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DEATH

The Last scene of Life

A spider was scrawling at the Puja (worship) altar. I called Ramana (our assistant). He came & scratched it with his foot instantly. I was annoyed at him for doing so. "Will you spread that now all over the house?" I asked. "No Amma. I will keep my foot upward like this, go to bathroom and wash." He answered. So casual about the murder, just then committed.

The spiritual part of my mind said, "If a goon kills a human, it's a sensation. If Ramana kills a spider no sensation?". Yes. No sensation because it's not my species. Usually, my response to any creature's death is in proportion to the closeness it has with my perceptions and the attachment I have with it.

My sister became sick when "Kulfi", my sister's pet-dog died. She performed Archana (a kind of worship) in Kulfi's name at Sai Baba's temple and prayed Him to give good

human birth to him. Kulfi came in her dreams also.

Our senior cousin passed away a few years ago. We were pained. But didn't go historically sad. My sister didn't fall sick at the news like she did in the case of Kulfi. In this case, the attachment created by the proximity is not there. In early childhood we and the cousin got separated.

Every evening Ramana comes with an electric bat and kills tens of mosquitoes in my room. I helplessly observe the massacre... the way he enjoys the crackling sound of the mosquitoes being burnt getting in contact with the electric wire of the bat. The otherwise trauma I undergo due to the sleeplessness on account of mosquito bites shuts my mouth while a corner of my heart bleeds with sympathy for them. That much. I will not spend sleepless nights as I did when my younger sister, father, mother, Rakhee brother, Poornanna

like people died.

They were married for sixty five years. Ever since I observed, both of them serve each other so beautifully. She gets him coffee...serves him food so fondly...she presses his legs unasked. He brings hot "Pakoda" (fried pieces of dough) for her packed in a leaf... he brings jasmines for her on return of evening walk. When she had fever, I saw him mixing coffee and getting for her. I saw him checking her temperature holding thermometer with his shaking hands due to the old age. I heard him say comforting words as she was lying on the bed.

On a fateful day he passed away. She was crying as her fragile body shook with emotion. Finally, a tempo came to take his body to burial ground. As the tempo moved I saw the octogenarian wife running after the tempo, shouting, "Ennaango.... ennaango..."(a respectable address in Tamil. Usually in older generations,

the wives addressed husbands so). I cannot give particulars of these couple as I don't want to intrude into the privacy of the family.

I saw similar scene when I was in eighth standard. The hen ran after the cycle as our father's assistant took the cock to get it cut and dressed for curry. That was one of the scenes that had lasting impact on me and for my adherence to vegetarianism.

When I let my mind browse the memories of my lost younger sister... parents... tears roll down even to this day.

Having said that, I need to mention a category of people. I saw guys who could ask and eat food within minutes

day to day activities and avocations in life. But I have also seen people with unforgettable pain of loss at their hearts though they perform the daily routine. The loss of dear ones brings a lasting impact on their whole being.

Do you want to smile....really smile at death? So "Yogi Bhava" (Become Yogi). The study of Truth in "Upanishads" and "Sadhana" (Spiritual practice) gradually opens up a new door to the Ultimate Truth. It enables one to face death with as much ease as one could travel in the path of "True" spirituality. This is more a mental process than ritualistic. No ritual can enable one to be able to understand higher Truth until and

brother, we do cry for their absence but not as much as when they pass away. When they go to US, we know that they will be there with our brother. But in death, we don't know where they are going and we really do not know if we could meet them again. But our Upanishads have given all the secrets of death and death after. Parama Hamsa Yoganandaji meets a few departed in subtle form, while he was alive. He sees a few departed souls attending his discourses in subtle forms.

Actually old age is more pain-causing, than death. Kids are used to the old age of their grand parents... they are used to see the wrinkles on their bodies....diseases to their bodies. These change are all the ambassadors of death. But why is it the death creates so much ado? Because the very utterance of death is considered to be inauspicious and right education about death hasn't been there. Did we see any lesson about death in schools or collages?

Let us teach our children in the best possible way that death is the part of life that has to be ultimately met with. Our tradition has been to celebrate death also. There is decoration... there is music... pipes and drums... there are dances....there are holy hymns... there is feast.... etc. we need to teach the essence of Upanishads in small lessons right from young age.

Let's study the Ultimate Truth in our Upanishads. Let's shed a few tears at the loss of our dear ones and smile more celebrating the lives of our dear ones. Let's not be afraid of our friend, death.

While I wish "Shatamanam Bhavati" to all, I also wish a graceful meeting of death.

(Author is a well-known musician, Devotional singer; writer and composer.) **TN**



after their father's loss normally talking about the arrangements to be made for funeral. It's not the strength that comes out of realizing the Ultimate Truth. It's inertia. The crudeness of upbringing and selfishness creates a thick layer of insensitivity.

Humans have a mechanism in their mind to heal the pain of loss eventually as they employ the mind in

unless one sets one's mind on the inner journey. Every worship

we do usually is for a practical purpose like a rank... a seat in medicine or engineering... a job... a life partner.... a progeny... etc etc. That kind of worship is only to make a happy living or to get out of danger. The Sadhana to understand the death is different.

When our parents go to US to our