



Happy no more: The story of an emoji

SHOUNAK REZA

I became known as the symbol of happiness instantly after my birth.

A little more than a decade later, people started associating me with anger and drama, with emotional blackmails and guilt trips.

My name is Smiley and this is my story.

Because of the rather eventful life that I have had, I feel like I was born a long, long time ago. Right before my birth, the dwellers of the online world were looking for something through which they could express their happiness, pleasure, joy, and every other positive emotion out there. Welcomed with open arms, I came into the picture as the solution to the problem that people were facing when they couldn't find anything to supplement their happy words and joyful sentences.

With the passage of time, more and more people departed for the rapidly expanding online world as the real world and the real smiles that adorned it became much less interesting in their eyes. People started feeling much more comfortable looking at the screens of their smartphones and computers and typing away in the speed of light. They took my help whenever they needed to write messages that needed to convey happiness. The recipients would be pleased to see the excitement emanating from the texts – just because I was used as a companion of the words that were typed with blank faces (yes, it is true that many of the people who took my services had forgotten how to smile in real life. That was when I entered their lives. I became the smile they had lost).

Making people smile is the best feeling ever, isn't it? That was what I achieved. I was loved by humans and envied by fellow emojis. I became the universal symbol of

happiness. Making humans happy in turn made me the happiest emoji on earth. The mischievous wink emoji, the playful tongue-out emoji, the miserable sad emoji, and the often-confused-with-the-sad-emoji emoji used to be jealous of me because, unlike me, they could not make people smile. They could never have impacts on people's emotions the way I did.

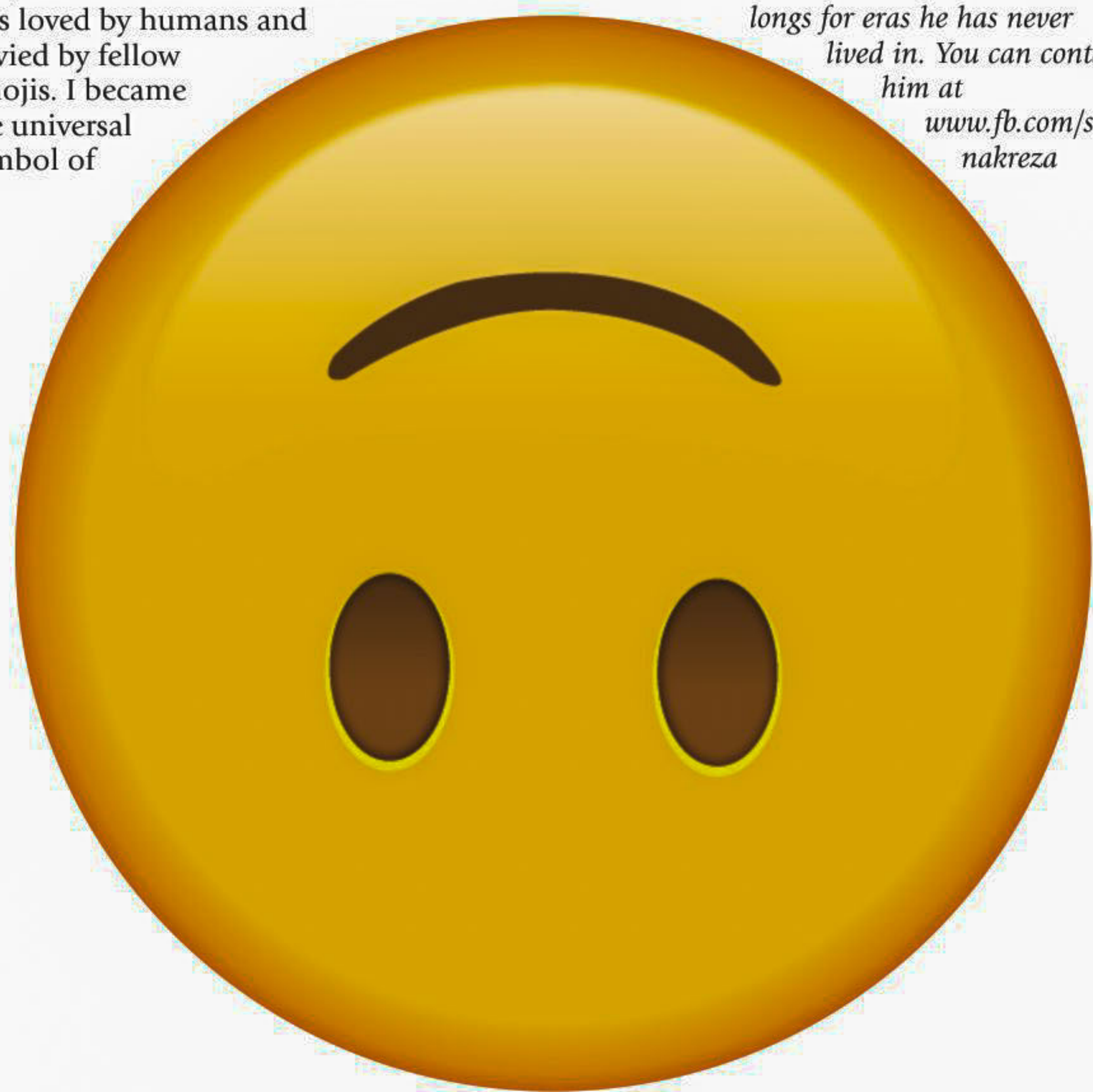
But then, out of the blue, my life changed.

