

# ADRIFT



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Weather at this time of the year is pleasant. Pleasant because summer has just begun retreating and softened its barbs of brutalities, giving space for winter to settle in day by day. Breeze, laden with some chill, at this early morning hour, is bringing the life back to all living things.

On the outskirts of the village, there is a temple. Baba, a Sadhu, is the only priest of this hermitage and he is here, in this temple, since his childhood. When there is still darkness in the surroundings he wakes up at around 03:00 AM in the morning. It is among his other daily rituals, and he is devotedly following it since he had gained senses.

As he has taken his bath, he is ready to go for another important daily routine and that is meditation. He took a mat and spread it in the center of the ground to position him on it in meditation pose. He then squatted on the mat cross-legged with his eyes closed and hands clasped in the lap. Meditation at this hour gives immense strength to him.

As early morning is the only time when he can think about himself and praise the almighty, he is making full use of this part of the day. People of the area, otherwise, would start thronging this temple and not leave him alone even for a moment till he slips into the bed in the late evening hours. Majority of the visitors are inquisitive who would be wandering in search of the answers for endless doubts arising out in their minds.

Baba always praises the almighty for giving him wisdom to clearly distinguish and follow right path. While praising the God, he is also putting some questions to him, which are erupting in his mind and always, remain unanswered.

‘Oh my God, you are great. All inhabitants of this area must be happy and thankful to you as you have given enough resources to the natives of this

region. They have got all fortunes to enjoy in the form of land, trees, greenery, forest or livestock to earn their livelihood from. You have blessed them all to the extent that almost everyone must be contented with what he possesses. Then why widespread unrest has always been noticed in their minds? They always look unsatisfied with what they have though they all are well-fed. Why they are always found tired, frustrated and distorted?’

‘Almost everyone is filled with resentment towards the society and those who are related to him. Common grumble found among them is that they have not been given their due share in the form of respect and recognition. Parents are not happy with their own children, and children in the same manner are unsatisfied with what their parents have inherited to them. Everyone who is demanding respect from those are related to him is reluctant to give respect to them. Why everyone in this area is filled with the feeling of indignation in his heart? All human beings should be thankful to God as he has blessed all of them with many relationships, and they can give and take respect and love from every end’, Baba thinks.

He believes that our relations are not restricted to those who are related to us by blood or marriage. We should instead broaden our mind horizon and think beyond this limit. We should also be genuine towards our fellow country-men. Not only this, fellow inmates of this beautiful planet are also related to us. They are related to us in a sense that everyone and everything in this world has been created by the same Creator.

There may be some genuine ambitions in everyone’s life, but the problem for all of us is almost the same, the greed and the lust for more than what we deserve. This discontentment has vitiated the whole scenario.

There is only one remedy for all these problems of this world that one has to bolster his faith in the Almighty.

He prayed before the Lord, ‘People of this area are coming to me in the search of answers for their questions. Kindly enable me to show them the right path whenever they are coming to me. No one should go empty-handed from here’.

Darkness has begun fading and now he can view things across more clearly. More clearly than what it was around an hour before when he had

positioned himself on this mat. Not only the darkness of night has receded, but the early morning fog has also dispelled tremendously.

Baba, awoken from these pious thoughts when he heard the sound of footsteps coming towards him. He opened his eyes to see the visitor.

The one who has entered into the gate is a young man of this village.

There is a gate but it is a misnomer to call it a gate because neither there is a wall nor a door is attached to it. In the name of the gate, the wall has been left unconstructed. The boundary wall is hardly of about four feet height that even a five-year-old boy can see inside from it just by using his toes.

When the intruder came near it became clear that it is the same young man, whose father had been here, in the temple, last evening to meet Baba.

He was pleading before Baba to help his son. His words are still buzzing in his ears ‘I have full faith in religious personalities like you. You have been blessed by the God with the enlightenment and divine vision. I know that no one in the world but saints like you can only help me and suggest perfect solution to my distress. For some time, I am disturbed due to the abnormal behavior of my son. He has become morose and prefers to remain absorbed in his thoughts. He has always been found entangled in constant dread of destitute. There was a time when I was proudly flaunting about him as he was supportive and inclusive. He was happily taking part in all family matters whenever my wife and I were in need of his help. God only knows what had gone wrong with him. Now-a-days he not only likes to keep mum but also continuously staring in the dark. My wife has made a number of attempts to know the reason behind his agony, but he had never bothered to share anything with us. He even avoids making of eye-contacts with us, despite our repeated requests.’

How can Baba forget yesterday evening when he had also turned emotional? His own eyes had also become damp when he noticed that tears were unceasingly rolling out from the eyes of that old man? He was pleading in supplication by putting his hands together and kept saying ‘my son is in great distress and needs your blessing. He has become a portrait of despondency. I have also discussed the matter with some of my friends but instead of extending any helping hand they had further confused me.

They call it depression and had even suggested me to consult some psychiatric.

