

Whispers of the Path

Every morning after breakfast Akash and I used to take a walk around our locality to inhale the cool breeze into our lungs. Perhaps for the rest of the day we had to inhale air which is equivalent to smoking a pack of cigarettes. We reached the circle, now we had to decide which way to go.

Akash said “Lets go to that side”

I inquired “but why?”

“We have never been there, let's explore,” he suggested.

I had no option but to follow, we both crossed the circle, keeping our eyes alert all around since the vehicle crossed the road in a rash.

Our eyes caught the attention of the fascinating cafes on the left side of the road. There were plenty of them, I thought to come later though Akash insisted “Let's go in that Warm Brews, the third one.”



I resisted, "oh no I am not going."

He said, "Will split, don't worry."

I resisted again, "Yeah but in the middle of the month and you know how it goes."

He was stubborn and said "I will pay, let's go, we did not have coffee today."

Now as my friend was going to pay, I agreed otherwise I would have preferred “Ramesh ki 15 wali coffee.” We headed towards the cafe.

A little surprising for me as the cafe was quite crowded in the morning, we headed towards the counter, looking at the menu board, Akash reaction was very natural and evident.

I said, pulling his leg, “Shall we leave?”

He resisted, “No, not even in your dreams!”

I thought Akash could have gotten his pocket, otherwise, he would never seem this resistive.

Akash said “Hey, I will have one Flat white..” he took a pause and turned towards me.

“What would you have?” he asked.

I am always a bit confused when it comes to selecting an item from a menu. In a while I said, “I will have Cold Brew.”

“So, one Flat white and a Cold Brew.” Akash said to the cashier.

A total sum of 400 bucks, he seemed to me more generous than ever.

I picked up the order and we went towards the last table placed in the last row beside the huge glass through which we could see outside.

“Done with the lab record” I asked.

“Still doing,” he said while taking a sip from his cup.

I was looking outside, there was a huge traffic, a number of cars lined up in the queue not moving an inch, "look at them, we will also be like them in a few months."



"What is there in life, is it meant to get stuck in this kind of traffic?" Akash asked.

“Don’t know Akash, in a few months, we would be following the same route, everyday.” I said

“Life would be like the rat constantly running on the wheel.” Akash added.

We both finished our coffee and went outside the cafe, the traffic was still stuck as it was.

A black cat caught our eyes, it was staring at us in a strange way. It went into the narrow street beside the cafe. It jumped upon the dustbin and went into an opened window.

We saw a wooden door, quite dirty, covered with spider’s web. Akash insisted on opening it, but I resisted.



Being stubborn, Akash opened the door, held my hand and went inside. There was darkness, we were heading towards nothing.

As Akash and I stepped through the dark doorway, we found ourselves in a vast, open-air marketplace. The air is filled with a soft, calming fragrance—perhaps a mix of fresh flowers and a breeze that carries a melody instead of noise.



The people here were wearing flowing garments made of light, shimmering fabric, almost like woven stardust, that reflected their emotions. The kinder the person, the more their attire glows in soft hues of gold and pastel. Some had intricate patterns that shift and change, symbolizing their pure thoughts. Instead of hurried transactions and bargaining, everything in the market operated on mutual exchange and goodwill—people offer items not for profit but as gifts, expecting nothing in return.



The market was lined with idols of unknown deities, not of any familiar gods but of concepts—an idol for kindness, another for wisdom, one that represents laughter, and another carved from a single piece of crystal, exuding warmth. Instead of loud hawkers, there were melodious chimes announcing different stalls.

Instruments that play music on their own when touched with kindness—a harp that sings memories, a flute that whispers forgotten dreams.

Fruits that taste different depending on the eater's mood—sweet when happy, refreshing when tired, and comforting when sad.

Mirrors that don't reflect appearances but show a person's greatest moments of generosity.

Akash and I, accustomed to a world where survival often overpowers selflessness, we were mesmerized. Akash, ever the curious one, picked up an instrument and plucked a string—only to hear the sound of laughter from his childhood echoing through the air.