Some insensitive people started using me to express anger. They started using me to highlight their passive aggressive messages. They resorted to me whenever they wanted to guilt trip someone. Instead of making people happy, I started bringing misery to their lives. Although I was devastated, I consoled myself saying it was just a bad phase of my life. I couldn't have been more wrong. Within months, this inappropriate usage of my services spread like plague and I became synonymous with emotional blackmail, guilt trips, rage, and passive aggressiveness. My life changed completely. From being the happiest emoji on earth, I became the most dreaded emoji to ever exist.

There was a time I had everything. My existence would delight people. Now it terrifies them. The other emojis are no longer jealous of me. They give me the cold shoulder and walk away arrogantly as I try my best to hide my face from them. Oh, what did I ever do to deserve this misery?

Perhaps one day everyone will forget that there was a time I was not just happy but also desired by everyone.

When he is not dealing with mood swings, Shounak Reza devours books and tea and longs for eras he has never lived in. You can contact him at www.fb.com/shounakreza



IKRIMIKRI Enchanting kids with its colourful world of books

SHIMIN MUSHSHARAT

Ikrimikri is a publication of books that deliver heartwarming stories and dazzling illustrations. The illustrations are striking enough to make any adult want to keep the books for themselves. The colourful, adorable picture books are perfect for the tiny bookworms to lose themselves in.

Ikrimikri has books for a wide age range. Some of the picture books have one or two lines of text on each page while some have a full plot development appropriate for six to ten-year-old kids. *Ranabi Kak O Kaththokra*, a new release, is written by Tushar Abdullah and illustrated by Rafiqun Nabi of the wildly popular comic strip *Tokai*. *Sada Boker Tinti Chana* is written by Imdadul Haq Milon, another new release with soft and loveable illustrations.

Fangsang, released on the Ekushey Book Fair 2019, focuses on a little tree-loving Garo boy called Fangsang. This book is written sophisticatedly and holds a significant message. This inspiring story contains diversity, kindness towards the leafy friends, and gives the reader a peek into the Garo culture.

Another book representing folklore is *Chandan Pahare*. This one is a Santal myth featuring brotherhood, the god of fortune, and a whole lot of adventure. The art style is endearing and the initiative to celebrate cultural diversity in Bangladesh is worthy of praise.

Zirodhoni, a Bangla folklore, is the story of a girl trapped inside an oyster. This book is drawn in traditional Bengal art form, Patachita. The illustrations of this book feature bold strokes and the colours create a stunningly festive atmosphere, doing the art style

justice. Lilies are a recurring theme in the book. There is also a benevolent old lady and a classic boy king. Mashing all these together, *Zirodhoni* leaves a lasting impression.

They have a multitude of books with an amazing selection of topics. From a classic like *Chotto Golruty* to bizarre and not so scary *Odbhut Bod Bhoot*, the books vary widely on the subject matter. *Glosterer Dorjee O Onnanno Golpo* is a collection of translated folklore for older kids.

Along with magic and folktale, the publication has science fiction and comics featuring the animal kingdom. They have also revamped some classic works such as *Kar Dosh* by Sukumar Ray. A collection of eight exciting adventures, *8 Rohossho* is appropriate for older kids with wandering minds. *Deshar Chhora* is a poem collection introducing the reader to the flowers, fruits, rivers, and traditional festivities of Bangladesh. *Nodi Nebe* is a significant book that is all about the rivers of Bangladesh. *Mrittu Bhayal Sindhu* is a story of two teens who decide to go fishing on the sea.

The psychology of the children has been clearly taken into consideration in the making of these books. The bright, eye catching illustrations are sure to appeal to the young generation. Ikrimikri's books tell the readers of humanity, love, respect, understanding and equality. The much needed qualities that should be inscribed on all young minds for the making of sensible and respectful adults.

For more information, visit www.ikrimikri.com