

SITAYANAM An Autobiography of Goddess Sita and Biography drawn by Sita towards other feminine characters of Ramayana. A View on Chitra Banarjee Divakurni's Novel the Forest of Enchantments

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Abstract—Chitra's novel "The forest of Enchantment" depicts the inversion of Ramayana story where Sita became the hero of the story and highlights the strength, self-respect, insight and solidarity of herself with joy and intensity. The novel shows Sita as an epitome of courage and being a path for all women. As a protagonist, Chitra throws the thoughts and actions of its myriad Characters in the words of Sita.

Index Terms—Myriad, solidarity, betrayal, infidelity, depicted, inscribed, predicts, abduction, tricks, abides, nurture, portrays, tradition, rituals, holiness, swayamvara, hesitate, omnipotent, boon, trigger, scenario, vanvas, mourning, vain, bitterness, slanderous, rumours, agnipariksha, diminished, educationalist, medicinist, employist, socialist, economist, mentor, lovability

I. INTRODUCTION

The greatest epic Ramayana being a tragic love story for Sita, an inversion of Ram katha, Sita being a hero tells her story with the pain she faced throughout her life on her own way. She depicted the pain of the women whom she met in her life as they requested to do so. She speaks about the betrayal, infidelity and honours of the women whom she faced, moreover she thought of standing for her rights but she couldn't because of flawless, extreme, unconditional love towards Ram and his surroundings.

II. CONTENT

When I read the story, I had lot of questions in my mind which is inscribed here as 14 questions, which predicts the pain of 14 yrs of pain she faced during

her vanavas and the period of abduction by dasavathani Ravana, with the root answer of Chitra and others through her novel "The Forest of Enchantment", along with my thoughts.

1. Why Sita had an affinity to nurture a garden?

Chitra depicts that Sita has been found in the garden by King Janak, may be she had been attached with Boomi matha where she learnt the tricks of curing everyone and being kind towards nature, where nature abides her and speak with her and give her a solution for all disease of human. Here nature gives a path to solve all the issues of human if we are close to them hearing their views about the surroundings and their feelings. So Sita may chose to nurture a garden from her childhood till she mingles with her mother Boomi Matha at the end.

2. Why Sita had an affection with the Bow?

The Epic and the novel portrays Bow was a gift of sage Parasurama to King Janak to find a best groom for Sita as well as it became a tradition of portraying the bravery of the groom as it has to be lifted by the groom to marry Sita. This bow has been preserved by Janak with holiness in a separate room doing rituals everyday and others were not allowed to touch it.

Sita once playing, came near the bow to take her flower ball, which laid beneath the bow stand but she couldn't move, later she started to speak with the bow, in behalf Bow taught her how to be calm, meditate and win the need by letting things being on their own. She had a deep attachment with the bow, everyday she used to spend time with Bow without others knowledge.

She felt very sad when the Bow was broken by Ram by mistake when he took it for aiming during her Swayamvar. But she says she can forgive the act as she fell love with Ram in first sight. What a typical women born as human being, love towards Ram made her to forgive Ram for his act.

3. Why Sita clarified her marriage thought with Goddess Gauri matha?

Sita had a thought that Gauri Matha answers all her questions by dropping flowers whenever she prays in the evening in her palace temple, Which will be clarified by the temple priest. Sita was asking for a groom for her to lift the bow as Urmila was intended to become a bride as soon as possible but hesitates to marry as her sister yet to marry.

Gauri Matha dropped the flower in left side, the priest announced that Gauri Matha conveys that they will get good grooms but with lot of unbearable pain. Sita accepts it to fulfil the wish of her father, mother and her sister. She even says that she has to face it to make others happy. The sacrifice stands their to prove her that she is Omnipotent.

4. Why Sita tried to create a couple bond with Kowsalya and Dasharatha?

Sita knows the pain of others, as well as the story of Kaikeyi who made King Dasaratha to be with her by her physical and mental tenacity. Sita got to know the issue prevailed between kowsalya and Dasaratha through her spouse Ram. Sita made Dasaratha to visit Kowsalya's palace by inviting him for dinner, serving delicious Mithila dishes and made him to come often to understand the value of Kowsalya, in turn Dasartha and kowasalya's couple bond became stronger, slowly Dasaratha started to stay with Kowsalya and discussed political, family matters with all of them. Sita wanted her mother in law to be happy at least after her arrival. Here again Baneerjee reveals that Sita did her duty as a daughter in law with her intelligence and handling elders appropriately, which was taught by her mother Sunaina.

