

ANVANITM

Moments

FEATURING:

REFLECTIONS

by Chinmayee Kulkarni

Creative Conscious Living

Doorways

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I AM ANVANI

I shed the shoes that wandered far,
And with them, shed the weight of roads and tar;
Leaving behind the echoes of places that shaped me,
Keeping only the good, the great, what set my spirit free.

Coming home Anvani is a ritual that shields,
One where time softens and stillness heals;
Like bowing down at the temple door;
To the power that cradles, the ones with less and more.

As I become Anvani, I meet the truest part of me,
Masks dissolve, and now I see;
Raw, tender, real — I simply am,
A note in the song, part of the Divine plan.

In this sacred pause, I learn my soul's own tongue,
Each feeling etched on the scroll, my story sung;
Touching the essence that stirs awake,
I come back home — not to walls, but to the space I now make.

And now as I speak, as I sing, as I claim,
My voice is a lantern, not a flame;
It lights my waters, sets my sea free,
I am who I am — I am Anvani.

— Arundhati Bhand

Moment Makers

Saish Gupta | Student, Pranic Healer

A Moment in Time

Rosetta M. | Cooking Enthusiast

A Moment in Time

Vinaya Mandke | Staff Engineer

Between the Pages

Ketaki Chinchorkar | IT industry

Hues & Strokes

Anjali Bhand | Home Maker

Hues & Strokes

Trupti Telkhade | Financial Analyst

Hues & Strokes

Trushna Telkhade | Pranic Healer

Perspectives

Aishwarya Kore | Software Engineer

Reflections

Chinmayee Kulkarni | Senior Advisor, EXL

Reflections

Aditi Joshi | Biocurator, Scientist

Tastes Like Home

TABLE OF CONTENTS

From the Editor	03
Anvani Journeys	04
A Moment in Time	05
Perspectives: Close enough to support, spaced enough to grow.	06
Tastes Like Home: Ras Bhakri	07
Hues & Strokes: Aaji's house	08
Reflections: The Weight We Choose to Carry	10
Reflections: Doorway for People	12
Hues & Strokes: The Part of Me I Hadn't Met Yet	13
Between the Pages: To All Who Never Grow Up	14
Hues & Strokes Chaitrangan	16
A Moment in Time: Leaves to Roots	17
At Her Feet: Strength of Forgetting	18



From the Editor

The theme Doorways was picked through a lottery. I compiled a list of themes and randomly picked one. When I was brainstorming theme ideas, "doorways" was written as I was literally staring out our backdoor into our yard. It's my favorite spot in the house to indulge in a little daydreaming.

The world outside always seems so oblivious to all that's going on inside the house, and even more detached from all that's going on within me. It grounds me. Maybe these raging thoughts, flowing emotions, sprouting ideas, and aches and pains can wait... for just a moment... till this hummingbird finishes its lunch... and then till the crow finishes its gossiping... and maybe even till the bulbul couple finishes bathing?

The backdoor became a doorway into a world that continues in its own rhythm, unrelated to what is happening to me or in me. That's peaceful, humbling, and deeply spiritual for me. It helps me separate myself from the part of my ego that gives me too much importance. And at the same time, it's not an uncomfortable process. In fact, it's enjoyable and meditative, and it always takes me back into my world through daydreaming—an act where I move through timelines, living multiple things in a single moment.

So here we are. As you walk through these pages, I hope you find your own doorway: your own small, unremarkable place where the world keeps its own rhythm, and you're allowed to just watch it for a while. Some will be as loud as my thoughts, and some as quiet as the bird finishing its lunch.



In this range of methods for stepping in, I hope you know that the aim now is not to look for doorways, but to recognize them as moments of choice, stillness, movement, decision, enjoyment, and opportunities to live multiple lives in a moment.

Om, amen, ameen.

Arundhati Bhand

Anvani Journeys



Vikrant, Pune

WhatsApp Challenges

I like the concept, design and the intention of the challenges.

Personally what stayed and touched me the most is that despite me struggling to answer everyday you did take into account that I was answering although late. It was a much needed emotion for me to someone to just take that into account. A big thank you for that.

