

## **Who Wrote My Destiny?**

### **Snehal Shashwat Basutkar**

The melodious singing of Cuckoo woke me up. Aah!.....what a beautiful start. Offering my prayers to God, I got into my wheel chair. This wooden three wheeled instrument is my only soul mate, my best friend & my strength since I was 8 yrs old. Sipping the morning cup of my favourite ginger green tea, my mind flew towards my past.

Very closely wrapped in arms of Mother Nature, my village Kannauj was a serene locale. The Blue gem Ishan river curved gently through the village. Kannauj is a land where two lovers, the Land & the Sky unite for eternity. The perfume village, as people call, uniquely known for its fragrance processes which remain for centuries. The Mud hut was my home. The Bakula tree stood in front smiling. The BAKULA, it is said that it blossoms when sprinkled with sweet wine from the mouth of a beautiful woman.

Shortly after school, we played at the perfume making house. Treasure of ornaments of flowers like Lilies, Violets, Rosemary, Plumerias, Orange flowers were ushered to make perfumes. We used to gambol admists the beauties.

Sometimes, I would pick a flower or two & gift it to my mother. Those were the exotic days of my life.

Swimming was my amateur interest. My water world flashed before me. Loved to play with water, I swam deep into the blue river currents. Small black fish were my river friends. How beautifully they floated into the water. They delicately kissed my body. I thought about the creator. He has created them to be small, but here they are brave & burly, glamorously racing in their water world. I thanked the Almighty as he had bestowed upon me the wonder colors of Life. Far did I knew that he had disparate plans for me.

Casting my mind back to the year 1942, I can still revive the series of events. A Kaleidoscope of beauty, December month had set in. First the leaves changed their colors, then they fell & made a crunchy cushion on the ground to walk upon. The bare branches of trees quivered in the wind. Though the days were cozy, the nights were cold. Each falling leaf brought a day closer to winter, a day closer to new year. One dreadful winter day, high fever stroke me. It did not cease for about a week. I was advised to get continuous rest. I wanted to run, jump, play around and walk. But I couldn't. I was angry on myself. I was furious on Maa and Father. I was irate on my fate. I cried & cried for long hours. I was so small at that time that I did not understand that I was diagnosed with Infantile Poliomyelitis. It had taken away my legs. I couldn't walk. Nor I could go to play in the perfume making house. I missed my river friends & they missed me. Maa & father were

distraught. Mother lifted me up & cuddled me. She said nothing. Just showered her silent love upon me. I was angry on her. How could I understand their sorrow?

We friends used to run behind the only bus that came in our village. The dusty red old bus was my attraction. Free butterfly I was. I had lost my beautiful wings. I missed the red beauty. I stopped going to school. My friends left me. Even my kin & kith ignored me. My only friend was Snowy, my dog. Only he understood my silence. We both used to sit in the veranda & count the stars in the dark sky. I used to think my life has become dark, but I had to search the small little stars which would illuminate my life with colors of happiness.

Father had brought me a set of color crayons & book. My other world was colors. No doubt my childhood was a phase where my body had got paralysed. But my mind wasn't. Today, I can confidently say that I have grown in terms of patience, perseverance, endurance, commitment, maturity and the most important of them all happiness & contentment.

My school days had been put to halt by my destiny. I never learned mathematics & science. Nor did I learn English. My uncle had appointed a home teacher for me. I used to eagerly wait for her in our veranda. She was a kind woman. She used to lift me up & take out for a stroll. She never relied on a specific syllabus. Instead she gave me an insight into the practical world. She showed me how a seed turns into sapling. She asked me to sow the seed & nurture it like your own friend. She explained me different growth stages.

