□□□□□□□□□□□□□ – MAIN- THE AMBITIOUS ME

VOICE ARISES FROM NOWHERE-

From the vicinities of the dark, where darkness empowers, there was a sudden jolt thunder struck, and she came, laboured with the sense of being heavy, fraught with difficulties and screamed…"I have not done anything…be just be fair and tell me why am I exiled. The indestructible force of nature, let me know what have I done to receive this? Laughter? you laugh at my plight? who are you? well I am the one whom you do not want to know –dear– there is not way I reason out my existence but I do exist…I am the self-centered, the ghoric woman who wished for the longevity of my son…what's wrong in it? he deserved it. He was strong and so he won… and I? I was defamed all over just because of my desire to have him? why? It is important that we all engage in ratiocination. Is it bad to be bad? justice is served ONLY when you be vicious.

"Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of direst cruelty!"
"Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers…"

"What's done cannot be undone." (VERY SOFTLY BUT EMPHATICALLY)

WHY? Why Why do you think so?
I can turn the tables…I know I can plunge on goodness and make it helpless

I can make the good- the CRASS.

(hysterical laughter from nowhere)

Your crudity, got you noseless mind you madam.

It is not crudity that can bring you the filthy victory that we long for since time immemorial

It is diplomacy…the main motto of one's life should be how to be nasty under the garb of politeness.

The shrewd manoeuvring that can bring marvellous results…

I can motivate goodness, mind you, not provoke it but manipulate it to discard its smooth skin and evince its crudity.

SCENE IN A STAFFROOM-

1- Please dear, understand! I have deleted those files!

2-But you had them with you!

1. **(diabetically) No dear! There is no way! I do not have them with me at all. It is vital that you understand my issue.**
2. **Oh! No!**
3. **No worries! Call her and tell her!**
4. **But she will be annoyed.**
5. **Not at all. I know she will understand.**
6. **Ok. (calls) Ma'am, I have to tell you that I deleted those files! Sorry! But…**
7. **I will give you a MEMO. I do not want to listen to anything! You are so horrible!**
8. **(sadly) sorry!**
9. **(Calls in a while to 1) Hey! Listen(with a nasty smile) I got the files on my computer. I have them with me. Do not worry. You send them to her.**
10. **Accha? (resigned tone) ok.**

(After a few days…)

1. **I heard 2 got promoted?**
2. **4-Yes indeed! She had it in her!**
3. **Yes. Indeed. She KNEW HER CRAFT WELL… (Background song- Sabkuch seekha humne…na sikhi hoshiyari…sach hai duniyawalon ke hum hain anari…)**

THE VOICE IS BACK-

See! You do not need to be RUDE – GHORY!!!!!! (STRETCH)

You need to be NASTY- BE NASTY-

SCENE IN A HOME

1. **Hi!**
2. **Hello!**
3. **Your voice is so sweet**
4. **-Oh is it?**
5. **It is music to my ears!**
6. **Why are you doing this with me? Flirting?**
7. **No! I am sincere. In fact, I wanted to tell you… I want a lifetime companionship with YOU!**
8. **OK. So come let us marry.**
9. **Marry? No. No.**
10. **What is lifetime companion then?**
11. **Friendship! Obviously! How foolish of you to think it this way. I never meant it**
12. **But…you said it and I know it that you meant marriage.**
13. **See it is a matter of interpretations.**
14. **But I could hear it in your expressions!**
15. **You are very emotional, don't be. Enjoy your life.**
16. **(TO THE AUDIENCE) I know he meant it! I could read it in his lines…the way he spoke but I cannot make anyone explain. Anyways, I invested. I am so sorry!**

(After some days…)

- **What? The show was a superhit? Is it?**
- **Yes!!! God is so kind. It is very important.**
- **Yes. God is very kind to give people success…UNDESERVING…UFF!**
- **Let it be. Leave it.**

VOICE- See! Goodness is a piece of ——— whatever you want to call it. It is not important or worthy. Nastiness counts. It is the need of the hour. It is mandate. If you are not nasty who cares for you? Who likes you? Who loves you? Goodness gets paid is a MYTH. The most successful people are those who are nasty- Who is not ambitious today? Everybody is? But is it necessary to be this foul? Well, the answer is YES. IF YOU ARE NOT FOUL…YOU CANNOT BE FAIR—FOR- FAIR IS FOUL AND FOUL IS FAIR.

Enter a beautiful lady wearing a white gown…I have sown the seeds of his downfall. By giving me his word, he has planted his own destruction. My interest needs to be secured. So, Oh! the great King hear now carefully. Your beloved son will be exiled and my beloved son will inherit your property. (silence all around and there enters a haunch back woman. Now she speaks aloud and confidently) So, I fed it in her mind to make him realize he owned her three promises. See! It worked! I knew the King was very true to his word. He would die but break his promise. So simple and truthful…hahahahaha. (a voice utters) I HAVE BRAINS YOU KNOW….YES. I AM NASTY/VERY VERY NASTY.

ENDING SCENE — DARK HUMOUR, MYTH, AND MODERNITY COLLIDE

(Lights flicker. A low, echoing drum. The white-gowned lady freezes mid-smile. The hunchback woman's laughter stretches into a distorted echo. Suddenly—another presence. A blazing red light floods the stage.)

ENTER — A WOMAN IN FLAMES (SYMBOLIC DRAUPADI ENERGY, NOT NAMED)

Her hair is open. Her voice—like thunder restrained.

WOMAN IN FLAMES (calm, terrifying):
Cloth…you gambled with cloth once.
Today…you gamble with *conscience*.
Tell me…how many times will you strip truth…
and still call it diplomacy?

(Silence. The nasty voice chuckles.)

VOICE (mocking):
Oh please…not another sermon.
We've moved on. This is not some epic age.
This is *performance appraisal era*.
Targets. Promotions. Alignments. Survival.

WOMAN IN FLAMES (steps forward):
And yet…
every time deceit wins,
a war begins somewhere.

(A pause. The hunchback woman circles her.)

HUNCHBACK WOMAN (smirking):
War? No dear…
War is outdated.
Now we have *subtle destruction*.
Emails. Silence. Smiles.
***(leans in)* CC and BCC are the new weapons.**

(Audience laughter—dark.)

CONTEMPORARY SCENE (PARALLEL DIALOGUE)

(Two office colleagues—1 and 2. Soft white light.)

1:
Hey…you handled that meeting brilliantly!

2 (smiling):
Oh thank you! Means a lot.

1:
I told the boss it was all your idea.

2 (genuinely touched):
Really? That's so kind of you…

(Pause. 2 exits. 1 turns slowly to audience, expression shifts.)

1 (whispering):
Of course…
I also told him she *missed the deadline*.
Balance, you see.

(Lights dim on 1. A notification sound echoes.)

BACK TO CENTRAL CHAOS

(All characters now on stage. Overlapping voices. The nasty voice rises again.)

VOICE:
See? SEE?
No blood. No battlefield.
Still…complete annihilation.
This is evolution!

(The woman in flames raises her hand. Silence crashes in.)

WOMAN IN FLAMES (soft but piercing):
And yet…
You tremble when alone.
Because somewhere—
you know…
even victory has a witness.

(A long pause. The white-gowned lady falters.)

WHITE-GOWN LADY (almost breaking):
But…if I hadn’t done it…
I would have lost everything…

VOICE (interrupting sharply):
Exactly!
That is the point.
Lose *them* before they lose *you*.

(Suddenly, the background song returns faintly:
“Sabkuch seekha humne…” but distorted, almost mocking.)

FINAL TURN — DARK HUMOUR PEAK

(All lights focus on the hunchback woman. She straightens slightly—almost regal now.)

HUNCHBACK WOMAN:
Morality is a luxury item.
Not everyone can afford it.

(She looks at the audience directly.)

HUNCHBACK WOMAN (smiles):
So…
what will you choose?
Promotion…or peace?

(Beat.)

VOICE (whispers from everywhere):
Careful…
Peace has no incentives.

LAST IMAGE

(The woman in flames begins to fade… but her voice lingers.)

WOMAN IN FLAMES (echoing):
Every act writes a war…
even if no one fights it…yet.

(Blackout.)

A FINAL LAUGH—UNCERTAIN WHETHER IT IS TRIUMPH… OR DOOM.

ULTIMATE LAST MOMENT (AFTER BLACKOUT… A SINGLE SPOTLIGHT RETURNS)

(Complete silence. Then—her voice. Not loud. Not hysterical. Controlled. Owning everything.)