The way the group works, the members are each other's support and strength.

Your responses to the answers are gems.



Smita A., Bengaluru

Pranic Healing

The Pranic Healing sessions are extremely beneficial, effective and calming.

I have personally experienced immediate results, sometimes during and after a session. 🙏❤️



Trupti T., Pune

ANVANI Moments Issue 01

What resonates with me the most is how beautifully it highlights ordinary life. It reminds me that there is so much beauty in the simple things around us, moments we often overlook in our busy lives.

Through different stories and perspectives, the magazine encourages us to pause and appreciate the little joys, meaningful experiences, and everyday moments that make life special. It is always inspiring to see how each person expresses themselves and finds beauty in their own unique way.

A Moment in Time

Saish Gupta
Pune, India

2026.3.7

Some doors reveal new beginnings; others reveal lost connections.
It all depends on which side you're looking from.

Perspectives

Trushna Telkhade
Pune, India



There's a natural phenomenon called canopy shyness amongst trees. It happens when the upper branches of trees shy away from each other, leaving these pathways when you look up at the sky. I was walking through Chittaranjan Vatika in Pune when I looked up at the sky one day and saw this pattern stretched out above me, and something in it stopped me. I was just gazing at the beautiful patterns of the pathways, close enough to support, spaced enough to grow. And the perfect lighting made it look like it was a doorway to the sky. What I loved the most about crown shyness is that the trees aren't distant from each other, they're close. Close enough to communicate and hold a kind of quiet strength against the wind. But they still leave each other room. Room to keep each other safe from



pests and reach for their own light. Room to grow without damaging one another. I resonate with them because it is exactly how my journey has been. I remember feeling the need for space to grow, yet have that support so that I can fall back. It's almost magical that today, I choose work that makes me that space. I walk alongside people on their own journeys, hand in hand, because I know exactly what that simple word of assurance feels like when you're the one who needs it. And whenever I needed a space to grow, someone was there. Now I can be that for them.

I think that's us. We are humans, our inner nature is only to nurture.

If only we could all do it everyday.

*Close enough to support,
spaced enough to grow.*

Tastes Like Home

Ras Bhakri

Aditi Joshi

Pune, India

Ras bhakri, yet another childhood memory from my holidays in Goa! This recipe is dear to me for many reasons; be it all of us sitting at the table, relishing this delicacy, laughing over silly jokes, gossiping about the lesser-known relatives, or just enjoying Disney cartoons as the plates magically were replenished with hot phulkas and sweet coconut milk, much like the feast in the Great Hall on the first day of every Harry Potter school year! Considering the times we are in now, and the times we grew up in, our growing up years were simpler, the way most childhoods feel in hindsight. A sweet craving meant home-cooked, delicious desserts as our mothers, grandmothers and aunts brought to us generational recipes from their kitchens.

While growing up, special occasions demanded special delicacies. Our yearly ritual of spending summers in Goa was special enough for our mothers to whip out this recipe! This is one of my favourite traditional recipes. One bite and it instantly takes me back to everything Goan- our house with the tiled roof, multiple rooms that had specific roles to play, and most vivid of all, the aroma of the kitchen...very prominently the coconuty-jaggery fragrances with a slight hint of the wheat phulkas being rolled out with unimaginable speed from the hot tava! While the 'ras' making is a little tedious, especially for a whole lot of people, and hungry children, the entire process is worth the wait!

'Ras' translates to 'Juice', here it is the coconut milk and 'bhakri' translates to 'flat bread', in this case, wheat phulkas. The recipe below can be adjusted to one's preferences of sweetness and cardamom choice. ENJOY!

