

Laloo, Rabri and Paduka

My daughter was very much fond of Laloo Yadav since she was about four years old. I don't know whether it was because of his dialogue delivery style, hair cutting style or funny appearance, but she liked him very much. Whenever Laloo came in the TV she would shout "papa Laloo", and I had to run to the TV to share her joy. When Laloo had to resign as Chief Minister and was sent to jail my daughter was disappointed. When I told my daughter that Laloo's wife would be the Chief Minister till Laloo came out of jail and absolved of all the charges in the court of law. She was delighted again and asked me "that means when Ram was sent to jungle, and Bharat ruled the country keeping Ram's paduka (a kind of sandal) on the 'singhasan' till Ram came back, Rabri would also rule till Laloo came back". I laughed and told my daughter " Yes dear. But as it is the end of 20th century, so wife did not like to go to jail along with husband, and husband also thought that kingdom would be safer in the hands of wife than a brother. The brother may not return the kingdom again". The discussion ended there and my daughter still calling me to the TV when ever Laloo appeared in the TV.

Initially though I had written off Rabri as a Chief Minister and thought that she would collapse very soon as a Chief Minister, I was really surprised to see that she had managed a state like Bihar better than my daughter's favorite Lallo. Then I thought that in a country where a paduka without the backing of Ram can be ruled for fourteen years, why Rabri with the full backing of Laloo through mobile would not be able to rule for five years. When the news of sacking of Rabri Government came in the TV, I was watching news with my daughter. After the news my daughter asked me "papa we could accept a paduka for fourteen years to rule the country, why we could not accept a woman as Chief Minister for five years?" I replied "dear, these days are not the days like the days of Ramayana and people follow logic rather than loyalty to the king and his representative". After few days when Rabri was again sworn as Chief Minister of Bihar my daughter again asked "papa why we put back Rabri again as Chief Minister?" I told her "because we are traditional Indian people and for us paduka was always important than rationality".

LALOO, THE PARROT AND ORIGIN OF MAN

I was reading Charles Darwin's "The origin of species". Though I had gone through Darwin's theory of evolution through natural selection during our school days I did not get the opportunity to read the book "The origin of species". During my last visit to Chennai during December 98 I was looking for a book in Higgin Botham when I saw the Darwin's book and purchased it. My daughter was very much curious to know about the book, and disturbed me whenever I start to go through the book. Hardly I had gone through two pages she came and asked-" what story is there in this book?" As I was not interested to talk with her, I simply replied "it is about origin of man". "It is about origin of man!" she was very much excited. "Our madam had said that man had come from monkeys. But papa mummy told that god had created man". I have realized that she will not allow me to read the book with concentration and closed it to talk with her. "O.K., your mummy and madam told you different stories regarding how man were created, but tell me what do you think, how man were originated". She thought for a while and then smiled and replied-"papa I think man had come from parrot". I laughed loudly and asked her "why do you think that man had originated from parrot?" This time she was quick enough to reply my question -"Because papa, parrot is the only creature, which can speak like man. Have you not seen in the TV a parrot was saying-'Laloo nirdosh hai'. More over Rima, Radha unty's nose looks like parrot. Parrot is the only animal who can tell about our future. Have you not seen astrologer uses parrot to predict man's future. Our Principal sir is also telling us that we are doing parrot learning in school without understanding." For some time I could not tell her any thing. As I myself was not sure, whether god created man or man originated from primates like monkey through evolution, I was not in a position to write off her. The answer is not so simple. But fact and reality is that most of the people believe both. They believe in Darwin and god, which is logically not correct. In a digital world you have either yes or no, on or off, zero or one. You can't have both. But as long as we don't have a single theory regarding origin of man I can't dismiss my daughter's view. Till then let her be happy with the parrot who said Laloo nirdosh hai. Who knows, Laloo may be really nirdosh?

DOLLY, GOD AND NATURAL THING

Information technology and electronic boom has brought a quantitative as well as qualitative change in the thinking process of new generation young stars. Some times it becomes difficult to argue with them because of their easy access to TV, newspapers, computers and quality books. My daughter is also some times put me in tight corner during any argument and when she asks some question, which is difficult for me to answer. That day she was reading about man made thing and natural things in her environmental science. I asked her "O.K dear, you have read about man made things, tell me five man made things". TV, VCR, Computer, telephone and sheep, immediately the answer came. "Sheep or ship", I want to get it clarified. It is sheep papa, S-H-E-E-P. "You, silly girl, can sheep be a man-made thing?" Yes papa, have you not seen in the TV that Dolly was made by scientist in the laboratory. "But though Dolly was made by man in the laboratory through cloning, yet Dolly can't be a man-made thing, she is a natural thing". My daughter is not convinced and argued- "as per definition of man-made thing Dolly is a man-made thing, if you want to accept us that Dolly is a natural thing you have change the definition of man-made thing in our books". I was not interested to argue any more as I was afraid that she may ask me now what is cloning, how cloning is done in the laboratory, what is the difference between Dolly and other sheep etc.

Next morning, I was reading the Indian Express and in there I got the news item that Richard Seed, a physicist and Ph.D. from Harvard had claimed that he will start cloning of humans within two years (i.e. by the year 2000). Initially the capacity of his laboratory (or factory?) shall be 500 human being per year, which will increase to 2000 per year when demand picks up. According to Seed, the estimated cost of the first human clone will be about US \$2.2 million. Once the procedure becomes routine, cost would come down to about US \$5000 to US \$10,000, which will match other infertility treatment. Within few days the debate had started whether human cloning is ethical or not. Church and other religious body declared that human cloning is unethical. Some countries even banned human cloning and Mr. Seed had also decided to go slow. Some scientist said that human cloning is not so easy and what Mr. Seed did was only to draw attention of media and gain popularity. What ever may be the reason, I am happy that for the time being there will be no cloning of human being and I need not argue with my daughter that man is not man-made thing but natural thing created by god (?). By the time the first cloned human being came to this world, I hope that my daughter will become an adult and by that time it will be decided whether Dolly and cloned human being are natural thing or man-made thing.