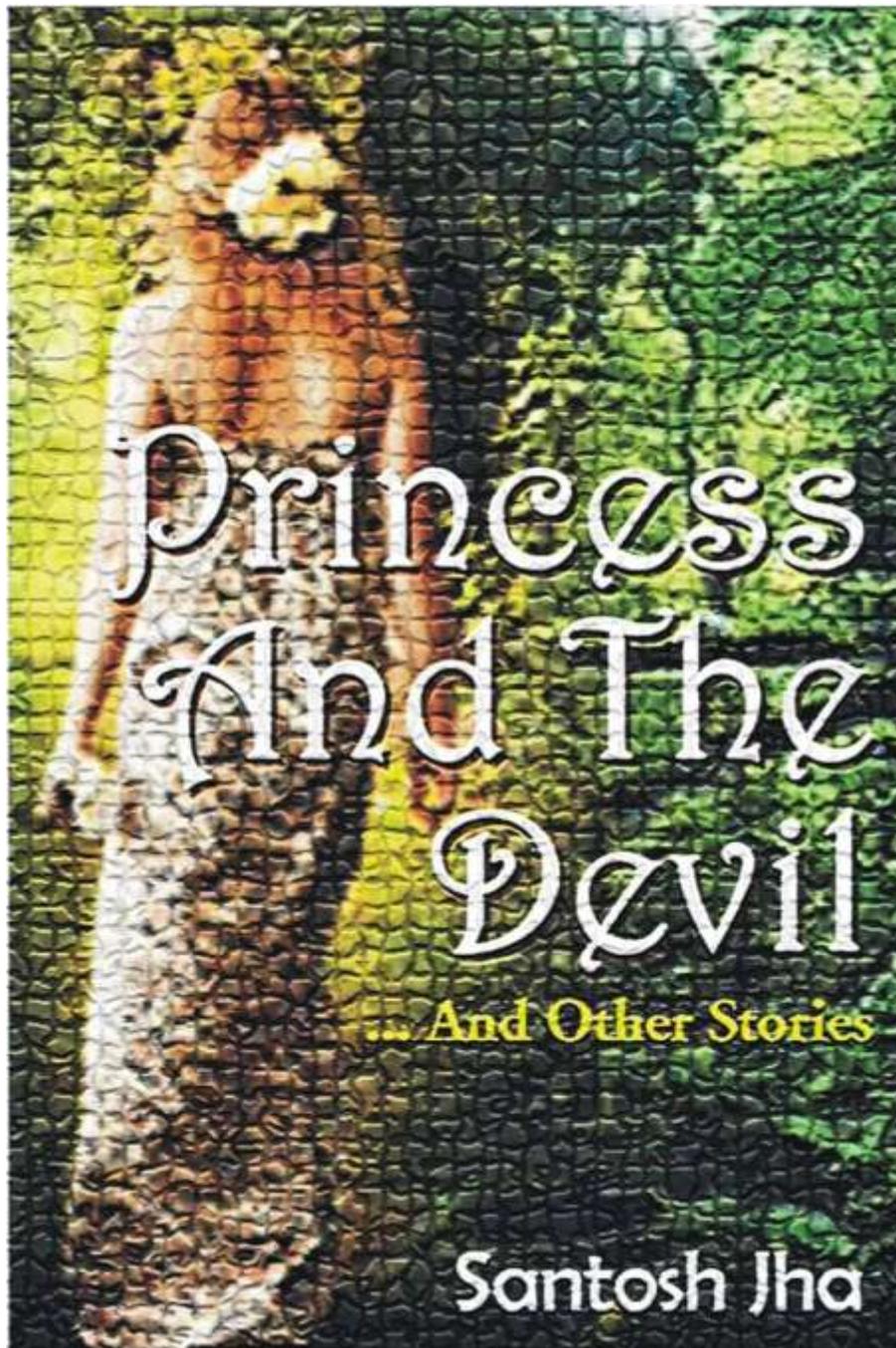


# Princess And The Devil

By Santosh Jha

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ONCE UPON a time, there was a king...

