

# Dying before death!

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We cannot afford to lose the best days of the year without extracting maximum benefit out of it.

I had pondered, wondered and bewildered about life more than death. Somehow I believed, one day all my dreams would come true. May be I was made to believe, as most were leading life same way.

Later I found, key is actually the other way around. If we know, believe and accept whole heartedly every single minute of our walking life, that *'we are going to perish one day, our shelf life getting over minute by minute'*, then, don't it forces to bother much about the utilization of the gift called PRESENT ?

When I met a 117 years old Jnani, he was not dreaming about life neither he was scarred about death, he was grounded. He asked my mentor *'What is your plan for your death?'* Everyone silenced.

I came across a longest minute of my life.

That was the only time till now, I heard such a question. It was not to ridicule, it was not to create impression and it was not about showcasing his superiority in knowledge or in age. It was as like; *'How are you doing today?'* Kind, very casual and normal.

My mentor in early 70's, trying as calmly as possible, replied 'there no specific plan yet'. I found that answer very pale, I was expecting a better one, may be everyone else present did felt same way.

Senior Jnani was more objective, he had planned his daily routine exactly the same way each day. With purpose, passion, clarity and routine, which indicates he knew days are always numbered. His meal was simple, once a day, a fistful of soaked ground nuts and plenty of desi cow's milk.

Well, when we talk about death, the beauty of life comes alive. Due to death, life has value, life becomes precious and meaningful. My questions were always about getting best out of the moment, whatever the case may be, I understood, best is NOW, not a day before nor a day after.

A life with no purpose worth's nothing; as if a Moth takes life on rainy evening and gets it over by morning. In those hours, it was child, young, adult and aged. Accepts the death, by light and heat. Whether it likes it, knows it or understands it; game does not change.

How can we solve a problem which is not even understood properly? How do we then set as an example worth perusing? Living only for self is mostly every living being does, how do we overcome this tendency?

Socrates remarked – *'An unexamined life is not worth living'*.

History, culture and civilizations repeatedly pointed out the importance of life, yet we get carried away on day to day activities. Busy being busy, while trying to dictate what life should be, based on the ideas, thoughts barrowed from people of same cadre.

When we look back, time has passed so fast, all we missed in the journey is *'thinking about ourselves'*, as an individual, away from being with any title, be brother, son, daughter, mother, wife, husband etc. Along with these titles, there is effort to prove ourselves with the society, for a title, which is being carried for a brief period. .

It took me over two years of calm living to reconnect with myself. To study my priorities and my obsessions, as an outsider, by observing my own behaviors. It revealed quite a bit.

Frankly, death is not when we leave the body. I realized death is when you forget that truth. Any moment we are away from the thinking, *'our days are numbered'* we have died. It does not matter, we are buried yet or not. Because its running is wrong direction, does not give any tangible results, like chasing the mirage, which keeps always ahead of us.

*It was Moth then, now a Man.*

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When I reconnect with my 'old' companions who are no more there to help me as they did, I discovered each of them had a purpose, they were alert, alive every split second, there was no casual talk, each word had reason. They took challenge of solving their problems single handedly and did what they need to do; no questions.

I have seen them not tired even in their 80's, they were clear, crisp and blunt. No formalities, no prejudice, right on the spot and to the point. All questions had answers, whether I liked the answers or not; it did not matter to them. They taught lessons which no books can. Two more such encounters were remarkable.

Second gentleman, in his 95, a Second World War soldier. His secret of health and longevity was being cheerful and working hard physically. When he talked about his past time, he showed me his photographs of drama troupe with Dr. Rajkumar, a way much before super star's movie career. I could see that old eyes were sparkling while talking about his heydays with a fellow dancer. Anyone could make out he was in a different world altogether while he talked about her. In spite none of them are alive at his ripe age, he could go back to them in his memory and feel the same sentiments. He did introduced his second wife, sister of first wife, who had deceased. Interesting!

*The body ages, mind remains ever youthful. I learnt to connect with people on their mind part, without getting biased by outer appearances, of what they ware or not! I noted people with cheerful mind, lived longer.*

Third gentleman was in his 97 when I met. He led a decent life as a rebel about social reforms and still maintained his dignity, self-respect. Educated and served in British-India government.

Interestingly, this time tables did turnaround. He asked questions about my understanding on life, before he could open up. Satisfied with my answers, he shyly said, 'test was necessary to evaluate your level of maturity, so that discussion possible only with equals'.

I amazed at his testing spirit in finding a worthy pupil even to talk about esoteric. He believed, otherwise its mere waster of his precious time.

A great input. Immediately I devised my communication rule number one; 'Either one should be befitted in any communication, otherwise it's not worth having one', PERIOD.

He continued, 'people of this generation are accumulating so much wealth which is not necessary. It has become habit, they forgot life is more precious, pointing the working couple life style. He showed a vacant site next to his house and said 'people have so much, they can't maintain it anymore, children are in abroad and these assets are creating trouble to locals, lacking in its maintenance'. An eye opening thought. He did introduced his second wife, though not the sister of deceased first wife. Interesting!

I realized, it's not about living life, but enjoying it; on what we are doing, moving to the direction which makes us better as days goes, an artistic way. These examples, I came across were active themselves physically, emotionally and financially till ripe age, none of them were greedy, lazy or negligent.

The art of dying before death, gives a chance to relook at life freshly every day and to realign ourselves towards the most important things in life.

An art which requires careful preparation till it becomes a habit. While we engross in any pursuit, consider that who are going to be there to reap its benefit and Is it best use of our time? the PRESENT of nature. Vastly helps to make course corrections, to create hurriedness in leaving out a grand legacy. Once such thinking becomes natural, our pursuits becomes more meaningful.

Knowing is for awareness, doing is for results.

I thank my 'old' friends who taught me beginning every SUNRISE with a CLEAN-SLATE