

THE DARK SIDE

There is an admixture of feelings swirling through me as I get ready to board the return flight home from Cambodia.

From the minute I landed, till this moment, the one thing that has resonated with me is the amazing politeness and gentleness of the Khmer. This was reinforced by the ethereal beauty of not just the Angor Wat temples, but the dozens of other temples and monuments that abound.

And then, every once in a while one comes across a notice board like this one.



A stark reminder that some of these very same gentle people had once been responsible for the killings fields, which had claimed between 1.75 to 2 MILLION lives. That is approximately 25% of their then population.

Imagine! **2 million people!** Each one someone's son, father, brother, mother, sister or daughter. Was there any single person in Cambodia whose life was unscathed by this genocide? Unlikely! And oh, so sad.

As a writer, a profiler of the times we live in - in fact, of the vagaries of human nature, I have seen how easy it is for the darkness inside us to be unleashed.

This fickleness of the human soul is as responsible for the rise and fall of nations and empires, as the indomitable and unstoppable human spirit. And each one of us has this black hole inside - a seething maelstrom of violent, beastly emotions that are carefully guarded and concealed by a veneer of civilisation.

But this layer is thin. Easily penetrated. And unbelievably beastly once unleashed.

As a combat officer and a thriller writer I have seen this happen... time after time... in people from all walks of life.

I am sure you too have seen a kind, gentle NORMAL person turn suddenly and shockingly aggressive at something as mundane as being cut off at a traffic light, or bumped into by a passerby, or someone jumping the queue, or a delayed / wrong meal order.

This darkness within is sparked off by the minutest of things - greed, lust, religion, politics, quest for power ... the reasons are myriad... but the result, once the darkness is unleashed, is always misery, death and destruction. All an undying testimony to man's proclivity for violence.

Perhaps this too explains the resurgence of the Right Wing literally all over the world, which is characterized by an emphasis on notions such as authority, hierarchy, order, duty, tradition, reaction and nationalism. And so often quite intolerant and violent.

Which is why, if the human race is to survive, kindness is important. Not just to each other, but every species that co-habits this planet with us. A good reminder ... for all of us... how are you on the Kindness Meter today? Remember, kindness is a manifestation of strength.

Be strong today. Every day.

Try it. Experience the difference.

Mukul Deva

<https://www.amazon.com/Mukul-Deva/e/B001IGJVQ4>

An alumnus of La Martiniere College, the National Defence Academy, and the Indian Military Academy, Mukul was commissioned as an officer in the Indian Army in 1981.

After a decade of operational service, Mukul's entrepreneurial journey resulted in two companies (MSD SECURITY PVT LTD and INFLUENCE SOLUTIONS PVT LTD) that have touched thousands of lives in a dozen countries. And his books, fiction and non-fiction, in five different genres, have been applauded the world over.

Hailed as **The Change Maker**, Mukul is a highly sought after keynote speaker, Executive coach, professional mentor and facilitator. He has empowered CEOs, top government officials, and managers across diverse industries, countries & cultures to achieve transformational results.