VOICE (slow, deliberate, almost intimate):
Mahatvakankshi… *main.*

(Pause)

Yes… I desired.
Yes… I planned.
Yes… I *became.*

(A faint, unsettling chuckle)

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[illegible] [illegible]…
[illegible]…
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

(A sharp sound—like a stamp of finality. Lights out.)


MAHATVAKANSHI
MAI

JODAE E- SARDAR- NOT A Play- AN EYE OPENER

A few sentiments often expressed non-verbally make more sense than those expressed verbally. This is true indeed but nonetheless; there are some emotions that sprout in our hearts and blossom only when they are expressed or else they hover around us making us more and more restless. Such is the power of organic art that the recipient is motivated to verbalize its effect dispensing with the requirement of diplomacy or tactic of any kind. I feel, like an unadulterated attempt with a known script based on a biography of an extraordinary leader, today's play Sardar based on Shri Vallabbhai Patel's life legacy, **Jodae – e- sardar** (Play presented by Gujarat Rajya Sangeeta Natak Akademi Gandhinagar Directed by revered theater director Manish Baradia) emerged as a spectrum of empathetic delight rousing patriotic emotions leaving behind any biased or jingoistic assertion on Indian freedom fight. The play was proudly presented by Sanskardham, an educational institution that fosters the holistic development of compassionate, innovative, and competent thinkers – Ahmedabad. The institution's effort to house the production of this play in its premises is indeed a step towards cultivating NEP 2020s virtue of ensuring that our students become empathetic citizens. It is not simply a retrieval of history that can enable the youth of today to reflect on ethical goals of life. It is reliving its essence. Jodae-e- sardar proves it.

Putting forth a strong critique of the British atrocities meted out in India during a particular time period when struggle for independence was the salient feature of the Indian nation [and hence the goal of many visionaries like Gandhi and Sardar Patel] the play nowhere forces us to

psychologically or pragmatically make any attempts to imagine a decolonized India. It instead convinces us that the choice that a leader makes at a certain time period is an outcome of the socio-political historical context and situation that has nothing to do with any cultural, social or national prejudice. Sardar is one such play that ceases to advocate any anti-British or anti-Pakistani terrain in spite of apparently propagating the majestic leader Sardar Vallabbhai Patel's anti-British or anti-Pak credence that manifested itself in the form of Gandhian Satyagraha. Comprehending the unmixed meaning of **Satyagraha as an uproar against 'injustice'** more than against 'anybody' the play becomes a mirror of the inspiring leader's journey from being a fearless lad who fiercely burns his abscess with a hot iron rod to his transformation into a colossal and formidable Sardar who fights for justice and wins the Bardoli Satyagraha.

Another striking feature the play brings forth is Sardar's education as a lawyer depended upon borrowed books from his fellow mates since he could not afford buying them, the play has it in the form of the most memorable dialogue, "The man who completed his education borrowing books from others, has his place in history books today." What a remarkable feature of his life. Perhaps many of us would not have known such a facet of the life of this praiseworthy man.

The backbone that stands with him, his wife Zaverba creates a short but an unforgettable impact with her memorable dialogue, "Jeevan na chella shwas sudhi" which acts as a strong source of Sardar Patel's sacrifice of spending his life in her memory after her death and fostering his children. What becomes noteworthy is that when he receives the news of his wife's demise, he is in a court fighting a case and chooses to execute his duty rather than getting immersed in sorrow; a very painful sacrifice.

This renunciation or sacrifice continued as Sardar decided to join the freedom struggle against the British rule,

participating in each of India's major fights against the British rule boycott of the Simon commission, The Quit India movement etc. earns respect for him as an important leader among the major freedom fighters of India. Governed by the sole objective of making the country independent, Sardar Patel finally emerges as the guardian of India when the play shows his indelible contribution in retaining India's unity in spite of the innumerable attempts to fragment India that was one of the most prominent set backs India could have witnessed after its independence.

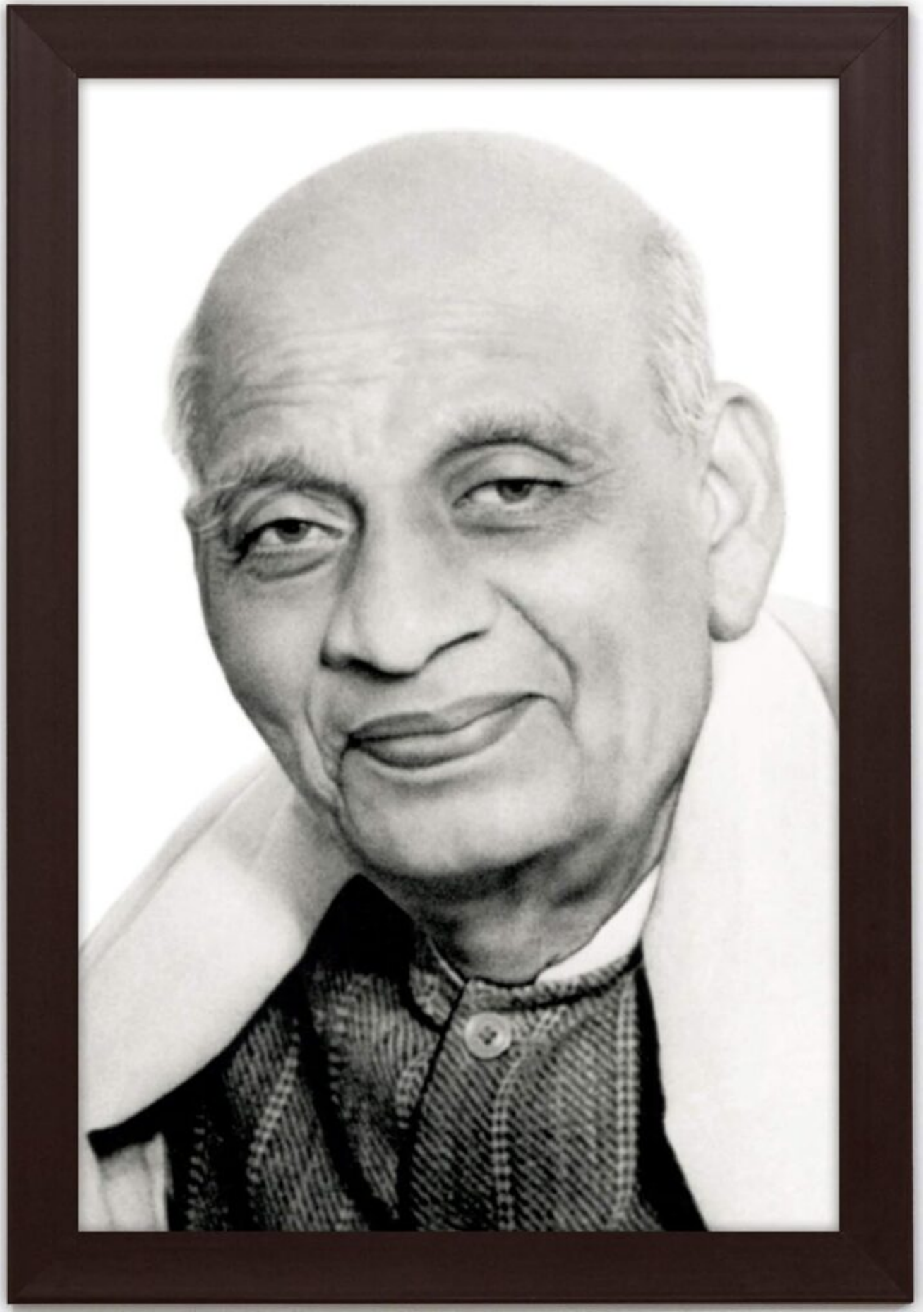
Certainly, the entire play admirably fertilizes aggression of Indian independence protests and struggle. The boycott of the British rule through the upholding of SWADESHI movement- Charkha, Khadi etc. is musically and dramatically depicted through dance instead of making it a vehement protest on the stage which could have given it a cliché appearance. The director smartly dilutes the tension of a serious subject matter through intermittent insertion of playful music and dance wherein the dancers through the bright costumes and impressive moves not only brings contemporary appeal for the youth watching the drama but also sieves the qualities of a period drama and saves it from being typecasted as a history play. Instead, Jodesardar manages to make us admire our leader who left us the priceless treasure of independence without amassing any wealth for himself. The closure of the play with his daughter's beautiful words, "aaje amari pita putri ni jodi tuti gayi' brings tears in the eyes and we surely do not regret this transition from practical people to emotional humans. This is indeed what Sardar did to me.

