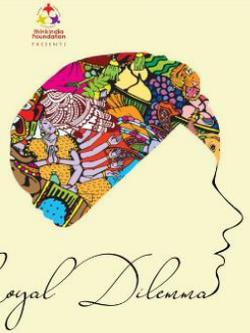


# The Royal Dilemma

Prakash Kagal



The Royal Dilemma

*I remember... I remember...*

*I remember... It was a beautiful evening. I left my palace on my favorite horse Bahadur accompanied by my sweetheart Ayesha and my buddy Ranbir. The weather was gorgeous. It seemed like there was a symphony of colors in distant sky. A gentle breeze and the flowing motion of my steed seemed to give me the wings that I lacked. The evolving sunset symbolized the beauty and mystery of life itself. However there was an ominous weather forecast to follow. Our protective guards had forewarned Ranbir ..but who cares! Half the time the weather would behave otherwise. We continued merrily on our trot. We went a few miles down the lake and like magic the sky turned viciously dark. Leaves started flying all over. Dust started getting into our eyes. The gentle breeze turned gusty.*

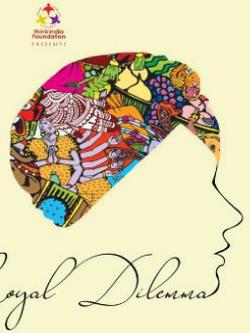
*“Yuvi, let’s turn back! .... Ayesha, you too! Let’s get back before this weather turns nasty!” Ranbir started shouting from the back,*

*“Such a sissy you Ranbir! You’ll never change.” I chuckled.*

*But then maybe he was right. I thought for a moment. Suddenly from nowhere there was a deafening crack of thunder. Bahadur instantaneously stood on his hind legs and jerked violently with an earsplitting squeal. Strange... that was not Bahadur’s nature. He was so gentle and protective towards me.*

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*In a split second I was thrown back on my unprotected head with a piercing pain down my entire spine with pitch darkness that floated over me.*

*I vaguely recollect paramedics working on me with feverish precision. It seemed like I was enveloped by the shimmering bluish grey vastness of a whirling tunnel engulfed by this mysterious celestial love.*

*After an indefinite loss of time, I found myself in an ICU. I felt like a puppet without strings. My sedation was flipping in and out. Ventilator and monitors were beeping incessantly.*

*Just about then, I heard a husky voice of a critical care specialist. His staff kept calling him Dr. Subramaniam. He had an authoritative voice with a heavy accent. I guess it was a teaching round with his vast entourage of staff, students and nurses flocking around him. He was trying to speak in hushed tone but I could hear him with my weaning sedation.*

*“Guys, bed number eight Prince Yuvraj Singh has an extremely rare neurological condition called ‘Locked In Syndrome’ that followed his Traumatic Brain Injury with pontine hemorrhage. It is almost three weeks now. But despite extensive workup and multiple consultants efforts he has now gone into this vegetative state.” explained Dr. S.*

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*“What a sad state of affairs for this handsome prince” one of the nurses whimpered.*

*“Will it be a permanent vegetative state, Sir?” one of the junior resident probed nervously.*

*“Sadly, yes. We have already conferred with the entire royal family, our ethics committee and neuropsychologist Dr. Ganguly.” Dr S stated firmly.*

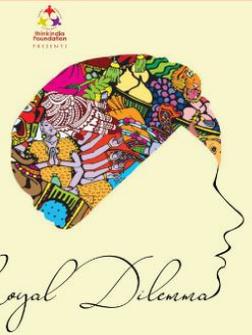
*“And what is the consensus, Sir?” yet another nervous mouth whispered from the back,*

*“Well, Dr. Ganguly will soon try to communicate with the patient, and based on the principle of autonomy, further action on his DNR will follow. The family is unanimous about honoring his opinion which was to live life to the fullest or be done with if it was devoid of purpose. “Dr. S continued in a serious tone.*

*I was fading in and out. OMG! Is this real or some kind of a nightmare! I seemed to have an instant flashback. My vibrant energy, passion for sport, music, parties, my royal wealth complementing my fathomless needs for lust of life, my storyteller Naanima, my caring*

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*Raanima, my best buddies Ranbir and Amaan, and of course my beloved darling Ayesha. Felt like a true celebration on a quick rewind. I missed them so dearly..... And now I could hear a soft calming voice trying to wake me. I think it was Dr. Ganguly.*

*He whispered gently, "Prince Yuvraj, I wish to inform you that your brain hemorrhage has led to an extremely rare and irreversible neurological condition called "Locked In Syndrome" that leaves you permanently in a vegetative state. You can possibly blink and hear and that is about it. Having discussed this extensively with your family, I would now like to understand your reaction to this situation. I am ethically bound to ask you a few important questions. You may blink twice if your answer is yes and once if it is no. Is that clear sir?"*

*I vaguely remember I blinked twice suggesting my approval.*

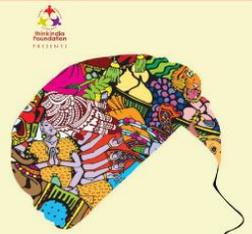
*"So, are you Prince Yuvraj Singh, sir?" he asked.*

*Was I? ... Am I..? I blinked twice.*

*He went on and on, back and forth and finally asked the most devastating question "So I presume you are with me sir. Now, understanding the irreversibility and futility of your state, do you still want to be resuscitated and stay permanently on this life support system?"*

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The Royal Dilemma

.....his voice was fading... All of a sudden I see this majestic divine form  
.... My body belonged to the world but my spirit was with the divine. My  
mind was in equanimity which brought me all the comfort, familiarity and  
enthusiasm. The worldly love seemed like an ocean but it had depth whereas  
this divinity was like a sky, limitless and infinite. I took a quantum leap into  
the boundless sky from the depth of the ocean.

I realized my entire life was a dilemma full of vibrant contrasting  
emotions, a challenging puzzle needing solution every day. And just then I  
remembered my Naanima's wise words "Beta Yuvi, whenever you face a  
dilemma, REMEMBER its solution too is in "DIL-E-MAA" which is your  
mothers precious heart enriched with boundless love empowering you to make  
impossible possible! Seek that LOVE. Merge with it, bathe in it, nourish  
it, cherish it. I promise you will find solution to any problem."

Guess what...I found all my answers!

I think....a few warm tears were rolling down my cheeks.

I think, ... I blinked just ONCE.

And then on...I don't remember.