As is the scheme of nature, there always are people who land themselves in a station of privileges and unequal bounties but then, the burden of onus and duties are also unequal. Often, people accept inequality of personal convenience only.

The king had only a daughter and she was famous for her beauty in all neighborhood kingdoms. The young princess was not only beautiful but also a very good-hearted woman whom everyone loved. Princesses are like that. For the convenience of the story at least, this presupposition is

okay. Goodness is often, disposed conveniently at populist perceptions of subjective utilities, rather than objective value.

Once, she was in the royal orchards playing with flowers, birds and small animals, which all enjoyed her company. The day progressed and when she slept on the grass-bed under a tree, she could not remember.

Incidentally, the Devil of the jungle passed by her and out of jealousy, he decided to play a trick with her. He stole the expression of the princess. She returned to the palace with an expressionless face and mannerisms. She looked like a statue. She did not smile, showed no emotions and did everything quite mechanically.

The king got to know of the developments and called the doctors. Later, magicians, tricksters, clowns, saints and every type of experts were called but nobody could help. The panicky king tried to marry her off expecting some change after marriage but all the princes who came after getting the invitation refused to marry her. Nobody wanted a wife who was literally a statue.

The king was sad and the entire kingdom was doomed.

One day, a Tantric (practitioner of occult) came to the palace seeking alms. He asked the king what was wrong as the king looked in poor health. The king narrated his woes. The Tantric urged the king to take him to the royal orchard. The Tantric immediately understood what had happened and he used his power to invoke the Devil of the woods.

The Devil appeared and the king fell on his feet imploring him to forgive his daughter. The Devil relented but put a condition. He said he would take back his curse and the princess would come back to her normal self but in return, he would take away something from her.

The king happily asked what he would like to take away as he was ready give him the entire kingdom for her daughter's smile. The Devil said he would take away her beauty and give back her expressions.

The king was shocked. He was very proud of her daughter's beauty and could not imagine how she would react if her beauty is taken away. The Devil was adamant and the king was very unsure what he should do. The Devil gave the king a day's time to decide and disappeared. The

Devil also warned the king that if he shared what had happened there with anyone else, he would be dead.

.... So, what the king decided? What happened to the princess?

The story has no specific end. It is just a possibility; like life. What the king will choose the fate of the princess would depend on and the story will end that way. This is life – the predicament, the conflict and the discretion. Anyone can be in the king's place. And there can be people like the princess; seemingly none of her fault but she had to be at the center of all tribulations of life.

One would argue; the king should know what is best for the princess; after all, he is a father and a king too. On his prudence and right discretion depended the fortunes of millions of citizens of his kingdom! If fathers ain't good enough to protect the best interests of their daughters, it is truly tragic!

However, one should also consider the fact that all good people may not take all right decisions. An important decision is usually taken after consultations and the kings are used to it. But the Devil has forbidden him to share his trouble to anyone. He only has the Tantrik to consult.

You would say, "oh yes...! So what the Tantrik thought was the right thing to do?"

Forget what the king or the Tantrik think is the right thing to do? Ask yourself; what you think is the right thing to do?

Well, you can ask, "why me? This is not fair! It is your story; you should know better."

Dear readers, forget the story. If you have to choose for yourself; what would you want – the beauty or the expressions?

Life is so cruel at times... or often...! You wish someone could take the onus and decide for you but eventually, it is always an individual's choice and before you make your choice, you must understand and accept the situation in multiplicity of details.

Remember, people say, "you are what choices you make and the vice versa". It is something that primarily affects you and your entire life. You will be deeply influenced by it. Things at stake are

not trifle. The beauty is not only for mirror, it is for you first and then for the entire world. And expressions; it is as important as breathing. Deciding between the two is a far-reaching choice.

Well, the women readers may say, “Why should only girls be troubled with all things in life? You said the princess was also very good hearted and she did nothing wrong to deserve this punishment from the Devil. She was actually in deep slumber when her world came crashing on her feet and she could not even realize why. Did she deserve to face all these troubles?”

Hmmm... this is life; full of uncertainties, some time golden but often black. Decisions always have to be owned by you. Yes, let me help you with some details so that you have ease in taking decision.