I profoundly realized how vital it is to relive the memoirs of those leaders who fought for truth and honesty and who enlightened the world that – Respect and love for a Nation is a matter of self-esteem and pride on our nation is our Birth right. This excludes personal interests and benefits and therefore, when Sardar Patel indubitably accepts Mahatma

Gandhi’s decision to have Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as the Prime Minister of India, he earns our admittance as the respected Chairman of Sanskardham Dr. R.K. Shah rightly stated- “ Had he been chosen, the condition of our country would have been different.”

Sardar is an eye-opener and not a historical account. A Must-watch. A brilliant story, a brilliant narration, a brilliant performance text that is a paradigm of an institution in theatrical excellence. When the closure of the play speaks – When after his death, it was found that his legacy had nothing but two pairs of clothes 160 rupees and one cow, we cannot help but weep at the greatness of this man and marvel at the prudence of the director who chose such episodes from the long life of this leader that could make this play truly memorable.

Dr. Payal Trivedi



MY KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS- THE NEW AWAKENING



So, My Krishna Consciousness awakened first when I began realizing the truth that life isn’t a matter of taking pride upon our glories. It in fact is a matter of becoming aware that we have our own shortcomings. This extraordinary self-realization dawned upon me not with the aid of any saint but

with the selfless help of those people that kept hawk eye on each of my stance ready to discover my errors like an eagle that is often geared up to pounce upon its prey. It is so considerate of them to make me their priority and my tasks as the matter of their able deliberations.

I saw an extraordinary lethal weapon that my detractors began using and that was pretense – a marvelous hypocrisy that was beyond my level of comprehension which made me put my ego aside and admit whole heartedly that I could be 'foolish' to be trapped by their so-called 'goodness.' It was through their able guidance that I was illumined that Humility and humanity are my weaknesses and not my strengths and I get carried away by a show of 'nicety' and then emerges the slithering cobra out of nowhere and I am left with nothing else but regret on my gullibility that governs my pragmatic sense. The outcome is – my brain becomes susceptible to people's apparent display of values and affinity towards 'being human.' It was slowly and steadily that I came to know that what's written on T-shirts, oughtn't every time the motto of life. I would give myself a benefit of doubt that the thing instrumental in making me a simpleton was my firm faith in the repetitive statement that resounded in my ears – 'God is with those that stay true.' Little did I realize then that God does not want us to stay blind to obvious wrongs that happen in front of us and wait for his intervention in things that we are eligible to solve.
Finally, after a long period of struggle my Krishna Consciousness bloomed at the time when I arrived at a finale that was the best eye opener. I encountered that there is a herd mentality that prostrates people under the pretext of appreciating their goodness in the society and that people who are repetitively heard praising it are the ones who actually promote 'conniving' and 'conspiring' nature. The next was a flabbergasting disclosure that these people aren't villains. Instead, they are the ones who have been the candidates that have continually failed the ' goodness' test of our ALMIGHTY. And they have therefore attributed the credit of their

incessant failure to God the Great who according to them is nobody else but the self-obsessed creature of Milton's Paradise Lost' having no role but to sit on the throne and observe people in constant agony.
Thus, cunningness appears as a blessing in disguise for such people and they opt for this. It becomes the shortcut for success- Yes- the more nefarious you are, the better it is for SATAN is the Samaritan of those that 'otherwise' want to be good but have turned into rebels as they have been disregarded by the ambassador of honesty and truth- God who has proved that KALIYUGA is the abode of rogues and you ought to be one in case you want to survive- and yes- who would like to embrace death? So, all in all, the fact stood unadulterated in front of me that if in case I choose to be on this planet, I need to adopt some or the other illicit means of survival which means the following needs to be done to be successful and have your share of profit. –

1. Worship slyness, become a devotee of callous and sadistic people.
2. emulate the principles of sycophancy and selfishness discarding altruism and selflessness to the optimum level possible and you have to do all this surreptitiously under the guise of PRAGMATISM
   Thus, Hence proved it was through these kinds of experiences that rewards and merits were awarded to those that were epitomes of ' the inhumans' as that would make you flaunt yourself as 'clever.' It will be your ultimate weapon- VAJRA to win over those provocations that could possibly let goodness overtake your SMART caliber of being 'NASTY.'
3. And…the warrior in me rose. And abruptly I took an oath that 'the fault lies not within me but in them who do not value my efforts and refrain from giving me any credit and adorn the garb of celibacy while embracing the rewards of my talent.

4. But…this wasn’t my way. It was not my choice and neither was my understanding of life. I brooded over when I got a call from my colleague, “would you complete work on my behalf as my mom is passed away and I cannot come to work.” And I got to hear that my maid’s son is hospitalized as he has met with a sudden accident and that a neighbor of mine needs my help urgently as he has forgotten his keys at office which happens to be near my work place and is requesting me to fetch them for him or else he would have to travel another one hour to get them from there. And finally, I could not understand the reason I was pestered by a small little urchin on the road begging for some food in order to fill his empty stomach and much more happened with me that day when I was in the process of utter transformation from a normal organic human being to an extremely hazardous being who was about to destroy goodness in the world. And…thus I am sure, there are many who are in this catch 22 situation wherein they are on the one hand compelled to sacrifice their goodness and on the other pulled by their goodness within. And thus, I would say, the final conclusion I have been able to draw after meditating on the problem with Vishnu sahastrnamawali as my guiding principle – We may be ‘good’ but we do not have the caliber to retain our goodness because we are often bothered by the concern of being ‘acknowledged’ for it. In case, we abstain from relishing the pleasure of being crowned as the most ‘good’ human on this planet we will perhaps do a great service to humankind as we would not be provoked to do ‘bad’ because we would not bother whether we are ‘touted’ good or not. I think that is the best mode of survival in today’s increasingly selfish world. This is perhaps what we call Krishna Consciousness that enables us the vision to see how ‘wrong’ we are because we want recognition even for being ‘good.’ When we know internally ‘ how bad we can be. And how erroneous too.

5. Hare Krishna.

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Avalon’s ‘Magnum Opus’- Krishna: Where devotion embraces innocence



Avalon’s ‘Magnum Opus’- Krishna: Where devotion embraces innocence

They may not know “lights, camera, action!” They may be unaware of the complicated stirring terms, ‘spotlights, props and stage angles,’ they may not have heard of prolix ‘gestures and postures and the so-called methods of acting’ but one thing that they seem to have earnestly grasped is – ‘KRISHNA the makhanchor.’ The little children of Avalon Heights International school (Vashi – NAVI MUMBAI) displayed a savant innocent wisdom beyond compare when on the auspicious occasion of Jaya Ekadashi 8.2.2025) they presented a play (in Vishnu Das Bhave auditorium-Vashi – Navi Mumbai) on the divine endearing Lord of countless people, the one and only ‘Sri Krishna’ who resides in the hearts of his devotees like the spirit dwells in the body.

One in a million times do you see such a remarkable exhibit of excellence with the children understanding their roles with such immaculate precision that it becomes easy for the spectators to admire their cuteness mixed with their truly

amazing understanding of the characters. This identification with the roles that they were playing made their performances assume appreciable quality beyond words.

From the beginning with the apt Ganeshvandana with which the tiny tots of nursery began followed by a rendition of Bhajans of Rama and Krishna, the children ideally set the platform for this devotional play; mind it…it was not a religious drama. It was a presentation anointed with the adoration for a LORD who has been our friend, philosopher and guide since time immemorial.

The play begins with the introduction of THE ATYACHARI KANSA who is more than a villain, a demon with merciless traits. He enjoys torturing one and all. This inception sets up an ideal stage for the audiences to wait for justice. The Kroor Kansa-dances with huge strides complementing each word of the song recital that recounts his demonic character. It is done with such exactitude that it becomes almost impossible to underestimate the little boy playing the role as merely a child artist; he is the formidable, the awe-inspiring KANSA indeed!

Thus, when the actor exudes both pride and selfishness of Kansa who does not hesitate to imprison his sister and brother-in-law when he learns that their 8th son would be responsible for his death, it becomes highly credible for the audiences. Moreover, the next scene where Devaki and Vasudeva's marriage is being interrupted by an Akashvani or the divine forecast and Kansa imprisons both of them, the play gives us the reason that at times, evil does become indomitable and all we need to do is to wait for the Lord to restore Dharma and destroy the invincible evil.