5. Why Kaikeyi wanted to fight with Sita?

Kaikeyi felt lonely as King Dasaratha was close towards Kowsalya, She came to know everything, it happened because of Sita, So she wanted to know whether Sita is talented in making things. She called upon to her place, spoke with her at the beginning

about the garden and plants, later she called her for sword fight, first Sita refused due to respect, the compulsion to fight made her to fight where she won and proved herself that she is talented in everything, Kaikeyi said your a correct person to become a princess of there kingdom.

6. Why Kaikeyi didn't have affection towards Ram for his coronation?

Kaikeyi was brainwashed by Mantra, her maid nurse to make Kaikeyi's son Bharata to rule their kingdom. She asked for the boon given by Dasaratha for her bravery shown during the war for the victory. The boon is that Bharath should rule the kingdom, Ram should go to forest for 14 years. Even though she says that she likes Ram the manipulation and deeds of Mantra made her emotions trigger against Ram and stopped his coronation. Sita had a question whether Kaikeyi really had an affection with Ram or she pretended so to have a hand with King Dasaratha.

7. Why Sita wanted to accompany Ram to the forest?

Ram said he has to go the forest as his father promised to his step mother. Lakshman, his brother said he is going to accompany him as it his duty to safeguard his brother. Sita being the better half of Ram promised to share the happiness and difficulty of her life throughout their life during marriage, So she wanted to join with them to the forest. Even though Ram refuses, Sita insists him to take her to do her duty as his wife. She also convince Ram that she couldn't live without him if he refuses to take her with him. Sita wanted to take part in all type of scenario which would be faced by Ram during his vanvas. The love upon Ram made Sita to take this type of decision.

8. Why Sita need to demand the Golden Deer?

Sita being all alone in the forest made her to think a lot about other things. She concentrated and made herself to involve in planting creepers, flowering plants and scented roses. She cured many animals, birds, sages and few more with her motherly touch with the medicine, she made with natural herbs found in the place where they stay.

She asked Ram to have children for them, which has been neglected due to the scenario they lived, which will become a threat for their children due to the animals, monsters and rakshasas which they face

often in the forests. This made Sita to postpone her wish.

She used to spend time in playing and talking with birds, rabbits and deer. She thought of taking everything with her while she moves from the forest to her palace. When she saw a golden deer, her heart ached and filled with joy to get it as she never seen such a deer throughout her life. She wanted the golden deer to play in her palace along with her children whom she is going to carry in her womb, after they reach the kingdom. It states how she had an aim of nurturing her children.

9. Why Agnipariksha?

Sita has been abducted by Ravan for her beautiful appearance and interest which has been created inside him by his sister Surpanaka as well as, the vengeance of her towards Ram and Lakshman, who insulted and defused her nose and made her to look horrible. Sita struggled a lot in pushpak viman to release her which became vain.

She was waiting and expecting her husband Ram to punish Ravan for his ill act and take her with him. She made herself to stay under Ashoka tree and refused to dress up like a princess and stopped eating and mourning Ram's name as a prayer to relieve her from that great pain.

Ram won Ravan, Sita wanted to hold Ram's hand to get relief from her pain, but Ram hesitated, which gave her more pain whether Ram would have thought Ravan would have forced her for his wish. She thought Ram and others would have thought that she became untrue, worthless and impure physically and mentally. Sita wanted to commit suicide in agni to let them know that she is pure physically and soulfully. Whereas Agni didn't harm her and took Sita as its daughter. Sita felt too bad stating even Agni, one of Panchabooth believed her whereas Ram didn't.

10. Why there is a lack of welcome to the upcoming queen who visit after 14 yrs?

After 14 yrs of vanvas, Ram and Sita entered their kingdom, where everyone of their kingdom praised Ram, Lakshman, even Hanuman and welcomed them with soul full of happiness, but not Sita, which made Sita to ask question inside her whether people forgot her that she is married to Ram, She is the first princess of their kingdom who is going to become a queen. She felt bad, She even thought whether all

type of difficulties faced by Ram is due to her which made the people to feel sorry and show their bitterness towards her. Sita aimed to change their bitterness through her kind hearted act.

11. Why to bother about slanderous rumours?

Sita grew angry towards Ram when he sent her to forest once again even though he knew that she is carrying their babies in her womb. Ram didn't even convey this directly to her. She started to worry when everything is open in the life of husband and wife, why Ram didn't say or discuss anything to her? Why Lakshman has to take her to the forest to leave her?

