

Slumdog Millionaire

By

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*Slumdog Millionaire*¹ is a 2008 British film directed by Danny Boyle, written by Simon Beaufoy, and co-directed in India by Loveleen Tandan. It is an adaptation of the novel *Q & A* (2005) by Indian author and diplomat Vikas Swarup.

Set and filmed in India, *Slumdog Millionaire* tells the story of a young man from the slums of Mumbai who appears on the Indian version of *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* (*Kaun Banega Crorepati*, mentioned in the Hindi version) and exceeds people's expectations, arousing the suspicions of the game show host and of law enforcement officials.

After its world premiere at Telluride Film Festival and subsequent screenings at the Toronto International Film Festival and the London Film Festival, *Slumdog Millionaire* initially had a limited North American release on 12 November 2008 by Fox Searchlight Pictures and Warner Bros. Pictures, to critical acclaim and awards success. It later had a nationwide grand release in the United Kingdom on 9 January 2009 and in the United States on 23 January 2009. It premiered in Mumbai on 22 January 2009.

Slumdog Millionaire was nominated for ten Academy Awards in 2009 and won eight, the most for any film of 2008, including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Film Editing, Best Sound Mixing, Best Cinematography, Best Original Score and Best Original Song.

It also won five Critics' Choice Awards, four Golden Globes, and seven BAFTA Awards, including Best Film. *Slumdog Millionaire* has stirred controversy concerning language use, its portrayals of Indians and Hinduism, and the welfare of its child actors.

This movie has caught the attention of the West and India alike and as a psychoanalyst; I have been fascinated by the audience's intrigue by this story of an underdog. Why do we relate so personally to this narrative? What catches our soul about this story?

¹ Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slumdog_Millionaire

The Slumdog appeals to the Slumdog in each one of us. Every individual has an orphan, disempowered, marginalized aspect of their personality that is relegated to the recycle bin of the Shadow, inferior function or a personality quirk, hang up or a complex. When we attend to this inner orphan, it redeems us. Often, in psychotherapy with my clients, I have found that when an individual honors this inner orphan, it holds the key to the complex and presenting problem that perplexes us.

Robert is a business man who presented for treatment for depression and alcohol abuse tendencies. His marriage was flat and institutional and there was no joy in his life. The current economy meltdown further exacerbated his woes. We did the usual and customary interventions to prop up his mood. The fire was put out but there was no source of life or inspiration left in him. When I inquired as to what gave him joy as a child, he said he enjoyed playing his clarinet, which still lay stowed away in his attic. I encouraged him to start playing his clarinet again. He felt a sense of renewal and energy. Gradually this joyful energy about his music generalized to the other sector of his life. This orphaned inner musician was the source of revival and rejuvenation of this life energy. The “Slumdog within” had rescued his damsel - his anima which led to a general renewal of his personality.

Another example is a Peter, initially diagnosed as Paranoid Schizophrenic who had a hobby of knife collection. As his psychiatrist, I was concerned about his fascination with knives. Over the course of therapy, I learned of his grandfather’s interest in Scrimshaw method of carving images out of whale bones. Grandfather was a Whale fisherman in the Pacific. I now understood that in Milwaukee, Peter did not have access to Scrimshaw. I encouraged him to experiment with Whittling. Now he used his whittling knife to carve beautiful little images out of wooden branches, plentiful in the Midwest. He got deeply engrossed in this hobby. There was substantial improvement in his psychotic symptoms and I was able to reduce the dose of his antipsychotic medication.

I urge you to cultivate your hidden and ignored talent and interest. This Slumdog aspect of your personality could have a salutary impact on your health and wholeness.

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Dr Bedi is a Diplomat Jungian psychoanalyst and a board certified psychiatrist. He is a member of the Royal College of psychiatrists of Great Britain, a diplomat in Psychological Medicine at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of England, a Distinguished Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association. He is a Clinical Professor in Psychiatry at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee and a Training Analyst and a faculty member at the Analyst Training Program at the Carl G. Jung Institute of Chicago. He is Honorary Psychiatrist at the Aurora Psychiatric Hospital and the Aurora Health Care Network. He has been a psychiatric consultant to several agencies in Metro Milwaukee. Presently he is the consultant for the Sexual Assault treatment center at the Aurora Sinai Samaritan Hospital, Dewey Center at the Aurora Psychiatric Hospital for treatment of Addictions and the Pastoral Counseling Service of Greater Milwaukee.

Trained in India, Great Britain and the US, he is interested in the emerging frontiers of Spirituality and Healing and the synapses of the Mind, Body, Soul and Spirit. He is author of the book, Path to the Soul, Weiser Books, 2000, Awaken the Slumbering Goddess: The Latent Code of the Hindu Goddess Archetypes, Booksurge Publishers, 2007 and the coauthor of Retire Your Family Karma, Nicholas-Hays, Inc. 2003, These and his other upcoming presentations can be previewed at his website www.pathtothesoul.com

Ashok Bedi has been in practice in Milwaukee for over twenty- five years and specializes in Adult Psychotherapy and Jungian Psychoanalysis. He regularly presents lectures and seminars in India, Great Britain, Ireland and USA on

the topic of the Spiritual and analytic dimensions of treatment, healing and personal growth. Over the last several years, he has been the International Association of Analytical Psychologists liaison person for developing Jungian training programs in India and travels annually to India to teach, train the consult with the Jungian Developing groups at several centers in India including Ahmedabad &, Bangalore. He leads the annual “In the Footsteps of Carl Jung in India” study group to several centers in India under the auspices of the New York Jung Foundation.