Well, you should consider carefully the details of the story. The girl in question is a princess and she happens to be phenomenally beautiful; three best endowments of life – wealth & comfort, authority & status and beauty & fame. The poise of personality, that keeps one safe and away from psychosis of mind is a very fine line. Extremities of life and life situations are often silent invite to psychosis.

Moreover, why do you think there is a Devil in this world? The Devil is out there to level out things; set off a balance of sorts. In nature and even in societal and personal systems, the good and bad are placed in cyclic position to engender a natural poise. Idealism is always evolutionary.

This world has love, intimacy, care, compassion etc as golden uncertainties and in the same space, jealousy, anger, pride, selfishness etc, as black certainties also exist. Always remember, one human body possesses them all simultaneously. The very presence of angels invites Devil!

Well, this is a story and that is why for convenience and brevity, the Devil has been personified as some outside entity but usually, it is the Devil inside the person and personality that starts the trouble. Even if you think, you do not apparently make a mistake; the devil inside you creates such an environment and attitude that a harm looks like an external creation. It is actually an internalized process.

The devil in the story is just a metaphor. Just be liberal and opened up to consider the facts as the background of the events in the story. Do not be judgmental. The psychotic mind is your devil

inside. It orchestrates all his machinations silently and unconsciously, presenting his full face at a time when it is conveniently opportune moment.

May be, the princess had unconsciously taken undue pride of her possessions! Anybody can; such enormous were her possessions and may be over a period had turned herself away from the world outside. Probably, her pride, or let us say her unconscious attitude made her lose contact and connect with her people and she ultimately lost her expressions.

In the story, for the convenience, it has been made to look like an instant deed of a Devil but in actual life, it is a slow and steady process, which percolates deep down in the unconscious over a long period of time. Psychosis is not a flamboyant extrovert.

May be; the many princes, who came to see her after the king invited them to marry her, had earlier felt insulted by her behavior of exclusivity and when they saw her in such trouble, they felt great joy in refusing her. May be this ... may be that... !

The unconscious mind creates so many psychoses and as the person is in 'princess-mode', used to the pampering and stately aura of kingdom, he or she refuses to even admit that the Devil has unknowingly sneaked into his or her soul.

As said earlier, psychosis is there when someone accepts only his or her fixated dimension of subjective realism as true and all others as wrong. He or she even refuses to believe that there can be many dimensions or subjective realisms. Simply, the realism he or she accepts is either a very underrated or an overrated version of realism, far off from the objective realism.

Many of you might have met with such beautiful, very good-hearted princesses and felt that they had similar fate. You might also have felt that the kings in their lives probably led them to their destinies. The kings often unconsciously create such life milieu for their princesses, which often lead them to the door of psychosis, even when they think they did best for them. The kingdom is often in trouble!

You might even have tried your best to make these princesses understand the 'devil of attitude' that they had unconsciously housed in their souls and minds but almost every time you would fail. It is tough to deal with the psychosis, the devil inside...

You can ask; why one almost often ends up meeting princesses so beautiful and intelligent but with psychotic attitudes? You wonder, why this, when there are no more the kings and the kingdoms! Well, stupidity is another kingdom...!

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## **Interview With A Top Model**

SUCCESS DOESN'T come cheap... too bad... it should... but then; a thing without a decently snobbish price tag ain't worth a pursuit... hardly merits flaunting... and what use success if it doesn't come with loads of rainbowish attitudes to flamboyant exhibitionism...!

This world is worth a penny because, we have things to exhibit to fellow mortals... exhibitionism is the salt of life and, attitude is the brand-wagon of what we have.... our assets...

As the marketing prudence goes, "... what exhibits well, sells well ...!".... exhibitionism of attitude is the right advert for individual warehouse... and, no amount of marketing is bad selling, till markets love it....

The real buyers may not be lured by exhibitionism.... but then, where is the dearth of window-shoppers...! .... you never run short of crowd.... and, the pop-culture feeds on nothing else but crowd madness and competitive consumptiveness....