Recipe (serves 2)

Ingredients:

Freshly grated coconut- half coconut
Cardamom powder equivalent to 2 cardamom pods
Jaggery- 4 tablespoons (increase 1 tablespoon for a sweeter ras)
Pinch of salt
Wheat flour- 1 bowl, kneaded
Kesar threads- a small pinch
Dry fruits (optional)

Method:

1. In a vessel, add the 4 tablespoons of jaggery. To this, add half a bowl of water, a pinch of salt and mix it well.
2. Grind the freshly grated coconut in three rounds. For the first round, grind it by adding just half a bowl of water. Using a muslin cloth or a very fine sieve, drain the coconut milk into the vessel with the jaggery. For the second and third rounds, add 3/4th bowl of water to the coconut slurry for grinding, followed by draining the coconut milk into the same vessel. Whisk this mixture thoroughly.
3. Roll out thin phulkas.

Assembly:

1. In a deep dish, place the phulkas folded in a triangle.
2. Pour a generous amount of the coconut milk ras on the phulkas and on the sides.
3. Add kesar threads and if you enjoy, some grated dry fruits of your choice.



Hues & Strokes: Aaji's house

Ketaki Chinchorkar
Pune, India
Acrylic on Canvas,
8" x 11"

My Aaji's house has a blue window with madhumalti arching over it. In many ways, this window has been a doorway to my memories there. Even after their passing, I can still walk through that doorway into cherished memories. Converting the same blue window into a door in this painting is slightly bittersweet, knowing no one is behind that door anymore. But the memories of my grandparents and their home will always live in my heart.

I hope this simple journey down memory lane will connect you with your special place or person.

प्रिय सौ. आज्जीस,

आज २६ एप्रिल २०२०, तू जाऊन ११ वर्षे झाली... खरं तर अजूनही विश्वास बसत नाहीये. लहानपणी एप्रिल महिन्याखेर आणि उन्हाळ्याची सुट्टी असली की आम्ही सगळी भावंडं आजोळी जमायचो, पुढचे दोन-तीन आठवडे मस्त अंगणात, घराच्या गच्चीवर, समोरच्या मंदिरात खेळण्यात जायचे. आम्ही तुझ्याघरी येण्याआधी तू आमच्या आवडीच्या सगळ्या गोष्टी, खेळणी, पदार्थ तयार ठेवायचीस. आम्ही आल्यावर तुला होणारा आनंद आजही डोळ्यासमोर येतो!

भावंडामध्ये मी एकटीच मुलगी... त्यात आज्जीची लाडकी, मनसोक्त फुले वेचणे, झाडांना पाणी घालणे, आज्जीला देवपूजेसाठी हार करून देणे, अंगण झाडणे आणि हो त्या झाडलेल्या अंगणात रांगोळी काढणे.

मला आठवतंय एकदा तर मी रांगोळी काढत होते, ते बघून माझे लहान भाऊपण रांगोळी काढायला लागले... नुसती अंगणाभर रांगोळी... अशा कितीतरी आठवणी... आजच्या दिवशी तुझी आठवण म्हणून एक चित्र काढलं आहे. असं चित्र जे कायम माझ्या डोळ्यासमोर येतं... तुझं अस्तित्व असलेली खोली... ती खिडकी... त्यावर विसावणारा सुंदर मधुमालतीचा वेल !!! आज इथेच थांबते... आम्ही सगळे आनंदात आहोत, तुला आणि ती. काकांना भावपूर्ण श्रद्धांजली...

- केतकी



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Scan OR Click!

Reflections: *The Weight We Choose to Carry*

Chinmayee Kulkarni
Pune, India



For the longest time, I believed forgiveness was something I gave to other people. Something that felt like a favour though often it came at the cost of my own hurt. If I forgave too quickly, I worried I was excusing what had happened. If I held onto my anger, I felt like I was standing up for myself. Somewhere along the two extremes, I realised I was carrying far more than I needed to. And the person who was probably last on that list of forgiveness, was myself.

I've replayed conversations that ended badly, questioned decisions made years ago, and wondered about the outcome had I spoken up sooner or stayed silent longer. It's almost funny how much grace I could extend to strangers while denying even a tiny bit to myself. How easily we offer context to other people's stories while editing out our own.