I assimilated the art of observation, the art of interpretation, the art of experimentation because of her. Once in the rainy season she asked me to collect rain water. I tried to collect it in utensils. She laughed and showed me the skill of rainwater harvesting. She was an ardent lover of plants. She showered upon me the art of gardening. She explained me the technique of composting. Even she had brought earthworms to demonstrate the composting technique.. I came to know that this very small animal is farmers friend. Studying was fun & frolic with her. Bird spotting was our favourite passtime. An excellent sea of knowledge she was, I was deeply attached to her. I understood the science of life. I learnt that change is the only constant thing in life. Consistent changes in your thinking, practicality and targets, surely will lead you towards the topmost level of success ladder. My mind grew like the roots of the Banyan tree, deep, strong and permanently enclosed under the cover of eternal knowledge. My soul was always in pursuit of knowledge.

I grew up. I grew up enough to make my own vision. I opted to start my own business. I knew that my disability will be my own enemy. I had to choose an obtion in which I will solely be the director, the analyst, the researcher, the marketer. I had to create my own recipe for success. Well, that exceptional Eureka!! Moment pops up in everyone's life, but only once. Taking a rapid trip down the memory lane, the Eureka moment of my life still remains alive. I met different people regarding my ideas. Some took pity on me & tried to offer me a job that I was not willing to take up. Some laughed at my approach. Others ignored me,

criticized me. Days turned into weeks and weeks turned into months. No one was ready to partner with me. No one was ready even to allow me for an apprenticeship. It was a melancholy phase of my life. I didn't want to wake up. I felt that I was having a more peaceful time sleeping. The worst thing was that I was crying, disheartened. But my sorrow could not be seen by anyone. It was my soul which was crying. I used to spend long hours thinking along the riverside. There was a Shiva temple alongside the river. One day, my patience came to an end. Both angry and sad, I went to the doors of God. God posed a challenge in my life. Now he only will give me the clue which can be the key to confront the challenge. I prayed hard that day, I said to God, You have taken away my legs, fine. I have no problem. But at least give me the strength in my hands. Give me the courage to make the impossible possible. While praying, I came across the bundles of incense sticks which were offered to God by devotees. Without a second thought I grabbed the whole bundle. Me being handicapped, people pitied me & let me have it. I checked the price on it. Outside the temple, I sat selling the incense sticks. At the end of the day I collected total 590 Rs. This was my very first earning. I used this as a capital to expand my sell. Keeping aside a small portion of the total amount, I used the rest as a capital to buy more incense sticks. The chain expanded. And after 1 year, I can proudly say that I was the owner of a Shiva stick shop.

I didn't want to halt here. I had different plans. I started the job to provide transportation of the exotic scented flowers from the suppliers to the perfume making house. To reach

to the heights is not that easy. You have to first be friends with the base bone. You must know every nook & corner of the emergence of your work. My vision was my microscope. I learnt the art of dealing people. I learnt to grab opportunities at the right time, with the right people. People now started to trust me. Its not important how hard you were knocked down. But its important that how fast and how determined you get up. I started my own import of exotic flowers. I hired 3 persons as my helping hand. To mention, currently , I run a full fleshed business of exotic liquid essences , perfumes and essence sticks. My goods are now been exported to distance places.

I experienced that never give up. Set your goals high and never stop running hard until you reach there. I dreamt and here I stand embracing my dream. This is my story, the story of dark nights & Golden morning of my life. It true that life is an exam where the syllabus is unknown & question papers are not set.

This is my own destiny, filled by shades of my sweat , My own destiny colored by the color of my determination, My own destiny decorated by the flowers of my thoughts, My own destiny challenge by me, My own destiny script directed & written by me....

So, come on, experiment with your thoughts. Follow your instincts. Design a new pen for yourself. A pen that can write your own destiny.....So be the writers of your own destiny....



**Snehal Shashwat Basutkar** studied her Master's in Microbiology and proceeded to work in Ceva Polchem Pvt. Ltd as a Research & Development Officer. She currently writes for "ENVOY", a monthly magazine of "Rotaract, Pune. Besides, she writes short poems and stories.

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