Sample this interview with a very successful hot model with top brand endorsements in her vanity case:

### **Q. How would you say, "who are you"?**

A. Oh yeah... saying it is as easy as sex... but as hard as loyalty... but then... does it matter...?... who cares!... but, I have done a reality-check on me... did some online tests for my personality orientations... the results put me on the high score of obsessive compulsive disorder meter... and you know, there were some interesting things coming out of these online tests... it said I am a shade bit narcissistic, moderately paranoid, mildly schizoid and borderline neurotic...

**Q. ...so, you are concerned about the findings?**

A. ...Neah...! You think am a kiddo...? ... I am commonsensical enough to take these things on my stride. And then, nobody has the business to tell me who I am. I already know my facts... and I have my heart at place to accept all my weaknesses and faults with generosity. You know, you have to accept yourself as you are... confidence is all about how you stand in this cruel world... and who knows, it may work for me...! Probably working fine for me. I am big time confident that I would find a man who would love me with all my stupidities and not try to change me....

**Q. How can you be so sure...?**

A. Why...? If I can accept myself with all my faults, why can't he? Yeah... I know... it is a bit tough on a guy... but it is the way it has to be... after all... I am worth it... I may not be the easiest girl around but he will have to love me this way... I know who I am... I don't come easy... I come with a price tag... it should always be this way or never be... get me...?

**Q. I do... but, you had a steady relationship with this guy and you are single again?**

A. Yeah... I am... he was very good... I don't lie about things which I reckon is my stupid past... he was a charmer... very talented, well-read, very honest, affectionate and compassionate. And the good thing about him was that he made me very happy and comfortable with myself... which is so rare... and the best thing about him was that he was a man... so rare to find one now a day... ain't it...?

**Q. Then, what went wrong?**

A. Nothing...! ... from very start of my relationship with him I was sure what I wanted out of it... I took him as my at-the-moment-joy and never as my happily-ever-after proposition... you know...! ... it is hell lot easy and saves you of lots of bitter after-taste when you are clear in your mind.... it is then very uncomplicated and straightforward to see and accept things as segmented and segregated....!... you always need to know your priorities... you do and you are happy....

**Q. So, what is next in your mind?**

A. Oh... nothing... I never plan... I am wild, erratic, enigmatic, free like fragrance, tumultuous but never timid, tentative but never judgmental, moody, bitter, snobbish, even vindictive but I never ever ask anybody to do me a favor... I am too reclusive for all these... and who cares...! I am successful, a winner and proud of what I have done with my life...

**Q. Love happening again in your life?**

A. Not now... I am a true workaholic... do I have the time for it...?... anyway, you need to gulp a quantum of good scotch before you go to bed...! ... and I am not retiring any soon... not going to the bed any sooner... that's the way life is... ain't it...

Wonder.... was that enough... enough for the markets... for fans would always want more... exhibitionism of attitude sells like hot *samosas*... that's why, the media shows you loads of attitudes and smart ingenuity and we all imbibe it fully and want more ... enough is never enough... till we all go to the bed...!

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**God's Design: Was She Right?**

A MAN LIVED in deep woods, far away from humans and that too by choice....

Since early civilization, humanity understood the basic causality of all matter with its environment. The cognition, consciousness, conscientiousness and choices; all are colored by environment. He understood and accepted it.

He lived in the forest and was successful in aligning his consciousness to the non-dualism of pure nature and its innate mechanism. He thought so, only to be proved wishful...!

Once, idling in his hut, he saw a herd of deer peacefully grazing in front. He felt affection for them and even wished to offer his food to them. Suddenly, he saw a lioness hidden in the tall grasses, on the other side of the herd of deer. He grew compassionate towards the deer and started making panic sound to woo away the deer.

The deer looked at him for a while and then continued with grazing. The man tried his best, shouting and clapping so that deer could be warned against the lioness. The deer were used to the presence of the man and were assured of his nobleness. They did not pay heed to his efforts.

The man finally dared and stepped out of his hut to chase away the deer with a baton. The deer still did not budge, as they were sure, the man was harmless. Finally, the lioness attacked and killed a deer for his meal.