But I, instead, very strongly believe that it is not a disease which can be cured by a mere medical help. I urge you to have sympathy upon me and dispel this unrest from the mind of my son. He seems to be unhappy with what God has blessed him. To my mind, he is also suffering with some lack of self-confidence and this lack of confidence is making the situation graver. Though my son has never shared with me the reason behind his dejection but it appears to me that this is a sheer 'helplessness'. This sort of dejection takes place in everybody's life when he finds himself helpless. He is hopeless to attain what he is dreaming for. Kindly infuse him with the ability to bolster his inner strength so that he may be able to face the harshness of this world.'

He is Sadagiram. Baba knows this young man by name because few months ago he was among regular visitors to this temple. He was often noticed utilizing his time in the library of this temple and going through different types of books. During those days he had developed immense interest in several types of books with special focus on books on philosophy. Baba remembers that he was very inquisitive and was raising very relevant doubts. Baba liked such types of people most who are genuinely devoting time to reading.

Sadagiram wished Baba and touched his feet but said nothing.

Baba asked 'if I am not wrong you are Sadagiram' finding that Sadagiram is not interested to reveal anything before him but preferred to keep mum.

'You are right Baba. I am Sadagiram', he replied.

'So it is you whose father had come to me last evening. He was very much worried about you. What I have come to know from your father is that presently you are suffering with some mental unrest.' Baba asked. He further continued, 'Leave this frivolous thing at once and take a pledge that from now you will try to utilize your precious time and mind by indulging in more critical and meaningful activities.'

Sadagiram nodded his head to say yes.

Baba said, 'Till some time ago you were a good boy and a regular visitor to this temple. What went wrong with you? I have not seen you here for

many days? It is good to have faith in the almighty. You should not have stopped visiting religious places. This may help you to solace the mental agony and find the perfect solution to your problems. With regard to your agony, you can talk to me or consult religious epics available in our library. The epics and religious books are being considered equal to the sublime top. The stream of knowledge flowing down from these sublime mountains has the capability to drench the surface of any heart with happiness. It is not good to run away from this stream. Let it fill the depth of your heart. Your father is a known intellectual and among old visitors of this temple. You have to follow his footsteps.’

Sadagiram who was standing near Baba by putting both his hands together muttered in a low voice, ‘you are right, Baba. It was my father who has persuaded me to meet you regarding my problem.’

‘Your father is a respectable man of this area. People revere him for his kindness and helpful attitude towards all’ Baba said. ‘Though I am not having any social binding either filial or conjugal but could not escape from the agony of a mother and a father. Your father is undergoing a trauma because of your abnormal behavior. He is a father and it is quite natural for him. It is unbearable for him to note that you, his only son, are suffering in such a way. Instead of taking care of him you are creating hardship for him. It is a tradition of this area that people are sensitive towards their elders, especially the parents’.

‘He was worried because he has not been finding any solution to your problems. He said that he had also taken you to several medical practitioners. He was saying that medicines of all streams have lost their efficacy in your case. One can think so when he fails to notice any improvement in health after parting with considerable time and money. He was right that medicine alone, in fact, cannot prevent or cure all human afflictions’, after saying this, Baba maintained silence. He was expecting Sadagiram to divulge something about him.

Sadagiram abruptly recalled from his thoughts. He has to reply to Baba’s question. His morbid thoughts always overcome him, however, forcing him to keep mum but here he may not be successful in hiding anything.

His wistful stand to hide his ordeal before Baba has now become untenable.

He replied, 'I have come to you with great expectations. I know that you are having answers for every question.'

Pausing for a moment he restarted to pour his heart out, 'I am telling you the truth which I have not disclosed to anyone. I am divulging it before you because I do not want to hide anything from you'.

He bowed towards Baba by putting both his hands around the mouth so that his voice may not spill to unwanted sides but go only towards the direction of Baba though he was fully aware that no one other than him and Baba are present in the Ashram at this time. Before divulging the truth, he even looked at the surrounding to make the attempt foolproof.

He then whispered, 'I am overwhelmed with the feeling of love. It is a girl residing in a village situated at the other corner of the jungle.'

His voice had spread into the hushed air and he was scared with the fear that there may be someone around him, hearing him while confessing, though this temple is known for its intensely serene vibes and there is no use of taking too much precaution.

Baba is intelligent enough. He can size up a man at first sight. He is very well aware with the reason young men of Sadagiram's age are coming across with but he wanted Sadagiram to recount his own story by himself. He raised his head and fixed his eyes on Sadagiram.

Baba wanted to give ample opportunity to Sadagiram to vent out what has been concealed in his heart, even in the deepest trenches.

But Sadagiram seems determined to not to divulge anything more.

Baba has finally beckoned by hand to vent out more about his ordeal. He starred in the eyes of Sadagiram for some time. To make out that there may be something which is at the root of this suffering; he kept starring in the eyes of Sadagiram. He was sure that the solution for every problem lies in itself.

His inquisitive eyes are at work to intelligently separate the grain from the chaff. By pretending to be happy and behaving in a normal way one may think that he is successful in hiding his secrets. But this camouflaged cannot deceive a sharp observer. Eyes can spill the beans out even without our knowledge. Eyes are deeply connected with the heart and soul. They



are the windows through which one can have a glimpse of what is going on in the heart and the mind. Baba, through this passage, is trying to find out as to what has been concealed.