Followed by the same is the birth of Krishna in jail transported by Vasudeva to Nandbaba's house wading through the powerful and thunderous Yamuna overflowing due to the tumultuous rain. The children make it sublime with the snake-

God entering and providing a shade on to the newborn Krishna until he is deposited safely to Nandbaba's home. When he carries the newborn yogamaya to Mathura in Kansa's domain and she manifests herself as the omnipotent Goddess informing Kansa about the birth of Krishna.The presentation becomes awe-inspiring with the same being telecasted as an audio-visual representation on the stage.

The BALLILAS of Krishna become the highlight of the play. Pootnas…both pretty and ugly become the show stoppers! The unparalleled wickedness they bring in their dialogue recital and body language is what I found the most unbelievable! Especially, pretty putana's vicious facial expressions and admirably cute gajagamini walk, certainly hypnotic. Another exciting feature was the choice of the song for introducing Pootana. The song said it all! She was insanely cruel and devilish and the small little girl dancing wildly aped the scariness ingrained in the song so well that she almost manifested the demoness in front of the eyes. Her destruction comes as a pleasant relief as she comes twirling around from behind a tree with the baby Krishna on her chest whining in pain. Beautifully executed! Followed by this is Krishna killing the other demons sent by Kansa. The story is displayed with the use of dance-dramatic presentation and adds echoes the ancient Indian theatrical tradition of sangeeta natya.

The Lila's or magical deeds of the slightly grown-up Krishna bring an incredible glory to the play. We want to sing in praise of the Lord when Yashodamaiya becomes witness to his immensely powerful all-encompassing form wherein he shows himself as the master of the universe by opening his small mouth as his mother scolds him on eating mud. This scene, once again depicted using the audio-visual form appears majestic on the screen. Furthermore, the introduction of Krishna as the natkhat butter thief, makhanchor forming a human pyramid and stealing butter from the houses of the Gopis brings a smile on our face when the little girls in their glittering costumes

and jewelry walk through the stage adjusting their ghaghras and uttering their dialogues so adorably “Yashoda, tere gharme makhan ki kami ho toh keh dena, aur bhijwa doongi.” And, the tiny Yashoda maiya looks equally attractive with her colorful blue and golden apparel and trinkets, especially the elongated nose ring that makes her look exactly as we conceive Yashodamaiya in all her glory. Her astonishment on listening to the complains of the Gopis about her Lalla- (her son) seamlessly convinces us that a mother can be both, stringent as well as benevolent at the same time. The same is the preaching that we hear as the child playing Lord Vishnu appears on the stage standing inside his lotus throne and saying, “Ma ke pyar ki koi seema nahi hoti…apni maa ki daant ka bura nahi manna chahiye.”

Krishna, destroying the Kaliya Naga- the dangerous snake of Yamuna and saving the lives of the brijvasis as well as his avatara as Govardhandhari who demolishes the vanity of the majestic Indra sitting on his airavat (the elephant) and challenging the prowess of the Lord indeed appears admirably grand. The scenes have been conceived with such theatrical skill that one hardly wants to reckon that it is just an enactment with artificial cut outs of the venomous Kaliya snake and Indra’s elephant far from being real. Similarly, Govardhan Parvat made artistically out of the available props by the art team of the school appears real on the stage not because it is designed with any special technical adjustments but simply because the little Krishna who seems to be holding it on his little finger seems to be the resurrector of the entire humankind; what an aplomb and style does the boy portray the scene with! It is more than a wonder…it is something that only someone who is truly blessed by the Lord himself can execute with such confidence!

The play gives a rewarding treat to the eyes parallelly with Radha and Krishna’s extremely honorable adoration. Radha’s first visit to Krishna’s abode during his birthday and her

offering him a rose as a gift is the introduction of the innocence ingrained in their love that is unmatched with the worldly feelings of love. As Krishna receives the rose fondly and treats it as supreme among all other gifts, the scene entrenches purity and divinity of true love in the human world. Followed by it is the beautiful dance rendition that displays the celebration of this lovely pair Radha and Krishna. The play does not bring the rasalila or Krishna's divine dance with Radha and the gopis but this dance serves to be an apt delegate of the same.

Kansa Vadha or the slaying of Kansa is kept very simple. Kansa invites Krishna for a mallayuddha or a duel and first Krishna destroys his attendants and later he kills Kansa. Though the scene has nothing spectacular apparently, the finale steals the heart. How beautifully does the scene imbibe Krishna's philosophy, 'Your Karma' is responsible for what you endure in life.' As he kills Kansa, Krishna makes him remember every evil deed of his and finally destroys him. Kansa is shown to have realized his mistakes and dies. The death of Kansa is the death of the vice and the evil that consume humanity. Vishnu thus appears and gives a loud and clear message making the spectators brood over whether they would like to choose the path of dharma or endure a fate like Kansa by choosing to do evil; the choice lies with the people. Vishnu's concluding lines are evidence of the fact that we have the freedom to decide the way we want to shape our life. Thus, the play does not give any fixed doctrine of dharma despite Krishna being the ambassador of righteousness. It retains the beauty of Lord Krishna's endeavors to make people own their deeds and be ready to accept the outcome.

The play ends with the death of Kansa but we are not contented and we want more as it closes it generates a greed – of Krishna's eventual journey towards the *Mahabharata* and his most serene preaching of the Bhagwadgita. It is only because performance of the children keeps resounding in our minds that

we do not want to accept the closure so easily.

Overall, from Kansa's loud voice projection that echoed peril in the entire auditorium to Pootna's heightened cruelty to Indra's unrelenting presumptuous attitude, to Devaki and Vasudeva's poignant emotional outburst, to the little Narada's pleasing rhythmical NARAYAN NARAYAN, to Yashoda maiya and Nand Baba's sober motherly and fatherly affection, to the gorgeous Radha's lovely love, to the staid akruraji's serious expressions that were enough to convey Krishna must not go to meet Kansa – each actor appeared fully immersed in one's role. Such inseparable oneness with one's role is doubtlessly an achievement par excellence. The supporting dancers who entered intermittently all decked up with dazzling apparels and make-up on the stage served to enhance the aesthetic splendor of the production. The lights were aptly managed and the amazing backstage duty doers who appeared after each black out on the stage adjusting different props for every upcoming scene did a commendable job; after all it was not easy to show the change of place so easily without a circulating stage. The only one thing that could have been taken care of is that the backstage prop adjustors could have appeared in Indian costumes and that would have made the overall appearance of the play organically 'Indian.'

On today's auspicious occasion of 'Jaya Ekadashi' Avalon's presentation made this religiously special occasion truly special. The play was indeed a treat to the eyes. Ms. Aarti Patt's hard work and dedication to her craft is truly visible; together the music and dance team excel in their creation. A must watch!

Dr. Payal Trivedi

For comments if any, please write it the comment box given below:

Jaya Bacchan- The snob is inevitably ok

They may say as they please. Call u a snob, a stoic, a conventional but u are the best Jayaji. People’s memories are so shallow and so shortlived. Little do they remember how arduous it has had been to be a BACCHAN’S WIFE. Sacrificing is not the word. A willing suspension of the yearning for the glam industry at the peak of your career, raising two children with an unparalleled wisdom of INDIAN SOLACE boldly facing every media gossip about the husband and standing true to all wifely responsibilities through the thick and thin of the BACCHAN PARIVAAR is indeed praiseworthy.. Everlastingly supporting a husband when he is a victim of both; public acclaim and accuse is not an easy achievement at all. PROUD of you. You have been the most dignified INDIAN actress ever. One can watch all your films with family is the best compliment that I think exemplifies your artless and immaculate persona as an INDIAN WOMAN ACTOR. Let them talk. They are of least importance. Indeed, a woman of your stature definitely has a reason to feel.proud of herself. And…it is NOT always important to put a fake smile in front of the media and walk the red carpet. I perfectly understand the irritation it causes. So, JAYAJI is avoiding media intervention and so justifiably indeed. If u want her to be kind, let her privacy be hers.

Those that intend to comment may use the comment box given below:

EMPATHY- A FARCE :A play by Dr. Payal Trivedi

(For performing this play read the corollary at the bottom)

CHARACTERS: Dhruv, Vrushali, Dhruv's friend



Dhruv- I cannot love you. I have tried a lot vrushali but I cannot.

Vrushali- Just because I have scars on my face!

Dhruv- Vrushali I know what you mean! But I have tried to like u, I mean love ypu . I know you are immensely talented. You have a sweet voice. But…I cannot love ypu and Im sorry.

Vrushali- Dhruv why did you preach to everyone that don't judge a book by its cover! You cannot love me because you see these scars and…

Dhruv- Vrushali am sorry but I cannot somehow develop feelings for you.