The man was very sad. His compassion made him cry and he was terribly sorry for not saving the deer. He said to himself, "if only I could know their language, I could have saved them". He then thought, if he were a bad guy, the deer would have run away from him and could be saved. He landed himself in the multiplicity of emotions.

The nature goddess was watching all this. She had been always around the man and was helpful to him. She asked the man, "why should you feel sad, it is my arrangement. I have wished it this way".

The man was shocked. "How could you be so unkind? How can you wish and plan such a calamitous scheme of things?" The nature goddess took the man in her arms, made him rest his head on her lap and calmed him, as a mother does to his child.

Later, she reasoned with him, "nature is instinctive; it is singular and non-dualistic reason. As there is grass for deer, there are deer for lioness. If you show compassion for deer, what shall happen to lions?"

The man was not convinced, he said, "but this is brutal, not the way things should be. The lions must understand. Why can't he turn vegetarian? There is plenty of grass for all."

The nature goddess replied, "you are mistaken, there is never a plenty of anything. There is a limitation of grass supply, which is why; some were designed to live on flesh."

The goddess went away and the man pondered, "she is probably right. Even in human society, most things are the way it is in jungle. Like the food pyramid in jungle, there is a life support pyramid in human society. Things do not change even in human society as people always feel, there is never enough and a killing is a must for survival".

He reasoned, “humans are the most advanced animals and they have reason, logic and consciousness. Still, they have societies where system is more like jungle’s food pyramid. Love and compassion is what makes jungle different from societies, still, they are not the guiding spirit in human society.”

He thought, “probably the nature goddess is right when she says lions too have a life and they need deer flesh for survival. May be lions cannot be trained to accept vegetation and other compassionate food as an alternative. Nevertheless, humans have consciousness and conscientiousness. They have evolved and developed to be mighty resourceful, capable to create an alternative of everything still, why do they still not drop cannibalistic attitudes and practices?”

The very moment, the nature goddess appeared again. He asked the same question to her, “why can’t humans accept and understand the supremacy and imminence of love and compassion?”

The goddess replied, “you yourself said, humans are the most evolved and conscientious animal. This is the reality. Humans are the most ingenious and very inventive animal. They have the ability to invent not only resources but also all vices and cunningness. And, still, they have the brilliance of mind to justify all vices as virtues. The mighty lion and elephant too do not have this ability”.

The man asked, “but how can it be? The god designed the humans and we cannot expect and accept a faulty design by god, can we?”

The goddess replied, “what you say is the most ingenious and cunning inventiveness of humanity. God’s design is the same for all creatures but, humans in time evolved out of this original design as it grew up its brain to defeat the purpose and design of god. Now, humans have become so inventive that they are even using god for all of their selfish designs. Human mind has grown beyond the god’s design”.

The man showed his unwillingness to accept the idea. The goddess smiled and offered an alternative idea, “just accept it this way that when god created creatures, he knew that in course of evolution, what shape of things shall happen. Therefore, he designed humans this way so that its mind would evolve the way it did and would finally be the singular source of final destruction of the earth and all lives.”

The man was still not convinced. He accepted that what the goddess was saying might be right but he was still hoping that god must have some contingency plan to reverse this trend and lead humanity to a loving and compassionate situation.

... human inventiveness is so powerful that it cannot accept defeat... the man decided that he would learn the language of all animals so that he could warn them against the predators. The nature goddess smiled...

... before saying goodbye for the day, she said, “you are the scholar, master of many languages humans speak, still you left society and headed to jungle a sad person. Are you sure that even when you would learn all animal languages, they would listen to you and accept your warnings as true?”

... the man was shocked... he went inside his hut and pondered... was she right...?

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## **The Intruder**

AS IS CONVENIENT for the navigation of a story, at times, something stupid has to be accepted as situational start of a journey... so, it so happened that there were five people sitting in the waiting room of a small railway station at night and suddenly, lights went off. There was complete darkness in the room.... and, minds started lighting up:

A young lady in the room was initially apprehensive of darkness... instinctively concerned and thought of taking out the match box from her purse. But, it came to her mind that darkness was rather more acceptable. She could now sit comfortably without worrying for her pimples on her otherwise beautiful face, which she had to cover up as a handsome guy was sitting just next to him. She was confident, in darkness, the guy would find her more acceptable and approachable....