Sadagiram has realized that his conviction is growing stronger minute by minute.

Baba smiled with equanimity on his face which is his trademark and said, 'you are not the only sufferer from this disease. The lust for love and wealth has become a widespread malaise in this age which is very badly vitiating the whole scenario of the world. Our young generation has stuck deep into this quagmire. You are a wise young man and it is not advisable for you to sway with the wave. It is nothing but a mirage. Your craving to reach near the target will always be futile, no matter at what speed you are chasing it with. No one can catch the carrot dangling at the other end of the stick he is tied with? You are running after the pleasure which is inextricably linked with pain.'

Sadagiram was raking his mind to find out a suitable reply. He wanted to say something but how can he divulge everything. He cannot reveal the fact that he is reeling under the trauma ever since he has started liking that girl.

He is undergoing the throes of death and this agony has made his life miserable. He, while in isolation, throb his chest like a chimp when this lust to see her crosses all established and demarcated boundaries. His heart has been inflicted with incisions deep in the heart. The depth of these cuts deepens further whenever he finds that the desire to have another glimpse of her always remain there unattended. He wants to be in front of her house and keep staring at her. But the sad part of the story is that this desire always refuses to calm down. It is instead forcing him to remain in the same position for 'another' glimpse even after having a glance after another glance. He remains crestfallen for the day, and this has become his ritual ever since he has seen her.

To break the silence, Baba said, 'what is the matter with you? You seem to be lost in thoughts. A young boy who was a regular visitor to this temple must have faith in religion and religious books. You must be capable enough to understand the meaning of celibacy. This is what I am preaching in my sermons.'

But Sadagiram did not utter even a single word. He was immersed in silence, and a long period has passed before he could bring himself to say something. It is a fact that a few months ago he was known misogynist who even used to boast about this trait of him in the group of his friends. But the fort of his misogynist has now completely been annihilated by sheer yearn to see that girl. Just by thinking about her has got the potential to lull his senses and make all his tall prudent claims of that time feeble and subdued.

Silence was also maintained by Baba for a few moments. He was expecting Sadagiram to say something about him who is still struggling to find some suitable words to express himself.

Sadagiram abruptly recalled from thoughts he was overwhelmed with. All of a sudden his focus shifted to a dog rotating swiftly in one of the corners of the temple. With an attempt to catch the tail by his mouth, the dog was swirling and swirling. Since he was not ready to give up this lust to catch the tail, he was making round after rounds. But the dog was unable to catch the tail by his mouth even after numerous unsuccessful rounds.

The dog could only stop when he got tired.

Sadagiram took it as a natural phenomenon but Baba laughed profusely. This peal of laughter was altogether different from the subtle smile, which can be always noticed etched on the face of Baba like a trademark. This time this subtle smile has taken the shape of laughter. Sadagiram, who has been controlling his laughter, is now ready to burst out laughing and has to join Baba in this pious endeavor.

Baba, bringing seriousness on his face, pointed his finger towards the dog and asked, 'Do you believe that one day the dog will be able to catch his tail by his own mouth, if he continues to practice it daily?'

Sadagiram replied glibly, 'No Baba. He cannot at all. How can he be successful in this impossible attempt? The effort to reach near the tail itself is creating the distance.'

'You should be thankful to this dog for teaching you an important lesson of life. You have got the most suitable answer for your questions', smiled Baba.

On noticing that Sadagiram has not understood his point, he continued, ‘of course. You should see beyond pettiness and learn from everything which is taking place around you.’

Sadagiram did not reply. Baba restarted, ‘Why to be bewildered for the lust of love and wealth? He has given up this lust on realizing the truth that the tail will move away from him the more he will try to reach near it.’

But Sadagiram is not convinced. He thinks that Baba is not trying to understand the matter and is not giving any heed to his miserable condition.

How can he tell it to Baba that the situation to him has become out of control? He is in love with that girl. He has come to him to find out a possible solution to this menace because the aftermath of this phenomenon is unbearable.

He groaned with droplets in his eyes ‘I dare not stop thinking about her. She has become omnipresent for me. I am noticing her everywhere, and she is in everyone who is coming to my sight.’

Baba interrupted, ‘thanks a lot for sounding me. You seem to be a crazy young man. Let me first make a safe and respectable distance from you.’

He jumped backward from where he was sitting. He laughed profusely and then said, ‘This decay has transformed you into a dangerous person on the earth.’

The laughing again reappeared and this time it appeared with a louder noise than earlier. Baba seems to be in a jolly mood today. He is taking full use of every opportunity for laughing.

It is a fact that Sadagiram is viewing her not only in every man and woman who is coming to his sight but in other animals as well.

He can give many examples to support this claim. He leaves his home early and returns only after every one in her neighbourhood retires for the day. With a view to take a short-cut he prefers to commute through the nearby jungle which takes half of the time though there is a safer way which is going through a nearby village. For some days a huge bull has been noticed there that infuriates at everyone who comes to his sight.

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