Along this journey, with the biggest help of regular meditation and reflecting inwards, something changed. I started asking different questions. Instead of "How could they say that?" I found myself wondering, "What must they have been carrying to respond that way?". That didn't make their words hurt less nor did it suddenly make every action acceptable. It was rather a reminder that people rarely speak from a place of perfect clarity. More often than not, it is from their fears, insecurities, exhaustion, grief or experiences we may never know about! Realising that someone can hurt me and still be hurting themselves. Someone can disappoint me without ever intending to, someone can love me deeply and yet not know how to hold me gently.

Empathy slowly changed the way I dealt with my anger. Not to say it's made my anger vanish, but rather it's given me a fresh pair of eyes to observe. It did not erase accountability but it definitely softened the resentment. I found myself focusing on understanding rather than reacting to the words. And soon the same compassion slowly found its way back to me.

I found myself seeing younger versions of myself as someone who was simply doing her best with what she knew then. I still have moments where old memories resurface and familiar emotions knock on my door.



Forgiveness, though, isn't a destination to arrive at once, rather it is a choice you make repeatedly. Some days it's easy, on others, it asks for discernment. Discernment to detach yourself from the situation and see it simply as an observer.

Perhaps over time, that's what forgiveness has become for me, not pretending nothing happened or erasing the past, but loosening the grip on stories that keep me tied to the past. Choosing kindness over impossible expectations from myself or others that I should always know better. Protecting my peace over replaying old battles, choosing to understand over assumptions. And maybe, just maybe I realised that healing isn't about erasing the scars over time, it's just realising that they no longer speak for you.

And as someone who loves a good metaphor every now and then, let me leave you with one. Acceptance of a situation is like standing in a doorway looking into a room that you've been avoiding. Perspective on the other hand, is the chance to look through multiple doorways; while from one we might see the hurt caused, from another, we may see the fear, insecurity and history that shaped those words. And finally, forgiveness, is choosing to walk through a door or to finally close it. Like reaching the threshold and realising you don't have to live in the room anymore.

Reflecting simply means seeing that some doors teach us something valuable, while some lead us somewhere new.

“Forgiveness, is choosing to walk through a door or to finally close it. Like reaching the threshold and realising you don’t have to live in the room anymore.”

Reflections: Doorway for People

Aishwarya K.
Pune, India

Doorways - When the theme of this issue was announced, the thing that remained in my mind was that the topic is 'Doors' and many thoughts came along the way. But when I sat down to write my thoughts, I re-read the theme and it's "Doorways". The door is what you open and close, while the doorway is what you walk through. And the immediate thought that came into my mind was, there can be doorways without doors. And my perspective changed.

If we consider the doorway is to enter into our life or to leave our life then I guess there are two kinds of doorways. One which has no need for a door and rather one directional. The people who come into our life and stay for the lifetime and that's our family, our parents and siblings. In fact they are already inside the room, and siblings might enter the room later but then they stay there, always. And hence maybe we take them for granted. But I like this granted nature, it's a comfort. Wherever you go, how much you change it's going to stay the same. Along with these people, one thing that enters the doorway and never leaves is our nature, our core values which are built in us throughout our childhood by grasping our surroundings. Yes, I know we do change in different stages of life but the core remains the same. Let me give you an example, when you meet your old friend after many years, it's obvious that you both have changed but you still click together immediately and find that comfort because the core remains the same.

And now the doorways with doors. Every other person other than our family, comes into our life via this doorway. We never know if they are going to stay and if yes, then for how much time. The unexpected friendships, they entered our life and just like that become an important part of our life. That's the magic of friendships, they just happen, without any calculations, just based on vibes. Some stay for a short period of time and some become part of our family. In my childhood, I used to feel, I am going to be friends with my current friends for the rest of my life. Elders around me used to say, that's not how it happens, you will go to college and things will change. I used to deny it. But when I went to college, I lost contact with some friends but it didn't hurt because I guess life happens. At the same time, I am grateful for the close ones who are still inside that door. At the same time life teaches you to let go of things and be peaceful with it. The friends who I felt will be there for the rest of my life, left the door and it hurts, a lot. But as they say, time heals. Sometimes when I think

about them I feel that hurt but it's for that moment because I have started accepting that not everything is in my control.

One more important person walks through that door, the love of our life. I find myself blessed that that person has entered my life, and I get to share my life with him.

