

The Resolution
Sanjay Chauhan
Translation: Harish Mahuvakar

Ragho took another glass of liquor.

He felt it like poison. The bitterness spread all over the mouth. The face grew tense and was pulled. Eyes too closed. He tried to swallow up the bitterness with the liquor draught. Right now wind blew from the back window of Chamanji's house. For a while he felt his body floating in the air. The house walls also began to take circles around him.

In a way this happened since last four days. As if everything revolved around him. Four days back Bhaloji a member of Parbat Patel panel joined Abheraj's panel. Without support the panel broke down. He lost the majority and Parbat Patel fell to the dust from his position. The family members of Ragho felt more shock than Parbat Patel and his family members. On that day none had taken meal properly as if it was tasteless. They felt it like someone's death. It was the matter that on that day Parbat Patel was to pass the resolution appointing Ragho as the peon. As the panel was now gone there was no such an issue and Ragho became workless. Two years labour didn't bring any fruit. Who will listen to this doleful story? But a couple of days back when liquor seller Chamanji stopped him on the midway he felt there's someone who cares for him.

'Oye, it's heard that you're dismissed? With a sharp eye Chamanji looked at Ragho.

'Oh, yeah. Your Bhaloji spoilt everything.'

'Why? He's not mine.' He brought out two biris. 'He wrote for my arrest.' He threw a biri that Ragho caught, cleaned its mouth and then pressed it in between lips. Chamanji lit the biri and gave him the match-box.

'You cowards, can't you do anything?'

Ragho brushed the match with the box but it fell down as those words 'you cowards' pierced his heart. The next match lit with a stroke and there was the puff of the biri. He pulled the smoke in. 'Eh, to live in the same village and why to make show?'

He returned the box to Chamanji. The latter for a while stared at him. He put it in the pocket and blew the smoke out of the mouth. He looked around to see that there's none around. Only the land panted wildly. He closed in and let out the smoke freely. 'Hell to them. You do it I say. If anything, I'll look after it. Me not a child. Strong and Mighty. In case anyone dares to touch you... Me with you. I say you do it.

'But my Lord...' the biri almost dropped from his hand.

Chamanji shook the biri-ash. 'You be at my home.' He narrowed his eyes. 'I'll serve you a bit and see what result it brings. You will have power to challenge anything. You make a show and people will take it done in the toxic mood.' Chamanji's words with the smoke went into the lungs. He understood something. The restlessness of last two days blew off with the smoke. Got ready to teach a lesson to Bhaloji. Accordingly he was to beat him. Directly he had no courage to do such a thing but without liquor he won't have power to

say anything. And now he wanted it. Chamanji also knew him. He needs to serve him as much as he demands. He kept a gallon of liquor. As if he were a Demon.

'He seems to be a Mighty Devil. Otherwise who would dare to sell liquor in this village? Now this man stands by me. Now who cares the Deity of Evils at the outskirts of the village? His eyes asked third glass. Chamanji filled the third glass. Ragho held it in his hands and saw it. It was filled to the brink.

'Don't call me Ragho if I don't break bones of that Devil Bhaloji. He put the glass on his lips and went it in. And within no time everything moved around him. His eyes moved too.

'Yes, yes...you are right Ragho. Don't worry at all. You go and do it. Me with you.' Chamanji now pushed aside the bottle.

'You are with me now, aren't you?' Ragho lifted his eyes up.

'O yes, me son of a Thakor. Keep it in your mind. Once it's told to you, it's final. Never break my promise.'

He supported Ragho to stand up. He walked up to the door. Chamanji who lived at the outskirts looked outside. Found none. Pushed Ragho out and his eyes signalled him to move on.

'O man, look that you stand...' he slowly walked ahead with broken words. He passed a farm. Then he passed a narrow lane.

He walked there but was confused. He didn't know where he was going. He asked himself, 'Where am I leading to?' And now instead of taking the way to the village he picked up the way to the hillock and the pond. Slowly he went up to the hillock and reached its top. He was surprised as the whole universe seemed to be revolving. On the back of the dry lake the children were playing cricket. He saw them and tried to call. He shouted, 'Ahoy...hey...come and see the universe's moving round and round.'

The words didn't reach to the children. Before he shouted once again, he fell with a thud. He heart on a leg and remained seated there.

'Hey, I say why are you lying like a wooden block? Come on. Stand up. Hold my hands.'

'Who's there?' Ragho looked around. But little far away, the cut opened heads of buffaloes hanging under a Khijda tree laughed at him. He threw dust over them. 'Oh this is the work have I to do again? Cut the animal bodies and tan them?' The dust fell on his eyes. So that he can work as a peon he had stopped this disgusting work.

His pulled his eyes wide open to look deep into the things but he felt as if all the hanging heads rushed to strike him. He took some stones and flung at them.

'Why O dear one, I say why you take on hand everyone's work?'

'We need you for the grass stocking. Come quickly.'

'Oye Ragho, come and fetch my calf. Please get me its skin.'