(some days later Dhruv is talking to his friend)

Dhruv- Rishab I know I have to forget her face and love her because we need to love the character not the body but Im

helpless. I cannot just overlook her ugliness ans I would not be able to do any justice to her.

Rishab- Amazingly double standard. You talk about the futility of looks and you make the same mistake now!

Dhruv- I am trying.

Rishab- You BETTER.

(A few days later)

Dhruv- Vrushali I will marry you. Come.

Vrushali- Dhruv!!!!!! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR FACE??????(IS SHOCKED SEEING HEAVY SCARS ON HIS FACE)

Dhruv- Vrushali EMPATHY is a FARCE. I CANNOT UNDERSTAND YOUR NEED unless I become YOU. Let us start a new venture today. And yes I agree never judge a book by its cover. But cover is the unfortunate first thing that everyone sees. Come Vrushali let us start a new beginning.

CURTAINS

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The playwright permits theatre practitioners to perform this play Royalty free with one request. Please message us in the comment box if you are interested in doing this play. Also, if and when you schedule your play, inform us and our readers in the comment box about it. Who knows someone might amble into your show after reading your message.

SHIV PARVATI SAMVAD: THE DIVINE MASCULINE AND THE DIVINE FEMININE – A FACE OFF (PART 1)



(Enter Shiva as a mendicant)

Mendicant: O Tripurasundari! How shocking it is to see a paradigm of delicacy as you performing such a rigorous penance! What is it that has provoked you to leave your father’s paradise and come to this snowy wilderness to cause yourself such agony?

Parvati: Salutations to you shree Guru. I am here to fulfil my most coveted desire to marry the Lord of the three worlds!

Mendicant: O! Is it? Yes. Indeed, I must say then your desire is worthwhile.

Parvati: I am so pleased to hear this from you shree Guru. Indeed. I tried explaining this to my mother and father who are so adamant in their standpoint of labelling my desire to marry Shiva as unwarranted!

Mendicant: What? You are performing the rigors to marry SHIVA?

Parvati: Yes. Be doubtless about your listening skills Shree Guru. They are flawless. You have heard it right. It is him…My Lord and Master Shiva. I want to be his ardhangini! It is he whose desire has instigated this urge in me to continue appeasing him with my offerings unless he agrees to bless me by granting my wish to marry him.

Mendicant: And I am sure this all would have been planned by that shrewd Narada if I am not incorrect in my conjecture?

Parvati: Yes. And I am so glad he explained it all to me that I needed to perform this enduring penance in order to win my Lord's grace in my favour. So blessed will I consider myself if he happens to accept me as his sevika.

Mendicant: Sevika…you mean his slave. What a menial desire! O! Tripurasundari, have you seen yourself ever in the mirror to speak so lowly of yourself! How can you be so unfair to your unparalleled beauty that can stimulate many to submit in front of your unprecedentedly captivating, indomitably alluring visage, your incessantly long black tresses that can powerfully entwine the fate of many who claim to have solved the most intricate of all labyrinths and the above all your charming and graceful personality, your sweet voice that can cause even the best of nightingales to shame! Your doe-like eyes impair the best of sights when they dare to even compete with them! Perhaps you do not seem to have an idea of the unbeatable strength of your indisputable attraction that can hypnotize anybody who proclaims to stay indifferent to Kama's

shoot!

Parvati: Shree Guru. First and foremost, I bow down to you for your kind words. I think I am not worthy of such appreciation as had I been the way you have described myself to me, the god of Love would not have failed in his attempt, the way he did! I am just another 'ordinary' woman with no such extraordinary appearance as you have described me. All I can say is – 'thanks' for the adjectives you have used for me as they are indeed flattering for any woman and do give her the joy of being "recognized" and the pride of not being "bypassed".

Mendicant: I do understand Tripurasundari. I do construe the immense sadness caused when a MAN ignores a woman. I heard the way HE did to you! Simply intolerable! To just reject the advances of a celestial nymph as YOU! Horrible! But you know. You need not feel sad. He is just unworthy of your attention. Trust me! He deserves to be left the way he is! My beautiful lady! You simply do not know you can avail ANY MAN you want in your life! What have you to do with such a personality as Shiva? I fail to understand!

Parvati: Shree Guru. Applying conventional wisdom to my understanding of a personality as you, I do acknowledge that if someone as respectable as YOU is stating something, it has to be in my favor as you cannot be unkind towards me and wish ill of me. Having said so, I hereby request you to explain me the cause of your concern. I wish to obtain the Lord of the three worlds as my husband. As mendicants are not oblivious of past, present and future, you, I suppose, already KNOW my association with him is not of this birth but of the past many births and that we are destined to be together as we are inseparable. My earthly form as Parvati is germinated as per the need of the hour but YOU certainly possess the caliber of viewing us in our ardhanareshwara swaroopa the indivisible Shiv and Shakti. Therefore, I am incapable of fathoming your LEELA at the moment shree Guru! What on earth has provoked you to deter me from following my determination? Kindly explain.

Mendicant (laughs): Now that you are so resigned to gather the reason of my objections towards your desire Trailokyasundari! Let me tell you the full-fledged TRUTH that is unavoidable and that has provoked me to express my concern and thwart you from making the same mistake that you've been making since eons! Listen to this very carefully. YES. Indeed I am well aware that you are the incarnation of Shakti that is born to seek Shiva. In the countless births that you've taken since the inception of this universe, you have been desiring the inseparable UNION of shiva. But…THAT IS NOT THE POINT. The point here is did you EVER OBTAIN SHIVA? The answer is NO. NEVER! You have been perpetually seeking his union and have perpetually remained incomplete. The inception of Shakti as the embodiment of Shiva and yet left to yearn for eternal union with him! Remember your birth as SATI. What did you attain? You had to finally give up your life! Again the chakra continued. Your incarnation as Parvati – And in this birth too…you are being tortured for attaining his union. Remember, even after you unite with him, you will have to bear the agony of separation. It is written in your destiny Parvati, you will have to suffer. You will have to take numerous births and in every birth, you will have to pass through the continual strife for uniting with him. My question is…when you already KNOW this; why on earth do you want to undergo this hellish experience again and again? Why do you not stop this? Why do you agree to experience this travail when you have the power to discontinue this tradition? Why do you wish to endure the torture? Disagree. Tell that ruthless shiva you no longer want to participate in the cycle of striving to unite with him. Tell him to let you be in your original form as Shakti, the power within the shiva that gives him life and the strength to sustain the universe. Deny; Parvati or else you'll never be able to attain beatitude. You will be incomplete for infinity! Mind you! This division that shiva has inflicted upon you is nothing but a CURSE!

Parvati: Shree Guru, firstly, I express my sincere gratitude

to you for your concern. Having said so, I would like to make certain clarifications with the limited intelligence of mine that I have obtained by the grace of many a learned people as you. The ceaseless travail that I have been undergoing since the inception of this universe is the self-imposed strife that I have chosen to experience as without experiencing separation, it is virtually impossible to experience LOVE. Since my feelings for my lord and master are beyond definition, I have always wanted to feel every bit of him. As I happened to recognize myself in him, I yearned for a separate identity; a form different from that of his because only by extricating myself from him could I avail the pleasure of pining for his union and valuing it so dearly. Remaining within him I was simply lifeless. I obtained my "identity" in the process of separating myself from him and became KNOWN as "Shakti", shiva's "better half". I was no longer shiva's entity- somebody of Shiva. I was another "entity" who was important for defining his existence as he required my presence to introduce himself fully as ardhanareshwara the composite of Shiva and Shakti wherein both are equal- not a tinge of gender difference. So, when we both are one in our separate identities, why do you think I should erase every possibility of the divine union happening through acknowledging the "difference" between the two of us? Why should I refuse to become his ardhangini, his wife when I know that it is only by choosing to be one I would be able to attain the inseparable union with him that would give me the recognition I truly deserve- of becoming indispensable element in his life. Remaining unrecognized within him, I lose the privilege of making my presence felt as the energy in him that keeps him charged for anything and everything, as the divine soul that keeps an entity alive, as the motivation that he avails of breathing life into this lifeless universe. Shree Guru. With utmost humility I hereby declare that Shakti is the requisite of shiva and when despite very well recognizing this, if Shiva chooses to ignore or bypass the eternal truth, it is Shakti's duty to make him realize her mandatory presence

in his life. I am NOT here to give up so easily. I am here to stay. I am here to remind shiva of his promise of enabling me attain unison with him because HE NEEDS ME to keep the cycle of creation and destruction ongoing, to regulate this cosmos or else, everything pertaining to creation will come to a halt. Everything will become unresponsive if the sublime prakriti that is the root of all creation does not unite with shiva to engender CREATION. I hope your doubts are clear shree Guru?