There will be no doors, if there are no hinges to hold them together. Just like that I feel our hobbies, our learnings, our daily routine are the hinges of our life. Irrespective of the entrance and exit of the door, these things are there, holding us together, keeping us sane when it's difficult to. For me, cooking is such a thing. Me cooking alone in the kitchen is my comfort space. Whether my dopamine is shooting high or is at its lowest, you'll find me in the kitchen. Starting with different kinds of veggies, masala, then the chopping and finally adding everything in a pot without any definite measure and creating that one dish (as simple as avocado toast), it just gives me pure joy. People around me say, I have magic in my hands ("Sugaran"), not sure of that but I am immensely grateful for it. It makes me and the people around me happy! A win-win, really.

I wish my doorways always have someone entering, even if only for a while. That's how I become a better, kinder version of myself.



Hues & Strokes

Trupti Telkhade
Pune, India
Ink on Paper

The Part of Me I Hadn't Met Yet

Sometimes, the things we discover about ourselves happen when we least expect them. I used to think I wasn't meant for creative things. But one day, I started doodling to fill the quiet moments—just innocent little lines. Every sketch began with "I'm just drawing nonsense" and ended with "Wait... that's actually cute."

Slowly, those tiny doodles turned into something deeper. What started as aimless lines are now demanding their own gallery space!

Looking at these drawings—the flowers flowing through faces, the soft feminine figures, the playful lines, and the delicate patterns—I see someone exploring, feeling, and expressing without worrying about perfection.

In one piece, I see more than just a woman's face. I see softness, beauty, and the feminine energy that has always been a part of me. The flowers growing through her hair feel like thoughts and emotions blooming freely. The bold red lips and bindi celebrates the joy of being a woman.

What I love most is that none of this was planned. Every line came together naturally. Each sketch feels like a conversation with a part of myself that had been waiting patiently on the other side of the door.



Between the Pages: *To All Who Never Grow Up*

Vinaya Mandke
Pune, India

Warbreaker | Mistborn | Tress of the Emerald Sea by Brandon Sanderson

What does it mean to be true to oneself? Does it mean being aware of what one does? Or does it mean owning what you do, whether that is being young and reckless and plain wrong, or accepting a graceful defeat? And where do you draw the line?

If there is one genre that opens this Pandora's box, it is fantasy, and I mean nothing less than dragons and multiverses and witches and every kind of magical creature. And within it, the arc I keep returning to is the coming-of-age. Coming of age is not something you finish. You do it every decade of your life, while life gets more and more messy and the fanfare gets quieter. And the author I would urge you, gentle reader, to read is Brandon Sanderson.

I came across him through a colleague who would not stop raving. The first book I read was Warbreaker. On paper, the premise is lacklustre. A young princess takes her elder sister's place and is married off in a faraway land, only to be dropped into a web of lies, deceit and secrets. The characters are ordinary people, right up until magic and disaster arrive and force them to become something else. What held me was not the plot but the shape of it. The younger sister, Siri, has to learn who she is within the confines of The Emperor's court, which wants her to be just another symbolic figurehead. The elder sister, Vivenna, who trained her whole life to be exactly this — a demure, gentle bride — is now suddenly thrown into reality. The things she learned mean very little in the real world. Two sisters, two ways of failing to be yourself.

If Vivenna spent years becoming the person she was told to be, and it did not amount to much, then being true to yourself cannot simply mean being consistent. Consistency is easy to fake. You can repeat a virtue for a decade in the hope it sticks, and end up with a very polished performance of a person you are not.

Then I read Mistborn, and I will keep to the first book, because I loved it the most. It begins with Vin, half-Skaa, born into the oppressed underclass, taught by a hard life to trust no one. Kelsier finds the magic in her



and takes her in, along with his crew of thieves plotting the impossible: the overthrow of an immortal tyrant. Here is what makes the book more than a heist. Kelsier and Vin do not believe the same thing about freedom. Kelsier's freedom is defiance. It is the raised fist, the refusal, the willingness to burn it all down and grin while doing it. Vin's freedom turns out to be something harder and more abstract. It is the choice to trust in someone and believe in something after a lifetime of learning not to. Kelsier can free a city. Vin can only free herself, and she does it not by hardening but by daring to be soft.