Various noises surrounded him. Morning breaks down and someone would be at the door. He never said no to any. There's none as careful as him. Small or big work there's no way but to find Ragho. Even though it may be the hardest one. Moreover he's the ultimate comrade since the smoke vomiting GIDC was set up. It isn't that he himself hadn't been to there for finding some work. But he had a tussle with the supervisor on keeping time. Immediately kicked the work. Hell to you and your work he had told him. And then he found this un-demanded work of animal cutting. He had no mastery over it but the whole Vas – the ghetto allotted him any animal that died. This hillock beside the pond was his- the reserved one. Though he possessed no paternal piece of land but this three acre hillock land belonged to him. He had all freedom there. If it's summer time a liquor pouch's enough. The stripped leather piece he would put there on three branched Khijda tree. Spreading a piece on the ground he would lay down. And it would be the evening. Till none came to call him he slept. The stray dogs too became fearful of his snorts.

A dog licked Ragho's face.

'O the Devil...' Ragho wiped his face. Got angry. 'O Devil, you found my face sweet? You now see what can I...' He got up and ran behind him. The dog speeded and disappeared

but he couldn't slow down even at though the pond ridge. He tumbled as he couldn't manage himself and fell down. The playing boys saw him and everybody joyfully shouted and ran towards him.

Ragho now and then jumped and hurriedly tried to escape from the place.

With uneven steps he found himself before Bhaloji's house. He looked around but there was no one but he felt Chamanji stood behind him. Now he was not alone. Both of them challenged Bhaloji. He came out. Chamanji handed a stick to him and with that Ragho like a thunderbolt struck him and Bhaloji was licking the dust.

Women and other folk came out of their houses to see Ragho striking his hands in air. There was a wave of laughter. Hullabaloo prevailed for a while. Ragho came to senses. He saw himself striking in vain. His steps were not steady. As he saw no man, he tried to raise his voice, 'Hey, where's Bhaloji?'

Someone responded, 'He's gone to Panchayat. There to the village office. Right now the children from the pond also arrived with loud noises. He thought it better to hurry up to village side. The children crowd chased him and shouted, 'Ragho's drunk. Hey village-folk, see, Ragho's drunk.' As he moved on and on the crowd also grew more and more. He was now totally confused.

'You never know what these stupid ones would do. May tear his clothes. It would be a blunder.' And so he took furlongs but fell once or twice. But any how he came before the Panchayat House. He popped in. Bhaloji presided as the Sarpanch. There was none inside. Made it sure that there was none. And so he tried to say something loudly but no word came out. He shouted 'Oye Bhaloji' but nothing really came out. Why so? He was shaken. Bhaloji's pan chewing face, fiery eyes, and sharp twirling moustache hurt him. He shook his head in bewilderment. 'Why my tongue froze? This made him wander into rubbish thoughts. 'Whatever the thing may be but I am drunk. If he sends for the police I am to be blamed. The police would break down my bones.' His troubles grew. It was impossible to stand even properly. He wished to go to his work place where he served for two years as a peon. But he missed a step and fell down. As there was some noise, Bhaloji came out. 'Why are you here, oye bastarad Ragho?'

Once again he fell but stood up. He couldn't utter anything.

'Why are you unable to stand today? So much have you taken today?' Bhaloji watched him in wonder. His soles were burning and breaking. He searched for an answer. He wanted to say, 'Oh Chamanji where are you? You pushed me into a great trouble.' Half of his liquor influence was gone now. Hurriedly he reached to the Square of the village. He looked back and there was Bhaloji watching him. He spat chewing pan towards Ragho. His eyeballs were red like his spitting. They were as similar as to that day. The desolate land of Amdhu stood before him. He heard Dala Raval's lorry approaching. The scorching noon heat began to burn his skin. Taking his lorry Dala, he went to pick up dry caster twigs. He had accompanied to Bhaloji. On the return Dala found it very heavy and so he insisted to pay more. Out of it grew the tussle. Bhaloji raised the stick with which he beat the camels. No sooner he saw him raising the stick he flew away like wind. Could take a breath only after a couple of farms. Like that day Bhaloji's eyes turned red today. Ragho couldn't control laughter on that day... Till late he couldn't come near to his lorry.

'Why are you standing so far? Come here', Bhaloji said. But Ragho began to find out the way to escape. There was no one at the place. He feared lest he's put into a situation that Dalo faced. He collected himself and decided to run but at that right moment he saw Bhaloji's fist and a folded letter in it. He thought it must be the resolution for his peon's job. He turned towards Bhaloji. On seeing Ragho coming to him he tore down the resolution. He flew pieces up which he tried to hold. To tease him more Bhaloji spread the pieces all over the place. Ragho continued to strive. People began to arrive to see such a show.

It must be an intrigue of Ragho. Bhaloji must have been put in to a shameful condition. Chamanji puffed biri smoke and thought it when he arrived on the scene. Standing

backside of the crowd he tried to see the reality. But what's that? It was a different situation. Ragho was licking the dust. The table was turned. He threw down half smoked biri and crushed it under his foot. Chamanji immediately pushed his steps back to his home.

Harish Mahuvakar 'Ame', 3/A, 1929, Near Nandalay Haveli, Sardarnagar, Bhavnagar 364002, Gujarat, India.

Cell: +919426223522, Email: harishmahuvakar@gmail.com