Mendicant: O! So you think so. But, Tripurasundari. Let me tell you. Listen carefully. That shiva does not believe in a tinge of what you have told me right now I suppose. Had he thought the same about your indispensable presence in his life, he would not have caused you this agony. And if he is testing you, I do not see any point in doing so as he already happens to KNOW you since eons. So, why is he being so unkind towards you and why do you take the onus of getting back his short-lived memory of your importance in his life since time eternal is my point. Can't be he accept you without causing you such misery? What is the point in making you suffer so much? He is behaving foolish that's all I can say by refusing to accept your pre-destined presence in his life? Can someone who is actually the Lord and the master of the three worlds be so gullible? I doubt in his so-called divinity now after seeing you in such misery!

(To be continued)

For comments (if any) please enter in the box given below.

By: Dr. Payal Trivedi

RAMAYANA: FRACTURED, FIXED AND FORETOLD Oglam Presentation- Janardan Ghosh’s Narration.

The Concept:

Ramayana has been told and retold over centuries but the difference lies in the way it is reiterated. Not with the perception of recounting a tale but with an intent to reinvent it to unleash the hidden secrets of this unbound narrative we attempt to retell again and again taking the artistic liberty that it affords timelessly to revisit it with an innovative perspective. The project is an enterprise to endorse the epic as a narrative that is much ahead of its times in its intrinsic potential to dislodge our linear interpretations of this colossal tale as a religious account of Hinduism. The endeavour is to re-evaluate the learn by rote method through which we have perpetually studied this epic; any change in the script is a larger than life or a utopian idea. In a country like India where the myth goes beyond the circumference of the story and becomes a ‘sacred tale,’ to conceive certain alterations in the script is a indeed a formidable venture. Yet, this redoubtable interpretation on our part has been an outcome of our humble initiative of making the narrative appear different and hence more thought- provoking as it raises questions on the fundamental aspects of human existence without tampering with the organic theme in a unique way. The Ramayana is fractured, fixed and foretold for an audience of today that’s intelligent enough to accept variations in established Literature if it offers food for thought. This differently abled understanding of the epic cognitively sheds light on the of presence of the elements that demystifies the glory of this mythological narrative making it a poignant tale

of a King’s sacrifice, struggle and his confrontation with the ultimate evil that is insurmountably challenging. Accompanying him is the divine feminine- the motherly prakriti, his consort whose worthiness being questioned every moment despite her inevitability in life is a tragic disclosure. When Nature is so serene and comforting, why do we exploit her? Is the question that resounds in every chant of the story teller who happens to have taken the onus of narrating the epic his own way without letting the cliche notions of propriety affect him. It is the kathavachna tradition that comes to the fore in the process wherein the kathavachak tries his level best to arrest the attention of the spectators who have gathered around him to witness his ability of telling a tale fascinatingly.

The alterations made in the tale are the result of an adaptation of the epic on which it is based. Nonetheless, the fact remains that these changes are made to inspire a generation of listeners to re-read the epic with an open mind without being influenced by the halo of divinity that revolves around it. This performance is towards giving Ramayana a form and shape that traverses the boundaries of conventions, religions and even Nations becomes a tale of global reality that surrounds human existence today. Our utilitarian approach towards nature, her exploutation under the garb of progress and development are universally undeniable truths that prevail in this tale of a magnanimous King who readily sacrificed everything in his life. His tales of heroism that prevail in our memory must not be confined to the deeds of valour but beneath there lies a purpose – to make the realization that the victory of good over evil comes with a price to pay. Divine Prakriti is insulted, hurt when the divine masculine shows his worthiness ascertains his valour and she ultimately chooses a silent retreat into the oblivion. Ramayana is indeed fractured at this juncture but the fact remains that it has to be fixed and again told for the generations to come and the Kathakar takes up this responsibility. Everything we see is an

illusion, it is just a dramatization of a popular tale but it aims at restructuring and reframing our often erroneous understanding of the tale as synonym of dictation of certain principles. It is therefore that often every time the tale adopts a new form and incidents do not coincide with the actual epic. Shoorpanakha becomes Mareecha and Sita Swayamvar takes place after the exile of Rama and Laxmana in the forest; only to make us comprehend that the kathakaar's choice to tell a tale remains uninterfered which opens up newer possibilities of engendering a CREATIVE PIECE- retold with a purpose: to enlighten. This is Ramayana – Fractured, fixed and foretold.

The Performative aspect:

The finer aspects of the kathakar's(Janardan Ghosh's) stage presence are intrinsically interwoven in the tale so inseparably that his gait, the gestures, the postures the expressions all depict a conceptual assertion of the Ramayana. The fluidity of the narration is indelible and the intonation is deliberately controlled to suit the parameters of excellent dialogue delivery which ought to have a thunderous proclamation of the epic coupled with a subtle yet effective volume that's verbose and yet aptly restrained. There is a performative glory inseparably blended with the musical beats of a folk rendition that invites the onlookers to participate in the performance. The Kathakar's splendid stage presence with his enormous voice modulations make the characters live in stage; needless to say- male or female. There's a quaint androgyny that Janardan Ghosh establishes on stage with his one man army – himself who appears as a reservoir of actors essaying different roles evocative of the Bahurupi artists that are used to playing diverse roles and yet one at a time. Slow and steady wins the race is the strategem that the Kathakaar deliberately adopts when he narrates simultaneously playing varied roles- Rama, Sita, Shurpanakha and above all the colossal Ravana. The entry of Ghosh defines folk narration that's charming endearing and at the same time prudent in its

discretion of becoming stern when the narration becomes the somber from the recreational. It is a folk teller whose telling of the tale exploiting all the assets of performative aspect become more than conspicuous. He cries and groans and shouts and screams and laughs and proclaims and sits and stands and jumps and circumambulates the stage as if capturing it from all its directions. Yet he releases the stage equally well and comes back to himself as he knows the tale will speak for itself. The brilliance of a learned actor becomes visible in Ghosh's choice to be Indian in his compassionate and anxious mannerisms of flourishing a folk tale of his nation and yet intellugebtly global in his approach towards narrating it objectively putting up a universal concern: Eco feminism. A subject matter of relevance for all across ages, Sita… a woman of education he so confidently he says and ends it so poignantly saying and in the end she immersed herself in the earth. And we automatically question " Why? Why do we hurt her – the one who nurtures us so fondly? The divine feminine. Ghosh brings the ties together: Of Sita's separation from Rana and of her being deserted in the end: Both are aligned. Whether she got accidently separated from him when Ravana abducted her or when he sent her away, in both cases, she is the sufferer. The performative narration impresses upon re-reading the epic independent of the notions of divinity attached to it.