She was right, the guy was really thrilled to have darkness around and even was praying that the power outage should last forever... he wished to smoke but did not as he was averse to disturb

the joy of darkness even for a second. Also, he was afraid the lady could sense his intentions from his face if he lighted the cigarette. He rather pulled his chair close to the beautiful girl, taking advantage of the darkness, which eventually fulfilled the lady's wishes....

An old man sitting far across the lady was engrossed in his thoughts and as darkness set in, he stretched himself on his seat and became more relaxed. He was happy that darkness would help him take his mind off his thoughts, which nagged him no end. He had left his home after his only son abused him and despite his best efforts, he could not close his eyes to sleep over the issue.... in the dark, sleep crept in his eyes....

A mid-aged man sitting next to the old man initially got nervous but seconds later, he smiled at the comfort of darkness around him. He was carrying huge cash money in his bag and was nervous that someone would get a whiff out of his face which he could not make look normal despite his best efforts. He clutched the bag in between his legs and a relaxed look was parched on his face...

A teenage girl was sitting on the farthest corner of the room and ever since she entered the room, she wanted to smoke. She was very disturbed as her boyfriend had just smsed her that he had moved on and had another girl in his life. As darkness set in, she was happy as she could smoke which she could not in the lighted room as she was shy of smoking in front of other people in the room.

As stories must end with something interesting, in this story too, a young man entered the room and flicked his lighter to find if there was some space for him to stay for a while till the power outage was restored....

As his lighter disturbed the peace and comfort of the existing five, they all shouted in unison, "... stupid man... can't you see... are you blind... put off the light...!"

The intruder could not understand and stepped out of the room in complete bafflement... He could hear someone among the five saying, "... irrational fellow...!"

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## **It Shall Be There, I No More**

THERE IS A RIVER a few meters away from my house...

In monsoon, rainwater gushing from mountains fill up the entity of the river and it flows, dances and sings like a young lass, oblivious of her surroundings and all other beings. Whenever at the pinnacle of my unattached consciousness, I prefer to sit down, by the riverside. The young lass has the charm and charisma... she has a filling flow and fruition of finiteness...

... early morning, I am there... not alone... more than 20 dogs and nine cows are idling around me... they all look mesmerized... some in deep slumber... the river sings loudly and the gushing flow ensures, nothing else moves but the furious water in bulk... the charm draws all beings to her...

Usually, the river talks to me... today, she is not... she is in pride... the abundance and the fullness of her youthful being makes her a bit self-possessed... youth, possession, pride go together and gel well... she is not responding...

A small, worn out and rounded pebble lies on the bank, just in front of me... water flows over it. As the pebble is small and well rounded, he is not offering any resistance to the water flow and no ripples are made. Just ahead, almost in mid stream is a large boulder... it is offering struggle and ripples are visible... rather, it is making the roaring sound... water attempting to flow over it and sometimes, river wins, sometimes the boulder wins...

I pick up the small rounded pebble in my hand and he starts talking to me... I can feel the same energy of my unattached consciousness in the pebble. The pebble says calmly to me, "two thousand years ago, I was there in the middle, where the boulder is now and was bigger in size, shape and almost everything. My edges were very sharp... ever ready to resist anything... now, I am in unattached consciousness, shed all my useless and painful edges; also shed the pride of my bulk. Now, you can see, I am painlessly small, well rounded and at peace... no pride of fullness, no pain of rough edges, no nothing... I just be..."

I asked the pebble, “can I take you with me”... he smiled... I put him back where it was... it shall always be there where it has been... I shall come whenever I shall need him... I know, it shall be there even when I shall be no more.... okay... bye friend....

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## **Of Heaven & Hell**

TWO PERSONS DIED on the same day and both were presented before God’s court to decide on who goes to hell, who goes to heaven and who shall be made to reborn....