When she got the answer for her question through Lakshman, she felt bad, She thought the private life of ones shouldn't be sacrificed for the public one. Sita even thought Ram should have clarified the doubts of Dhobi rather than bothering and believing about the rumours. Sita got pain by thinking even her spouse didn't trust her after agnipariksha.

12. Why no one stood up for Sita?

I had too many questions to all the readers of this book and my article, "Why no one stood up for Sita?".

Kowsalya being mother-in-law, why didn't she speak for Sita? who made her to enjoy the pleasure of her better half and the pleasure of queen after her arrival as a princess marrying Ram.

Kaikeyi being a step mother-in-law, why didn't she speak for Sita? who brought back her diminished life into prosperity by consoling Bharath to speak with his mother after her arrival from the forest.

Urmila, Sita's sister why didn't she speak for Sita?, who wished to marry only for Urmila's sake, who played and been friend throughout her life, who retrieved her from the bed of deep sleep, who made her to have good relationship with Lakshman and who taught the values of life to Urmila.

Lakshman, Bharath and Sathrukan, brother's of Ram, why didn't they speak for Sita? who thought that brothers should be united, who gave the space to speak and move freely like a mother, who stood for everyone for their sake.

The people of their kingdom, why didn't they speak for Sita? who been a good princess, who been a good educationalist, who been a good medicinist, who been a good employist, who been a good socialist,

who been a good economist, overall who been a good queen and a good soul.

13. Why the life of Ram and Sita became a failed marriage?

Marriages are fixed in heaven said by many. Marriage of Ram and Sita was a great event. With the bravery of art, Ram lifted and aimed the Bow, in turn Bow broke into two, which made Sita feel bad and sorry for the bow, which is a great mentor to her, but the feelings upon Ram on one sight made her to forgive Ram and wished to marry him.

Sita fulfilled the wish of Ram as Ram said "we four brothers has to be married in the same family", She along with her sister Urmila and their two cousins, all four married the four princes of Koshal.

Sita wanted to take her nurse maid Malini along with her to Koshal where she is going to be a princess for the entire kingdom, but it has been rejected by Dasaratha in turn She didn't even asked or claimed this to anyone.

As the first princess and first daughter in law of Koshal, she reunited Kowsalya and Dasaratha, as Ram said and felt upon the miserable state of his mother. She gave way and suggested good ideas to all the decision made for the welfare of the country. She proved herself individually to all without complaining to her spouse due to the love she had with Ram.

She fulfilled her duties in the forest, she sacrificed her luxury living of palace life because of the love upon Ram, She gave up becoming a mom as Ram suggested so. She faced lot of difficulties due to the evil act of Ravana even then she has not been understood by Ram.

There is no discussion about Dhobi's word to her by Ram, but let her alone in the forest by Lakshman, too many sufferings, too many questions while she grew up her children Lav and Kush in the sage's ashram. Ram didn't even wish to see her or their children at least once in the ashram.

I felt Ramayan end up with a failed marriage of Ram and Sita, who couldn't be united, even though it has been conveyed in a greatness of a king in the side of Ram in Ramayana and lovability and sacrifice in the side of Sita in Sitayanam.

14. Why Sita said no to Ram?

Sita got hurt in all the stages, she realised herself and proved her in many situations which been a tragedy. After facing all the problems and sufferings in her life, she wanted to save Ram and both her children without fighting one and another and she also wanted them to be united. When Ram called her back to their palace to lead a happy life thereafter, she rejected and said no to his offering. she was fed up with the doubts which been raised by others and Ram and fed up by proving herself every time, so she wanted to end up her bond with Ram by calling her mother Earth God to take her away from all the pain of human life.

III. CONCLUSION

I raised many questions and I got answers for my questions in various ways which I couldn't accept even though it is logical. I'm a women who should understand a pain of a women. I understood the pain of Sita who struggled to live a happy life which ended as a sorrow one. According to me, I think decision took by Sita to say no to Ram was a good one.

Why women alone should take up all sort struggle to prove them?. She may be affected of certain things done by others but why she should take the responsibility. She too has heart, she too has pain, she too has right to think, she too has a command of deciding her own life.

I wanted to appreciate Chitra's view, who gave way to think that Valmiki asked Sita to write her autobiography of her life and biography of other women in her Sitayanam.

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