

The Last few pages!

Mysore, I reached midnight, planned people could not join, usual, be it for my leadership sessions or travel. The next day planned to travel to Gokarna in the early hours. It's quite challenging – driving a small car, twenty-five year old with seventy-five year father, both travel fit.

I picked up the ancestors list, an official record dating AD 1380 starting from Delhi, Andra and Chitradurga till my father entire clan. Courtesy of official list possible with the heritage associated with Onake Obavva as part of the family, travel was with the idea simple, to do Shraddha for all known, unknown ancestors.

On the way I could not meet my friend, yes ten years have passed in only in SMS and calls. Hearing our conversations, my father added, *'Life looks shorter when we have good days and also when we feel our days are numbered.'*

A great point, we live as if there are plenty of days ahead.

While, having mom's packed lunch at thick forest amidst coffee plantations of Chikmagalur, a thought struck me. With three hours of daily travel time to & fro to the office at ECO SPACE, Bangalore, we are missing the beauty, serenity, liveliness of the forest, breeze and rains, where life exists to its fullest. We are ending our life without even taking note of these simple pleasures; replaced with gadgets, the internet, sceneries and pictures. No time to enjoy the god's creation; forget even creating something new, I moved by thought, as did the car uphill

I shared this with my father. He added, *'travel time to office should not be more than thirty minutes; otherwise you miss your life which is much more valuable. Constant travel subtly ages the body faster with shakes of the vehicle'*. I noted the point, all though I avoid daily travel as much as possible.

The entire stretch was with nature; often I stopped, stretched my arms and closed my eyes inviting the fresh oxygen into myself, nature responded with much more air and pleasant melodies of birds at that moment. Felt much filled with life's energy and wondered if a few minutes can make so much difference and what is if I stay at a stretch.

Maybe it would opposite too, not having allowed ourselves to rest in corporate, chances that we may become discomfort in the loneliness of the forest life!

Travel conversations continued on the value of life.

I shared; *'In my experiences so far, I am bound to conclude that unless we have laser focus there is no authentic progress in any areas of life.* Past two decades, I have achieved many goals, in education, career, enterprising, writing etc., but authentic claim still alludes. I feel, *'whatever I have done so far are not significant ones, though at times I felt that they were the most important'*.

Ageing forward I don't want to climb the wrong ladder, achieving things that turn out insignificant when I review back in my life.

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Father replied, *'Yes very true; I am the living example, time has gone without even being aware of it. It went in solving the problems of life, be it with siblings, my varied interests in literary, farming or even survival amidst high Government post'*.

Yes, he has done many new's in his career, the roads, bridges, temples in different places of Karnataka.

Father continued, whenever he tried to do differently, his people not only opposed but they made all efforts to sideline the improvement which he was trying to bring around. Maybe because of their limited vision and beliefs. Instead of getting benefiting together, it hindered everyone involved.

I had felt similar effects in other areas of life. Where people cannot understand the simple facts the right way, but understand with their flavour, even after many trials. If they cannot, then the responsibility lies with us. To pick up the facts in between lines, do that mid-course correction however harsher it looks.

Napoleon has put it very aptly, 'Action is the superior knowledge'.

I observed such circumstances repeats in life if we don't pick up the lessons. When our time comes near an ending, people get a glimpse of life where things could have been done differently. However, while being part of it, people lack awareness of what is happening with them, which may be due to the veil of *karma* that was to be answered. Many a time, the answer can be in a simpler way rather than taking head-on with the problem as the 'only way'. I noted this for my life.

Gokarna is set with still olden hue, row houses, Brahmin kids with traditional dress, cows inside the houses, which are built-in woods is a common view. Very traditional and to the point, I appreciate that team which helped in our purposes.

Way back took a deviation to see Madhukeshwara temple at Banavasi, kula deva of Kadhambha dynasty, the first of Kannada kings.



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Shiva linga carved in honey-coloured stone, in a vast place surrounded by Asta dikpalas, very peaceful, very divine. I wondered how only temples can remain, where are the palaces and other things which dynasty has enjoyed?

Later I understood it's because of the Vastu & astrological alignment with the directions that kept ancient temples still vibrant. In the past lord would have enjoyed much reverence; over time, now remains as a National monument.

The best thing which a soul feels, as great at a moment while doing an activity, may have the least significance over the period. Yet another important lesson, I need to be careful about my pursuits, which I think as the best utilization of my time.

Forests slowly changed to plains, while heading to Hubli. Amidst paddy fields, crossed the local road to join the mainstream, Song was loud – O Sanam from Lucky Ali, unable to match the true tone. I was reluctant to stop my efforts with practising those songs which I don't want to die with, unsung!

Hubli, noises and aura of the city will not give complete sleep, however good the place is. Calmness has its rejuvenating effect overnight on the body. I used this fact to wake afresh morning at a motel away from the city, to drive to Saundatti temple. Set on a hill, took half a day to finish the visit. I found a local fort at Saundatti which is awesome. Tippu's attack on the fort has still marks left on the stones.



The next day's conversation continued. *'Do you have any regrets in life?'* I asked. Father took a deep breath and answered.

'Whatever the circumstances were offered, he fared well, and continued, when thinking itself was limited, similar to people who were around and then there is no question of regret. What you cannot imagine, even think, then there is no possibility of that in your life'

Point to ponder; to keep our vision broadened, otherwise, we may miss the best things in life without even knowing about that. I took the lesson seriously.

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He continued, his push to become an engineer was from his mother, he struggled to achieve that for many years.

I asked, *'what was the vision after becoming what you wanted for many years,*
He paused, and said *'once it was achieved I had no further vision'*;

At last, he added was to get the marriage of his daughter done before retirement. Added further, with the recent ceremonies, he felt he has done the most significant contribution to his responsibilities and can be free of any guilt.

I got alarmed; even the worthier goals need to revise after achieving them, otherwise, we would be satisfied and miss better achievements, and a constant review of our goals should be an every year-end activity if not quarterly. Goals should be constant companions; I noted this.

He said firmly, *'No new regrets at this point of life when only the last few pages are left out in the book'*. I felt heavy at heart, but could not respond.

Chitradurga, back to our native village and personal temple at the farm, darkness started spreading while we concluded the Pooja.

Two local people with us warned that this place is haunted by bears and cheetah at nights so no one comes at this hour here, and continued, a year back two deaths by black bears happened nearby. By the time he concludes his talk, we heard the scream of bears very near next to the bushes. Suddenly, as suggested we all made a huge noise and moved fast to reach the car. I felt, fifteen minutes of highest tension, in my entire life, real scary without lights and in rains.

Father was calm; he said *'You feel so because you have not seen this kind of life, it is normal, keep fire with you and no animals will dare to reach near to you'*.

I missed the road link back to the main road due to heavy rains and made a couple of stops to correct it. While driving back home to Bangalore it took nearly two hours for me to become calmer and to talk normal again.

The trip ended with a high lesson, anything can be stressful based on the value we give to it.