AI used to create/ideate on the image. Final linework and colouring done by hand.

Humor me for a moment. Being free is not the absence of chains. It is being able to choose against the weight of everything that made you. Picture Plato's cave, people chained in a cave their whole lives, facing a bare wall, watching shadows flicker across it and taking those shadows for the whole of the world. One of them slips free, climbs out, and finds the sun. For Plato, that climb into the light is the point. Reality is up there, and the shadows were only ever a lie.

Maybe leaving the cave was never the point. Who knows what waits above, and possibly the truth is emptier than what Plato promised. There can be no sunlit world outside at all. Freedom is not in the light. It is in the clarity you find while still chained, in seeing the shadows for what they are and knowing the choice to break free is yours. If being true is not about accepting your fate, and not about pretending bad things never happened, then what is it? Maybe it is the narrow, unglamorous thing Vin does. Seeing clearly what was done to her, and choosing anyway.

This brings me to *Tress of the Emerald Sea*. I will not call it Sanderson's best, but it is the most imaginative thing you will read. A young girl sets off to rescue the boy she loves, taken away to an evil island across a sea that is not water but spores, seas of colour that kill you in inventive ways. It is absurd from the first page, and if I squint a bit, it reminds me of both *Harry Potter* and *Earthsea*. Sanderson took the coming-of-age story and quietly removed the destiny from it. What is left is agency, plain and stubborn.

And that, gentle reader, is where my erratic leap of logic lands. I do not think fantasy is escapism from the question of how to be true. I think it is the cleanest place to ask it, because it strips the unnecessary logic away. One becomes free not by being handed the best version of themselves, and not by repeating the right things until the words wear a groove. One becomes free the moment they stop performing the person they were assigned and do the next true thing in front of them.

I do not think being true to yourself is a defeat you accept gracefully, or a wrong you forgive yourself for with a flourish. I think it is smaller and steadier than that. It is the willingness to keep coming of age, to keep walking through doorways, one small honest choice at a time. At twenty, at thirty, again at forty, and I hope well into my eighties. That is why I still read these books. They are not reminding me who I was. They are asking, once more, who I am willing to become.

Hues & Strokes: चैत्रांगण...एक रांगोळीची परंपरा

Anjali Bhand
Pune, India

Rangoli
24" x 24"

चैत्रांगण म्हटल्यावर मला आई, आमचं घर, त्या समोरील छोटंसं अंगण आणि तुळशी वृंदावन डोळ्यासमोर येतात. आई रोज सकाळी तुळशीसमोर एक सुबक रांगोळी काढायची.

चैत्र महिन्यात, चैत्र शुद्ध तृतीया ते वैशाख शुद्ध तृतीयेपर्यंत ती चैत्रांगण काढायची. चैत्रांगणामध्ये जवळपास ५०-६० छोट्या रांगोळ्या आहेत. त्यांना प्रतीके पण म्हणतात. ह्या छोट्या रांगोळ्यांनी आमचं अंगण भरून जायचं. ही प्रतीके ज्ञान, समृद्धी, संरक्षण आणि सुपीकता दर्शवतात. मी आईकडून रांगोळी व चैत्रांगण काढायला शिकले. ती परंपरा मी चालू ठेवली आहे, बदल एवढाच की मी चैत्रांगण देवघरात काढते. त्यातील मला जेवढ्या रांगोळ्या माहिती आहेत, त्या इथे काढल्या आहेत.



Scan OR Click!

A Moment in Time: Leaves to Roots

Rosetta M.
Thane, India

I captured this image of symmetric, open leaves during a walk at Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Thane. The image intrigued me, and I thought it looks perfect for this theme, giving a different perspective on the doorway to the source of life for plants, which is their roots. The perfect symmetry in nature and God's creation makes me stop and wonder... if nature can be so perfect and marvelous, how much more are we!



