Barbarika was a grandson of Bhima (second of the Pandava brothers), and the son of Ghatotkacha. Ghatotkacha was the son of Bhima and Hidimbi. Even in his childhood, Barbarika was a very brave warrior. He learnt the art of warfare from his mother. The gods (Ashtadeva) gave him the three infallible arrows. 

He was bound by his principle of always fighting on the weaker side, which led him to stand witness to the Kurukshetra war without taking part in it. He is worshipped as Baliyadev and is believed to have been sacrificed before the Mahabharata war to ensure the victory of his grandfathers, the Pandavas.

Barbarika had come to Kurukshetra armed with just three arrows. When Krishna asked to show his power, he boastfully said “With one, I can destroy the Pandavas. With the other, the Kauravas. And with the third, Krishna”. Then Krishna asked the boy whom he would favour in the war. Barbarika revealed that he intends to fight for the side whichever is weak. As the Pandavas had only seven Akshauhini armies compared to the eleven of the Kauravas, he considered the Pandavas to be relatively the weaker side and hence wished to support them. But Krishna then asked him if he had seriously given a thought about the consequences, before giving such a word to his Guru (about supporting the weaker side). Barbarika assumed that his support to the relatively weaker Pandavas side would make them victorious. Krishna then revealed the actual consequences of his word to his Guru, and the judgment with no-bodiness. This was symbolically told before giving word to his Guru, he would have to think about the importance of Dharma, Adharma instead of weak or strong.

Krishna says that whichever side he supports will end up making the other side weaker due to his power. Nobody would be able to defeat him. Hence, he will be forced to switch sides to support the other side that has become weaker. Thus, in an actual war, he would keep oscillating between the two sides, thereby destroying the entire army of both sides and eventually only he would remain. Subsequently, none of the sides would become victorious and he would be the lone survivor. Hence, Krishna avoids his participation in the war by seeking his head in charity for which Barbarika accepted.

Before decapitating himself, Barbarika told Krishna of his great desire to view the forthcoming Kurukshetra war and requested him to facilitate the same to know about Dharma and Adharma. Krishna agreed and placed the head on top of a hill with support of three sticks overlooking the battlefield. From the hill, the head of Barbarika watched the entire battle.

At the end of the Kurukshetra war, which is symbolic of life war (Jeevan Sangram), the victorious Pandava brothers argued among themselves as to who was responsible for their victory. Krishna suggested that Barbarika’s head, which had watched the whole battle should be allowed to judge, and he stated that “he will be the best judge”.

The judgement and truth of life is highlighted and received by Vyasa maharshi, Krishna, and Pandavas at the end/climax of the Mahabharata. Barbarika gave the judgment with no-bodiness. This symbolically suggests that “the truth of life” can be seen (witnessed) by the human race and therapists like us without dis-
tortion of reality, which is the ultimate truth of life by selfless observation/no-body-ness in the highest wellness domain.

Balancing the life can be made possible by accessing one of the individual's greatest resources - awareness, observation with nobodyness, empathy, and insightfulness which will help one find an individual's true self. By this, the individual constantly grows and evolves from “I” to “We”. Indian rishis have told us how to decondition and go to a childlike stage (nobodyness) to see one's mind with an undistorted self-image (fact without fictions). An average human being will be identified with somebodyness i.e., name, gender, caste, religion and nationality which leads to distorted judgement.

Child like seeing - Pruning

In a child's brain, all parts are well connected with one another and the child has not yet developed a strong identity. As we grow, because of pruning, the connectivity is decreased and we become more conditioned with all good and bad effects of our so-called civilized life, and thus our judgment gets subjected to all these conditionings. By Yoga and Spirituality, the unlearning of all ill effects of civilization will occur. This leads to reshaping of synapses, and neurogenesis takes place. As a result, we can protect our evolutionary thinking, cognitive functions and fine judgment capacities by preventing neurological regression.

This is the message of Indian Rishis to human civilisation, who were symbolically given as “Barbarikan way of seeing with no body ness”.

End Note

Author Information

Dr. Kishan Porandla
Professor and Head, Department of Psychiatry, Prathima Institute of Medical Sciences, Karimnagar, Telangana; Editor, Telangana Journal of IMA

Conflict of Interest: None declared

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