Dr. Payal Trivedi

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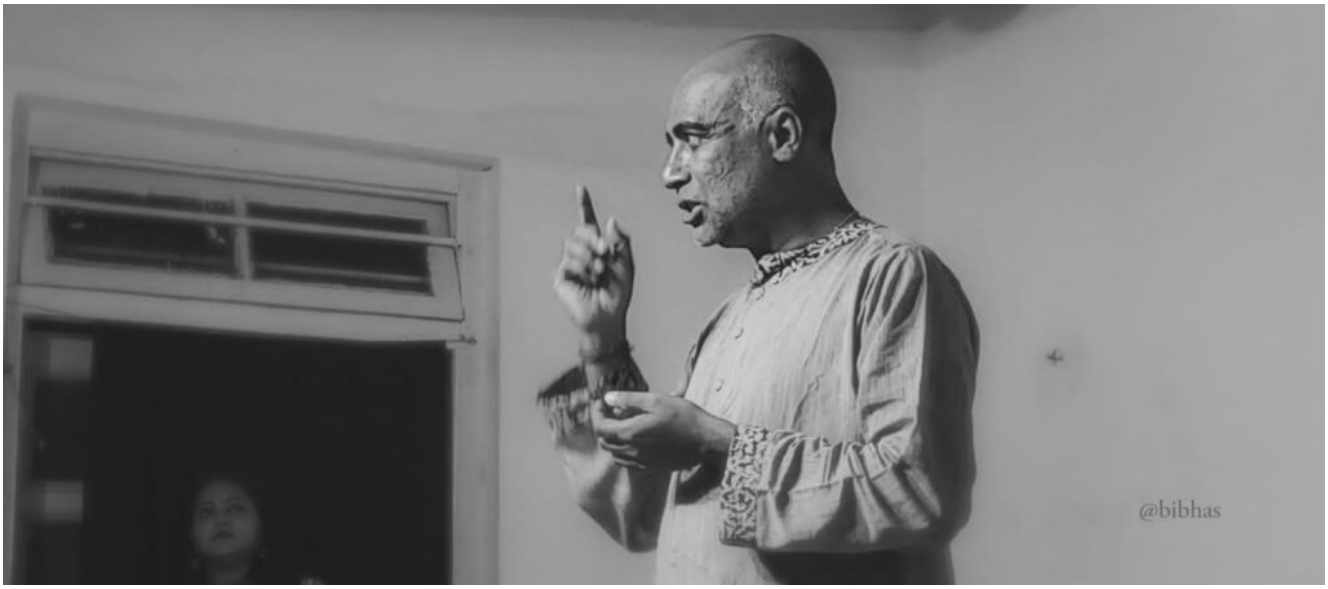
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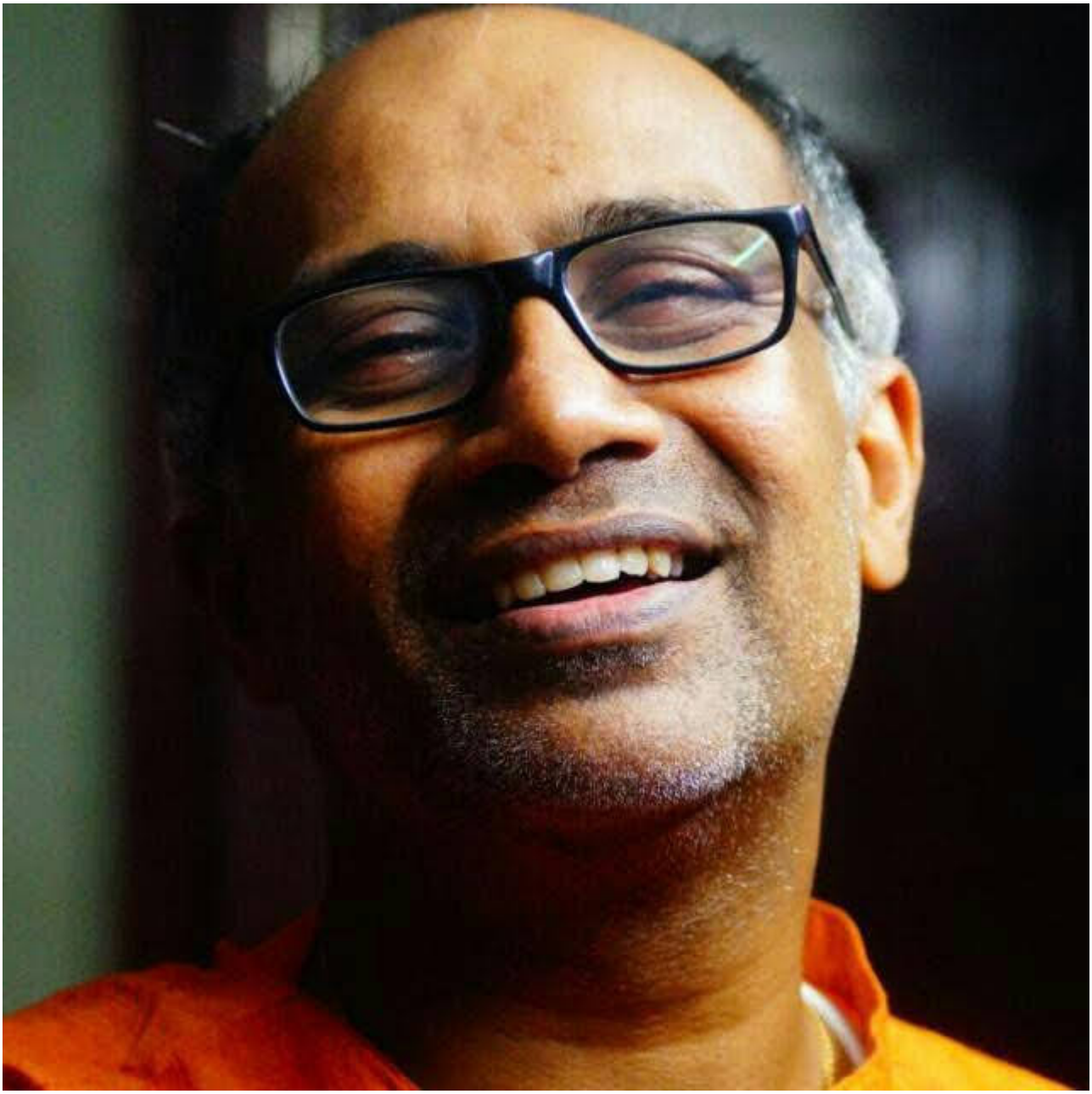
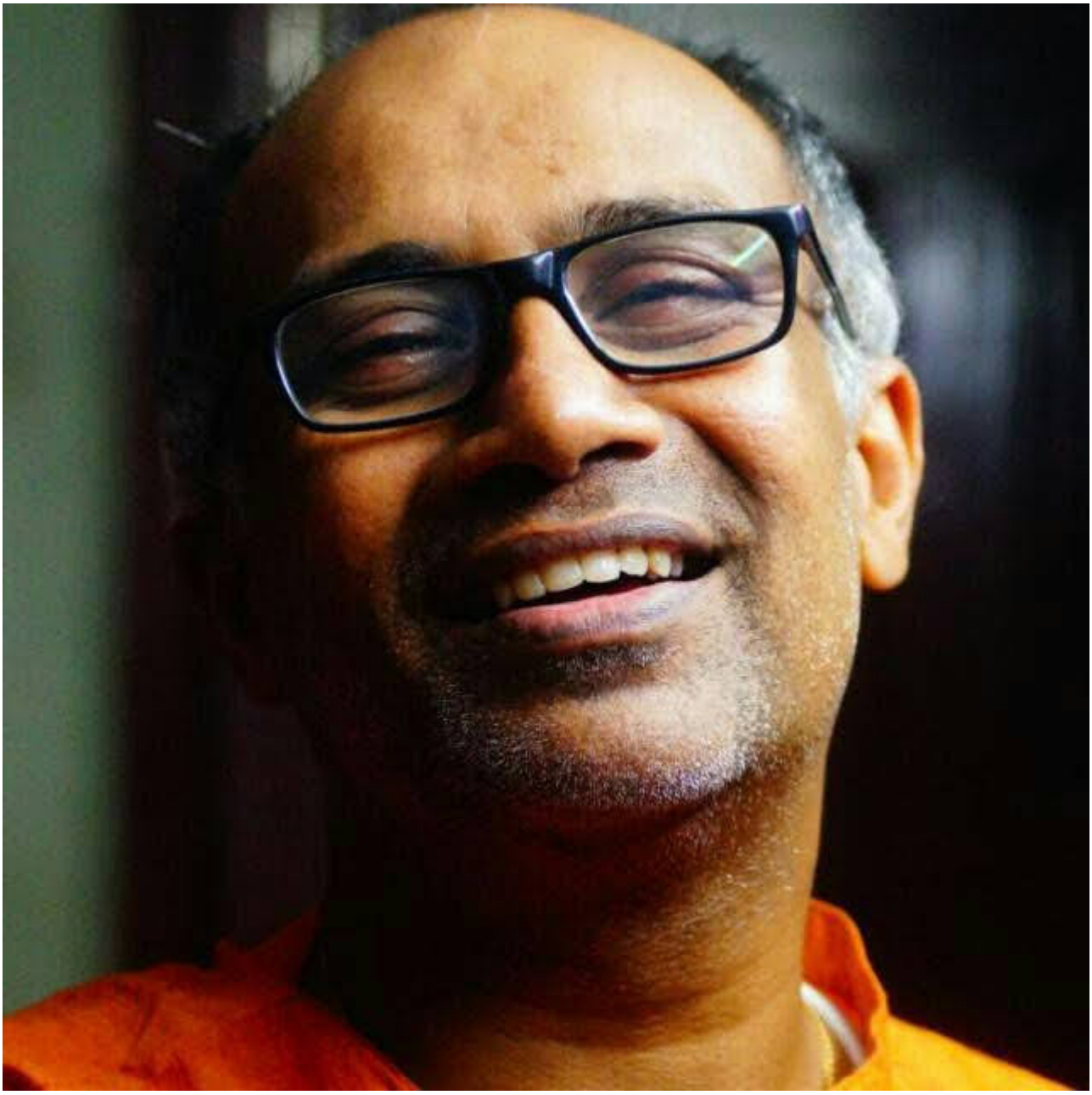




Janardan Ghosh’s Kayantar – Towards the need for Transformation



KAYANTAR- A film co-directed by Rajdeep Paul & Sarmistha Maity

The lead actor in the film, Dr Janardan Ghosh, is really versatile and multi talented. He is a performing artist, academic, theatre director, film actor, playwright, performance coach and storyteller (Katha ‘Koli, a new art of storytelling) whose practice includes the use of traditional theories, contemporary performance vocabulary, and interactive media. His research-based work engages the indigenous practice methods in urban spaces exploring the perspectives of historicity, spiritual consciousness, intertextual dialogue, and body-space dynamics of myths, tales and gossips.

