

The Illusion of Reality

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'



A spider was weaving a gossamer web to start a family. Spiders are lonely creatures. Birds and animals live in nuclear families – male, female and infants. A spider weaving web to start a family? That was illusionary – a dream inside a dream.

Kapila woke up rubbing her eyes. Drumbeats were getting louder and louder. It was the last day of *Durga Puja*. The statue of the goddess will be submerged in a river tomorrow. The festivity lasts only for nine days then the mother is sent away. Life, alas, is momentary. We all leave this world for an unknown destination, anyway.

Pictures of the deceased are arranged in a corner of the house. What happens to those pictures when the generations change hands? I do not have the pictures of my grandparents with me anymore. What will happen to my parent's loving pictures after I am gone? Maybe, they should be submerged in the holy river before they are thrown away with old furniture.

Kapila clutched the fading black and white photo of her grandparents that she accidentally found while cleaning up the clutter in her closet. She brought their photo up to her forehead and started kissing them irresistibly. Emotions and tears can get out of control like winds and waves over the ocean on a dark stormy night. All becomes calm and serene after the storm passes.

Nascent cuckoos and crows look alike. Alienation begins as their wings grow. Is it not strange that the cuckoos sneak their babies into crow's nests? The crows feed the cuckoos and

protect them until they realize that they are not crows. Growing up, Kapila and Jay were inseparable. Now they never see each other. Their children do not even know their cousins' names.

“Water and love always flow downward by the law of nature,” grandpa used to say, “don't expect more from your parents. Whatever they are doing for me is a blessing. You will realize this when you have your own children.”

“Grandpa, those dying lepers in Calcutta were not the children of Mother Teresa. Why did she care for them selflessly?”

“There are comets and there are planets. Comets belong to interstellar space. They are not dependent on the gravitational balance of the solar system. The planets remain in the confines of the solar system for their own survival. If not, they would collide with each other and be annihilated. Mother Teresa was a comet. Comets are anomalies to the celestial empire. They are free from attachments.”

Attachments create human bondage, unhappiness and illusion. Birds and animals live in nuclear families – male, female and infants. Humans are like spiders. They weave gossamer webs to create illusion. Life gets entangled in those webs. In the end, some of us are enlightened. Enlightenment makes us free.

Kapila took a deep breath and went back to sleep. Why be awake when reality is only an illusion!

