

RAAVAN: THE HEALED VILLAIN OF *RAM CHANDRA SERIES*

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Abstract

Ram Chandra Series is a set of four books written by Amish Tripathi. The story features the character of Raavan as an antagonist. Raavan is presented as a complex, multi-dimensional figure whose actions are deeply rooted in his past with personal and collective traumas. The character of Raavan surfaces throughout all four books. The character of Raavan plays a vital role as he plays a crucial role in the life of Ram and Sita, right from their birth. The paper traces Raavan's journey in all four books through the lens of trauma studies. The paper emphasises how experiences of love and loss shape his identity and moral trajectory. Abandonment in childhood, displacement, emotional instability, and the profound loss of his love, Vedavati, are the pivotal traumatic events that shape his character. These incidents make him a man with a lust for power and a profound villain. Raavan's narrative is not merely a story of destruction, but it also figures out as a story of psychological liberation. By positioning Raavan as a figure whose villainy is inseparable from his wounds, this study highlights the interplay of trauma, resilience, and transformation, offering a nuanced understanding of one of India's most enigmatic mythic characters.

Keywords: Coping mechanisms, emotional scars, life-altering experiences, psychological resilience, redemption.

Amish Tripathi's *Ram Chandra Series* is a retelling of the enduring epic of the *Ramayana*. The series is narrated in four books through a multi-linear narrative.

The first three books *Ram*, *Sita* and *Raavan* are dedicated to the story of the three important characters, Ram, Sita and Raavan and the fourth book *War of Lanka* plays a crucial role in narrating the internal trauma of Raavan. The book deals with Raavan's individual psychology, moral ambiguity, and also discusses the socio-political complexity. The retelling varies from the conventional portrayals by constructing Raavan as a deeply wounded, psychologically intricate figure. Amish presents Raavan as a character shaped by the traumatic experiences of childhood abandonment, displacement, social rejection, and the devastating loss of his beloved Vedavati who gradually evolves as a healed villain who earns Ram's respect towards the end of the narrative.

Raavan as a child receives a lot of humiliation from the society as well as from his father. Raavan is born as the son of Rishi Vishrava and Kaikesi. Raavan is born as a naga child with a small outgrowth in his belly. Raavan, is hated by his father because he sees Raavan as a sign of disgrace to his family lineage. His father also blames Kaikesi's karma for the birth of Raavan as a Naga. He says, "Silence! This is all your fault. I am suffering due to your karma. Your bad karma has infected his navel! And his mind!" (*Raavan*, 23). This conflict between his parents plays a decisive role in shaping emotional and psychological development of Raavan in his early childhood days. The hostility that Raavan receives from his father creates in Raavan an early sense of inadequacy teaches him the lesson that power could be the only source that can be used as a shield against humiliation and social rejection.

The birth of Kumbakarna is also a defining moment in the life of Raavan. As his father's people decide to kill Kumbakarna, the naga child, Raavan, though a young boy, is forced to take up the responsibility of saving his newborn brother, fragile mother and uncle during this moment of crisis. Raavan's responsibility stems not from a stable, nurturing environment, but from bitter experiences of abandonment and social hostility. Raavan's exile from the ashram with his brother, mother and uncle is driven by fear and prejudice against the appearance of him and his brother. This incident makes Raavan, a pessimist, who believes that the world is inherently unsafe and unwelcoming. Incidents like the killing of rabbit reflect Raavan's turmoil where his suppressed rage unleashes as impulsive violence. The hostile environment of childhood makes Raavan feel insecure and shapes him as an increasingly hardened individual and a defensive personality who longs for power, respect, and control.

The journey makes Raavan a formidable trader. He builds a vast maritime empire using his intelligence, audacity, and ruthless pragmatism. He cheats

Ambakana in becoming a powerful trader. His success as a business man assures him the respect that he was denied in childhood. Though successful and powerful, his rise is tinged with moral ambiguity. Intimidation, manipulation, and strategic violence become his strategies in business to dominate trade routes and secure wealth. His success in trade paves way the foundation for his later role as a king, demonstrating an ability to shape systems while simultaneously bending them as well.

Raavan as the king of Lanka further displays the duality in him. Raavan becomes as efficient, visionary and courageous ruler. Under his command, Lanka becomes prosperous, technologically advanced, and culturally vibrant but his brilliance is also shadowed by cruelty, ego.

The tragic death of Vedavati, the irreparable loss of his beloved makes him more assertive and he takes vengeance by exhibiting the superiority over Aryavarta. The tragic death of Vedavati acts as a fulcrum in Raavan's psychological decline, hardening him irreversibly. The passionate lover in Raavan transforms into a vengeful, emotionally fractured leader whose grief mutates into obsession.

Raavan's brilliance, in music and art, is as far more than a display of talent. Raavan resorts in music and art, at times of despair. It all signifies his efforts to escape and heal from the emotional wounds. Art, to him, becomes a crucial psychological escape shaped by the emotional wounds of his childhood. Raavan's uses art as the space where he can express suppressed emotions. Music offers him a rare emotional outlet, allowing him to channel his grief, loneliness, and longing into an art form that transcends societal judgment.

As the enemy of Aryavarta, Raavan directs all his political strategies, personal grudges, and inner anguish toward challenging Ram and the systems he represents. His battles are not merely military. It signifies a deeper war between wounded pride and righteous order, unresolved trauma and moral clarity. The *War of Lanka* becomes the final stage on which Raavan confronts not only Ram, but also the consequences of a life shaped by anger and unresolved pain. His decisions during the war reflect a mix of brilliance and desperation, and though he fights with unmatched courage, he also begins to recognise the futility of his long-held vendettas.

Raavan's transformation into a healed villain becomes most evident after he realises Sita's identity as the daughter of Vedavati. This recognition awakens a deep remorse and introspection that he had long buried under layers of rage and ambition. Raavan, an advocate of free will after the abduction of Sita, treats her well. His love and respect for Vedavati exhibit the good and order in him. The respect

remains unshakeable till the end of his life. Raavan sacrifices his ego on seeing Vedavati's daughter, Sita. His behaviour with Sita and his surrender to the mission of finding Vishnu prove him to be an orderly gentleman. Raavan's choice to act as a villain with purpose is revealed through his words in Amish' War of Lanka:

I died the day Vedavati died. I have been dragging my carcass around all this time. It is time to let my corpse itself die. The right time. I can allow myself to be destroyed so that the legend of Ram and Sita may rise. And as long as the world remembers the two of you, it will remember me. I will be immortal too. (57)

In his last moment of life, when Ram asks Raavan whether he would like to hold his sword at the time of his death, Raavan replies, "No, I am holding what I want. The only thing I ever truly needed... Vedavati's hand... Ram held his breath for a moment. A man who loved a woman so magnificently could not have been all bad. Maybe there is some good in him... Maybe..." (459).

In his final acts, Raavan displays dignity, acceptance, and a sense of closure that had previously eluded him. His respect for Ram increases, and he confronts his own mistakes with clarity rather than rage. By the time of his death, Raavan is no longer merely the tyrant he becomes a tragic figure who, shaped by trauma yet capable of introspection, dies with a measure of emotional liberation.

Thus, Raavan emerges in the *Ram Chandra Series* as a healed villain. A man who begins life burdened by abandonment, grows into a brilliant yet tormented ruler, commits acts of undeniable cruelty, but ultimately finds clarity, acceptance, and a form of redemption in his final moments. His evolution highlights the intricate relationship between trauma, power, love, and self-realisation, making him one of the most complexes and humanised antagonists in contemporary mythological retellings.

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