First was a saint and he had a huge following of devotees... he had done a lot of charity and looked like a fit case for a long stay in heaven... but, God ruled that he be sent to earth to be born again so that he could get another chance to earn his chances of heaven....

The second man was a poor peasant who died with loan on his head and also a borderline drunkard.... he looked like bound for hell.... but, God ruled that he stays in heaven for some good many days, before being sent to earth again....

An assistant of God, who kept all records of human deeds on earth could not understand God’s rulings and he very humbly questioned his jurisprudence...

God told him, the saint did so many good things which might have benefitted a lot of people but, every charity and good deed he did during his life time was done with an intention and emotion of earning name and fame for him.... and to ensure that he was popular and revered as a saint.

He also resorted to some clever tactics, which actually misled many.... The peasant did nothing remarkable as his position in life and resources never allowed him to. But, he was always very humble and year after year, he planted his crops and cared them like his own child, always thinking that his crops must feed many hungry stomachs in the society, even when many times, the crops failed despite his best care. And that landed him in debt... his intention and emotion towards his work was very pure and exalted...

The difference is in with what emotion and intention you do your karma... your duties of life... the former's case was an action of goodness but for self-aggrandizement whereas, the latter's action was of goodness without selfishness. The amount and size of goodness does not matter a lot, what matters is with what emotions and intentions you do it... karma is important, but more important is the energy of intention that decides it...

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## **Mishandled Potentials**

HE MUST HAVE been six years old and his brother a year elder. As kids must, they were onto all sorts of childlike tomfoolery.

It would be summer holiday and as their dad would leave for office, they would be off to their usual devil tour, and they had a business at hand...

In front of their house, there was a large mansion of an old man, who lived alone. On one side of the mansion there was a tree of luscious berries and on the opposite side, there was a mango tree. In summers, both trees would be full of fruits.

The old man had a virtual tough time. He would chase the two kids away from the berry tree and they would attack the mango tree. As he would limp to other side of his huge mansion, they would have enough time to have their fill.

The old man would be exhausted. He would abuse them and threaten to break their legs and the kids would be no less polite. They would make faces and laugh their hearts out to tease the old man more.

Think of the whole thing; was this all necessary? They should have been good kids; they should never have bothered the old man and what for? These fruits are anyway sold dirt cheap in the market and the kids were not actually hungry, they did it for fun, so bad....!

However, one also cannot resist the thought that if the old man could have understood their childlike stupidities. If the old man could just understand, they could just have taken only a few

fruits from his orchard. It is intrinsic nature of trees to give its fruits to others and, the kids were not thieves, just kids!

The old man could have handled the scene skillfully. Consider the change of the scenario: The old man could have invited the kids to his house and allowed them to have their fill. This certainly would have taken the seemingly sadist joy out of their kiddish adventure and they would have moved to some other pranks.

It could not happen. Rather, all bad things happened. Even when, a small gesture and a small idea could have ensured that all good things could have and should have happened. So sad, so bad...!

This is life for us. We all can do all good things. We have the potential to attain goodness out of any situation. However, our follies and we ensure that we land into all sorts of bad and sad things and negativity. Moreover, usually, we realize when things move away and we have our hands empty. Most do not even realize this simple thing! Sadly, often, wisdom comes to us as a lost opportunity and a posthumous virtue.

We are all born as a huge potential. Science admits that a healthy new born is the ultimate genius of the cosmos as the infant is designed this way. In next few years of the infant's life however, we all ensure that he learns all stupidities of life!

Sadly, our learning processes take away a major part of our potentials and ensure that we grow up to become otherwise stupid but only culturally genius. We turn the infants as slaves of contemporary popular societal benchmarks as they grow. This suits all cultures and civilizations of all time...

However, we all have a chance to get back to this original genius position, when we grow up and have a maturity stage in life. If after becoming a grown up, we could start an opposite unlearning process, to get rid of the slavery of societal mind; we can hit our potentials. Very few people actually understand the utility of such a process of unlearning. Fewer of them, actually perform it.

There is actually a huge gap between two people – one with a mind being a societal slave and one with a mind freed and liberated after the unlearning mechanism. The unlearning process for

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