At Her Feet

Renuka Mata The Burden of the Axe, the Strength of Forgetting

Arundhati Bhand

The story of Renuka Mata is a famous one, full of conflict, unforgiving acts, and an ending that leaves you wondering why and how it all happened.

Renuka Mata was a pure Devi. So pure that it was solely her intention that kept wet clay solid. Every day, she would make a fresh pot out of clay to collect water, and without baking it, the pot would hold the water safely. That was the level of her sadhana.

One day, while collecting water, she saw a couple of Gandharvas frolicking in the lake, husband and wife, engrossed in leela. Legend says she had a moment of weakness when she looked at them, and that was when the clay pot dissolved. Jamadagni Rishi, her husband, saw her and immediately accused her of having unsavoury feelings for another male.

Furious, he ordered his eldest son to cut off her head. The son looked at his mother, looked at his father, and refused. Jamadagni turned him to stone where he stood. He turned to his second son and gave the same order. The second son, too, refused, and watched his brother's fate become his own. The third son refused. The fourth son refused. Each time, the same silence before the refusal, the same stone after it. Four sons had now chosen their mother over their father's rage, and four sons now stood lifeless around her.

Just then, Parshuram, their fifth and youngest son, returned home to find his mother accused, his brothers turned to stone, and his father still burning with fury. He understood, in that moment, exactly what was being asked of him. Jamadagni turned to him and gave the same order.

Parshuram did not look at his mother. He did not look at the stone where his brothers had stood. Without a single doubt, without a single question, he raised his axe and beheaded her.

Seeing his son follow his orders so diligently, Jamadagni was satisfied, and granted him a boon: whatever he wanted would be given. Parshuram got down on his knees, folded his hands, and humbly asked for his mother and brothers to be revived, with one condition: that none of them would ever remember what had transpired.

Jamadagni woke from his slumber of anger with a start, and realised the sin he had just committed. He had killed the mother of the universe. Overcome by regret, he was scared to revive them. Not because he didn't want to, but because how would he live with that guilt?

Parshuram said: as the sin was committed by us, its burden has to be borne by us. Continuing to live as it were, with the knowledge of the crimes we have committed, never being able to apologise or confess, that will be our punishment. Jamadagni revived them all, and life went on as it were, with the burden lying on shoulders that, with time, became heavy. Jamadagni would later meet his own violent end. And according to some versions, Parshuram's axe would fuse with his hand and remain there till the end of time as a result of this unpunishable sin.

Looking back at this story, I see the silence in Renuka Mata's voice. Jamadagni's anger spoke, the sons' refusal spoke, Parshuram's guilt spoke, but she stayed silent. I don't aim to give her a voice, I don't think I can, after all, her silence too is saying something... maybe something different for each of us. But, I have always questioned why the woman looking at the Gandharvas was decidedly wrong. If her entire identity is that of Jagatmata, mother of the universe, would she not have looked at them as her children? How could one who could instruct wet clay to hold its shape, dissolve herself in a moment of weakness? Why was a moment of lost focus treated as a crime requiring defined punishment, while a sage crippled by an emotion as fickle as anger faced no retribution at all?

Here is how I look at it. I see Renuka Mata watching a couple in love, enjoying leela, and craving that same intimacy with her own husband. If anyone had that effect on her, it was only him. Something he should have realised in the first place.

And another gap I see is how the Gandharvas weren't blamed, but the Apsaras in our stories carry such a bad reputation. It was wrong for her to be tempted, and then wrong for her to be tempting. This is exactly why I am laying these stories at her feet. Because honouring her presence in us, in society, in stories and in our history, is redoing the way we talk about ourselves, not from a men vs. women perspective, but an unbiased view that takes her strengths into account, just as we have taken his, and his weaknesses, just as we have taken hers.

The stories aren't meant to portray perfection. They are meant to be lessons.

In this case, a lesson of control.

You can either lose control and lose yourself, or lose focus for just a moment and get back up.



“

You can either lose control and lose yourself, or lose focus for just a moment and get back up.

— Arundhati

Renuka Mata: The Burden of the Axe, the Strength of Forgetting (At Her Feet)

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