
The Art of Dying

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I, not very long ago, happened to attend a Rotary club meeting at Ghaziabad, Rotarians follow a practice of inviting an eminent person as chief guest and arrange for an address by him on some relevant topic followed by discussions. The chief guest for the evening had to speak on 'The Art of living' which has been a fashionable topic for quite some time. Somehow, the chief guest, an IRS officer could not make it. The host readily declared that we have an IPS officer with us who is working with Central Para Military Force 'CRPF' and we request him to assume the role of the chief guest. I was in a fix, not having foreseen this twist of circumstance, I had come unprepared, Jokingly, I said-sorry, I am a propounder of the 'art of dying'. I cannot speak on 'the art of living'. Many of those present in the audience assumed that I would be speaking on my experience in the police encounters or some such related issues.

But that was not my intention at all. I had various piecemeal thoughts screening through my mind. I had read Kabir, I had read Swamy Chinmayanand's discourses, I had read books of various faiths. I had evolved my own thoughts of 'spirituality' distinctly different from 'religiosity'. Some how I started speaking - "Change is a constant phenomenon". The air we breathe in is, at a given point of time, a part of our system. The moment we exhale it, it goes out into the atmosphere where someone else inhales it. It remains no longer ours, it belongs now to someone else. The water in a wave of the ocean remixes in the sea, once the wave encounters the shore or some rock enroute. And soon after some other wave envelopes it and carries it away. This change is taking place everywhere. The river you

see right now is not the same which you see the next moment. The river may flow within the same banks but the waters have changed. So does our body. The cells are dying every moment and the new ones originating. The process of change is constant.

When we want to live, we hold desperately to the present, wanting to retain the inevitable. The emotional attachment with the status quo thus becomes the source of our misery. The real art of living is learning 'to let go'. How beautifully we can imbibe the change to the higher echelons and let the remaining die out, as they have to, would decide how blissful can we be. "I went on adding similar examples", when a person is ageing, lower energy inputs through stomach or other sensory organs become ineffective. Those who draw energy from 'Pranik' or spiritual inputs, survive well. In fact, the dependence on lower form of inputs has to be waived off. Same way emotional attachments have to be diluted. When a person is in process of fading away / dying, people surround him. Because of these emotional attachments, he finds it difficult to die. Here also the art of 'letting go' becomes "desirable".

I found people trying hard to digest what I had said. May be they were nonplussed, confused and yet not wanting to rebuff me stayed glued to their seats. I continued my delivery as the thoughts forming a pattern raced through my mind.

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I took help of behavioural thoughts and went on to delve into the concepts of self. "The physical self, the social self and the spiritual self. Physical self is what we physically and mentally constitute of and think of ourselves as, social self is the image that people have of us, we are often worried about that. The physical self may die as we perish, the social self may have a longer span of existence but our spiritual self is what lives on and on forever. When a person dies, he, in fact, traverses from the physical self to the spiritual self along with his faith and impressions of 'Karmas' (his deeds). Since this is the ultimate truth and the final destiny, those who learn the art of migrating to the spiritual self while in the living state, find the change over not only easy but also stimulating. Hence learning the 'art of dying' is important from this angle too."

I could see the appreciative smiles surfacing on the faces of the audience, that audience on whom I had almost been imposed upon. "The 'art of dying' or 'letting things go' can be understood further on different footings. We may be totally materialistic in our approach, others may be working for social recognition and not just money, still others may choose to work in order to earn the love and respect of their fellow being or may be inspired by the aura of the place or the reflections of the intimacy existing amidst those he has all along identified with. Yet, some people may be further self actualised and want to add deeper meaning to their life. Even beyond all this, the rarest of the rare people may toil on the basis of 'faith' they evolve within themselves and enjoy a state of absolute bliss. These are the various gradations of the human mind and here one has to evolve from lower to the higher echelons. Thus dying out at the lower levels and resurrecting at the higher level is the only secret of maximising the level of satisfaction till one ascends to a state of 'eternal bliss'. So ascend to the higher levels of the mind and kill the attachments at lower level, in order to reach the levels of sublimity (your eternal self).

It was only after crucifixion that 'Christ' evolved in the purest form, the 'Tandav' of Shiva is nothing but the destruction of your 'Srishti', the lower level world, which you have evolved and which is unfortunately bounded by bodily limitations. The sacrifice of his 'dearest' as offered by Hazarat Ibrahim

was nothing but the suppression of all his lower level bindings. Religiosity might have evolved in different ways, but spirituality remains the same. Death is nothing but an evolution from the physical realm to the spiritual realm and that is the only forward looking positive-step in our life."

There followed pin drop silence in the hall. I had said all that I had set out to say, unable to bear the suspense any further I broke the silence. "I have completed my address".

I cannot fathom how a Cop is philosophizing on life", said an elderly gentlement with an appreciative glance directed at me. "Our cops are now turning philosophers", I jokingly added. I could see some one trying to pose a serious question. I prompted him to speak louder. He said, "you come in constant conflict with people, then how can you allow things to go past if they tread on your feet, it must be difficult not to react in such a circumstance."

To me it appeared to be a corollary to what I had spoken earlier. The topic was bound to invoke discussions and that is why Mr. Ghoshal posed the first serious question. "Yes", I started replying "you may choose how to counter this move. Many options are available. But to me it appears more relevant that we 'forgive & forget" and come out of the loop fast."

"But what, where is the guarantee that we stand to gain by going into spiritual realm or ascending towards 'God' who is after all only an imaginary entity", asked another gentleman. It was gradually becoming clear that we were entering a zone of deciphering what came first 'the hen or the egg'. But I was confident of my evolving thoughts. I tried to convey them across", there is no separate entity like God. You are yourself a part of the "absolute power" but that is in its dormant state. Through your inner evolution you activate the higher levels of your mind and try to invoke the power which can descend from there. One has to traverse from the 'sub-conscious' to the fully conscious state. This can only happen on the basis of our 'faith'. 'Faith' can move mountains. So everyone can evolve as 'God' if we truly strive for that state. It is, in fact, a flight of freedom from negativity to positivity. What you want and strive for yourself shall be achieved when you have deciphered your own level. Your sufferings & happiness would depend on

the definitions you draw out within yourself."

It was nearly ten in the night. Meeting ended with a vote of thanks in a rich and a positive mode. What impact it had left on the audience. I cannot say. But to me, as I know for certain, it helped to reformat my thoughts. It helped me to re-discover myself. My final understanding of the 'art of dying' remains alive:

- The art of 'letting things go' is basic to attain internal bliss.

- It is always preferable to 'forgive and forget' rather than falling in an unending loop of misery.

- It is wise to change the level of mind and enhance your satisfaction level through a range of higher 'level value-additions'.

You may or may not agree, but at least spare it some thought. It would not be far fetched to say "learning the Art of Dying is actually the crux of the real "Art of Living."