Kayantar- is a poignant tale of religious discrimination that leads to repenting circumstances for those that are forced to quietly endure and hence implicitly exploited to endorse conformity to the extent of losing their identities and eventually their lives. Moreover, it is a tale that has a sub-plot dealing with the pathos of the Bahurupi artists who beg in front of the people for their survival; their art not being recognized as a respectable profession but being condemned as a demeaning activity, pursued by those that are financially underprivileged and become nomadic thus imploring in front of the people for alms in order to make both ends meet.

The film is heart-wrenching as we see how the Bahurupi Muslim artist (played by Dr. Janardan Ghosh) dressed as the Hindu Goddess Kali appears in front of his two children; only to consecutively become crippled and hence forcefully passing on his legacy to his son who dislikes pursuing his father's profession. The son has a point. He being a Muslim roaming around in the apparel of a Hindu Goddess is disparaged by the religious stalwarts of his community, is mocked at by the children of the village and is boycotted by many conservatives as 'Bhikhari' – a pauper. These facts reiterated in an overtly painful and innately stark undertone are enough evidences to make the pangs of the young man believable and evocative of the viewers' empathy for him.

That the innocent youth who has not acquired this profession by his own choice and it has been rather forced on him comes as a harsh and undeniable truth that grills our thinking capacities to the extent of questioning all our modern theories of global indivisibilities of culture and religion. When the young lad takes an anomalous decision to choose a girl of the rival community and loses his life because of being engulfed in the holocaust of communal riots that take place in his village, our conscience gets stirred and we as viewers of the film are compelled to revise our notions of living in an industrialized, progressive world. We are made to

rethink whether the circumferences of culture, creed, race and religion only exist on national borders or are they still prevalent somewhere within our psyches and we are only ignoring these under the pretext of being the civilized community.

Within the framework of a story that so effectively becomes pertinent with the theme of universal relevance as we still find the world divided into castes and communities and people identifying themselves through their religions, there is a very intriguing story of Asia, the young girl who wishes to adorn herself as Kali and pursue her Bahurupi father's profession with confidence and dignity. The tale comes as an pleasant surprise when Asia is founded engaging herself in painting her body coal black and rejoicing to see herself in the gruesome look. It seems a woman's reclusive identification of the other dimension of the divine feminine that exists within her apparent demure image of a meek girl.

That Kali chooses Asia's body to be her abode is also a fact that demands our prudent understanding of the fact that religious differences prevail only on the superficial level as the Bahurupi keeps singing "Apanar Apni fana hole shei bhed jana jai"- Means that realization comes only when the distinction between mine and yours gets erased. Such an indubitable truth of the oneness of divinity is fondly repeated as a backdrop of the entire film makes the theme of the movie apparent- It is not by dividing but it is by uniting that humanity can realize in the oneness of this universe wherein every entity is the fragment of that supreme energy that we call God. The philosophical context in the film does not let the film lose its ties with an integral theme of gender discrimination.

Asia takes the permission of her father to dress up as Kali and pursue her profession as a Bahurupi. Nonetheless, the Bahurupi, her father, gets annoyed with her and says that he cannot allow his daughter to wander on the roads as a

prostitute. Why the man who has earned a living with the same profession disallows his daughter to follow his footsteps? The film gives us a jolt when we hear these words of the Bahurupi. If it were such a demeaning profession, why on earth did he adopt it? Was he also forced by his family to adopt it and with great reluctance he went on from door to door dressed up as Kali and asked for money from the people? The film does not answer these questions but raising these queries in our minds the film acts as a thunderbolt when we see a Muslim girl adopting her father's profession ultimately when her brother dies in the communal riots and she has to earn a living for her home ultimately as her father is crippled and is unable to do anything to make a living. Though she finally opts to become Kali, the intimidating figure of the bloodthirsty goddess who is so venomous becomes the most pensive image of pathos; she has to become Kali only to support her family and this time her father is helpless and cannot stop her even if he wants to. She walks on the railway track fearlessly continuing her journey on the route that has her brother's remnants that remind us of the gruesome ending that the young boy faced due to his unfortunate choice.

Diluting the conformist image of Kali as a fearsome goddess, Kayantar presents another facet of hers as a sad feminine figure who wanders helplessly for recognition. When she walks on the road men do not fear her ghastly appearance. They in fact dare to tease her which undermines her ferocity only to expose the truth that a woman's frightening exterior cannot dismantle the atrocities meted out to her in a man's world. She may be regarded as an epitome of Kali and the goddess may have chosen her to manifest her form but the fact remains that she is an ordinary woman confined within domestic sphere that does not allow her to operate according to her will and discretion. Her life is what a man wants it to be. She may dress up as Kali but she will never be regarded equal to the formidable goddess of the temples and the cemeteries. She will remain as an ordinary woman. When the Bahurupi tries to

disclose the truth in front of her thus refusing her to wander on the roads as Kali, it is this harsh reality that he tries to explain to her which remains unadulterated truth pertinent to all times.

That a woman is exploited under the pretext of granting her equal rights and overt sexual violence and tacit manipulation are indeed a part of this so called man's world even today are not hidden realities but are undeniable truths. Kayantar shows that if Kali wanders as an ordinary powerless woman Asia, she will be shamed. The film aptly demystifies the wrathful image of Kali and extracts the ordinary femininity in her that seeks recognition till date.

When the goddess Kali accidently stepped on Kala- Lord Shiva as per the mythical account, she was unhappy and wailed for the fact that she had made a grave mistake of putting her feet on her husband's chest; a sinful conduct for a woman as per the conventional theories of Hinduism. It is not Kali's pathos that is underpinned in the temples when we worship her as the mother goddess. It is her ire that is being continually recognized and the red tongue that lolled accidently out of her mouth due to her unconscious act of putting her feet on Shiva's chest is ironically regarded as a mark of her fearful image. Kayantar shows the other aspect of this horrific Kali and that is – Kali as the one that resides in the domicile of an artist who earns his morsel of food by emoting her from door to door. When the Kayantar takes place and the Bahurupi allows her to possess him, the possession is just on the level of the exterior. There is no internal possession because the artist cannot afford it. He is supposed to be submissive and not exert his redoubtable image in front of others. He is a beggar.

The film talks about the pathos of the village artists that pursue their profession only as a means of earning the basic necessities in life. With the advent of complex technologies in the realm of entertainment, these artists are deprived of

their due recognition. Kayantar – the transformation is of the body and not the soul but this is what the film seems to have intended. The ardour of transforming one's soul is explained through the restraint that the Bahurupi imposes on himself and his son who both dress up as Kali only because they have to earn money to win their bread and butter. There is no philosophical enlightenment in the process of transforming themselves. It stays at the superficial level even after the Bahurupi keeps singing the song 'Apnar Apni fana hole shei bhed jana jai- which talks about the need to escalate beyond the boundaries of time and space to realize divinity.

The song remains merely a song and the spiritual message ingrained in it is only a matter of speculation. In the end, the Muslim girl Asia adopting Kali's image does undermine religious discrimination but it does not become prominent because; the extremely painful state of a girl who takes up a vocation on account of a drastic change that occurs in her life of losing her own brother is a telling tale that completely dilutes the fury in the image she adopts and brings out the agony of an ordinary woman incarcerated in the prison of conformity that she is unable to challenge or disown.

All in all, Kayantar is a film that stimulates us to understand religion beyond the confines of the right and the wrong and urges us to revise our cliché associations of Gods and Goddesses as intimidating figures of the temples who possess their disciples that invoke them in the temple rituals. It certainly is an eye-opener to the fact that the transformation of our soul is needed but is often occluded by our senses governed by selfish motives that thwart the spiritual awakening which engenders the realization of truth.

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