"What is this place?" he whispered.

A kind-eyed vendor smiled and replied, "A world where no one takes more than they need, and no one is left without."

The vendor handed us an hourglass.

We took the sandglass from the vendor, we were left with a sense of wonder and curiosity. The vendor's voice lingered in the air as he softly said, "When the sand runs out, you'll return to your world. Until then, explore and learn."

We both, captivated by the tranquility of the new world, set off to explore the market. The path ahead seemed simple at first—just a winding street lined with small stalls and colorful tents—but there was something unusual about the place. The air was light and carried the scent of fresh fruit and flowers. People walked by, not hurried or distracted, but calm and purposeful, with smiles that didn't feel forced.

Akash, ever the inquisitive one, noticed a stall selling woven baskets. The vendor, an elderly woman with gray hair tied in a neat bun, greeted us warmly. She handed Akash a basket and said, "This basket will hold what you need, nothing more." Akash, puzzled, asked, "What do you mean?"

The woman smiled and gestured to the market. "The baskets here are for carrying only what is necessary. You'll find that if you take more than you need, they'll become heavier, harder to carry. But when you only take what you truly need, they will remain light and easy to hold."

Akash glanced at the basket and then back at the market, slowly beginning to understand. "So it's about balance?"

The woman nodded, "Exactly. Take what you need, no more, no less. The weight of excess burdens us all."

Meanwhile, I was drawn to a small fountain in the corner of the market. A group of children gathered around it, laughing as water splashes playfully from the center. The fountain had no walls, no borders, yet the water flowed gently in perfect harmony, filling every crevice of the surrounding basin without ever spilling over. The sight was peaceful, almost meditative.

A child noticed me and offered a simple explanation: “The water always finds its way, just like we do. It doesn’t force itself—it simply flows.”

I said, “What a beautiful way to live... just flowing, without trying to control everything.”

As the day progressed, we both moved deeper into the market, marveling at how the world operated in such harmony. There was a stall selling small wooden toys, but instead of being bought and sold, they were shared freely, passed from one person to the next as though the toys had no owner. Each time they picked up a new toy, the joy of discovery is reflected in the smile of the previous person who used it.

“What’s the story here?” Akash asked the vendor, an older man with a thick white beard.

“They’re not for sale,” the man replied. “They’re for sharing. In this world, there is enough for everyone. If you need something, you don’t have to take it, you just use it and pass it along when you’re done. That’s how we learn to live with each other.”

The thought lingered in Akash’s mind as we walked. The entire market seemed to hum with an unspoken agreement—a quiet understanding that everyone had enough, and the idea of excess is alien to this place.

After a few hours, we decided to retrace our steps and return along the same path we came. As we walked, however, something seemed different. The sky had shifted colors, and where once there were plain walls and simple

market stalls, they now seemed intricate murals on the buildings—vibrant images of people helping each other, working together to create something beautiful.

Akash stopped in his tracks. “Did these paintings exist before?”

“I don’t remember seeing them,” I replied, equally baffled.

We noticed that the market itself seems to have changed, more people are now walking by, laughing and conversing, their voices calm and pleasant. The baskets no longer felt like they carried burdens—they seemed lighter, even empty. The toys were still being passed around, but now, the people were sharing stories as well.

I said, “It’s like we’ve changed, too. The more we see, the more we understand. It’s as if the world around us is shaped by how we choose to see it.”

Akash nodded slowly, understanding now that what we had discovered wasn’t just about the market or the people—it was about ourselves. The more we embraced the principle of balance, of sharing, and of taking only what was needed, the more the world seemed to shift in harmony with our actions.

As we reached the point where we first met the vendor, Akash looked down at the sandglass. The sand was flowing quickly, and we both realized that our time in this world is coming to an end. But before we left, we both turned one last time to look at the market—a place that had taught us not just how to live, but how to see the world differently.

