

A LOST LOVE: THE LEARNING OF THE PAST FOR FUTURE

Love Kumar Joshi

A Dissertation

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requirements of the degree of
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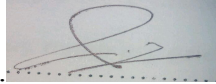
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

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Abstract Approved:



Prof. Bidya Nath Koirala, Ph.D., Dissertation Supervisor

The study portrays my extremely heartfelt experience of grieving death and dying rituals of my loved son-Rose. In fact, one should not live killing the heart (Shkya, 2008, p. 8). This grief research points to isolation and traumatic circumstances of the griever's (the family) face. Evocative auto ethnography is the method that I used. The writing is a journey to self.

This thesis has utilized the theoretical constructs of symbolic interaction and evocative auto ethnography as forms of self-enquiry; revealing how I come to make sense of my lived experience in dealing with the loss of a loved one. I drew heavily upon personal journals, academic papers, and the religious books such as; The Geeta; The Garuda Purana; The Shiva Maha Puranam; Srimad Bhagawat Maha Puran and The Vedas. Grief epics-Muna Madan and Gauri; dialogical discourse with the pundits; hearsays; newspaper clippings and cultural *Sa Paru* etc. are used as field notes in order to construct narratives dealing.

My findings showed that grief brings both positive and negative transformation in life. However, I am in favor of positive ones. In addition, the implication to education is that grief literatures reduce pain and help people live for others' life as well. In my case, I have accepted "writing as a therapy (James W. Pennebaker, 1990)."

Episode 1 deals with the methodologies that I followed

Episode 2 discusses the immortality of soul, thirteen days period of morning process-*samyama*, abstinence in food and conduct, sharing grief among griever as heart and mind healing - provides patience and peace to the bereaved family members.

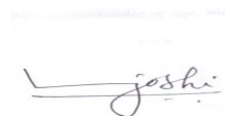
Episode 3 narrates the importance and impact of reciting the Garuda Puran, the practice of Sa Paru and Bala Chaturdasi carnivals as a social therapy.

Episode 4 deals with chaos and prolonged grief at home, relation between *the dream world* and the living world, the purpose of joining M.Phil.Programme and issues associated with teaching profession.

Episode 5 describes gloomy festivals, the importance of sraddhas, endemic and external religious pilgrimages for transcendental liberation, the learning and findings of my experiences, my theories of death and dying rituals and lastly, conclusion and implication to education.

The Episodes are my experiences and my self-actualizations. If they reflect with the-readers' self-actualizations, I expect, my efforts will be recognized.

Key words: heartfelt experience, Evocative auto ethnography, self- enquiry, grief, transformation in life, writing as a therapy, death and dying rituals ,death and dying rituals



Love Kumar Joshi

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Please...

"Authors search out pearl;

Diving into the-

Ocean of thoughts".

I'm not an author,

I am a father,

I've narrated-

Student- teacher's pain,

When I lost my rising son.

DEDICATION

To my loving son

Rose



Joshi

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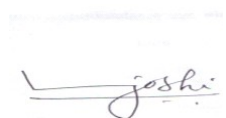
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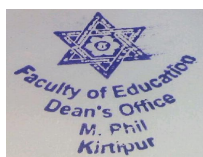
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.....
Love Kumar Joshi

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April 2011



ACCEPTANCE AND RECOMMENDATION

The undersigned certify that we have read, approved and recommended to the Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University for acceptance, a thesis entitled A LOST LOVE: The LEARNING OF THE PAST FOR FUTURE by Love Kumar Joshi in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION WITH SPECIALIZATION IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES.

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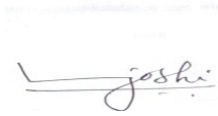
I would like to express the deepest appreciation to the external examiners of this thesis, namely Prof. Dr. Dibya Man Karmacharya and Dr. Bal Chandra Luitel for their insightful comments and feedbacks as well. Both of you made me aware towards creative expression.

My special thanks go to my better half Kamala Joshi and younger son Sarose Kumar Joshi. Your enduring encouragement is highly appreciated.

Muri muri (unbound) thanks to my classmates Ram Chandra Dahal, Pawan Bimali, Yagya Bikram Shahi, Anju Khadka, Lalita Joshi, Som Bahadur Thapa, Sharad Chandra Simkhada and

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The acknowledgements will be incomplete, if I do not praise Suman Acharya. Your friendly help and timely information geared me to drive my vehicle to the destination.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Love Kumar Joshi". The signature is written in dark ink on a light background.

Love Kumar Joshi

Sinamangal, Kathmandu, Nepal

17 April 2011

GLOSSARY

<i>aasani</i>	seat
<i>agarbattis</i>	incense
<i>aila,</i>	homemade liquor
<i>Aryaghat</i>	cremation chamber
<i>tantriks</i>	the magicians
<i>bajai,</i>	wife of a Brahmin
<i>Bala Chaturdasi</i>	religious mass practice to emancipate departed soul
<i>Bhagawan</i>	God
<i>Bhai Teeka</i>	brother worshipping
<i>bida,</i>	leave
<i>Buba</i>	father
<i>chandan</i>	White powder used for worshipping.
<i>DDRZ</i>	Death and Dying Ritual Zone
<i>daal roti</i>	a type of food
<i>dakshina</i>	money offered voluntarily
<i>darshan</i>	Have a vision, scene,look
<i>Devabhoomi</i>	god's land
<i>Dhami</i>	wizard
<i>dharmabhiru</i>	god fearing
<i>Dharmaraj</i>	the God of Death

<i>Dhoti-kurta</i>	Male dress in the hot locations
<i>Dibyadarsan</i>	revelation
<i>Dya Maas</i>	mother Gods
<i>Ekaha</i>	reciting of the Bhagawat in a day
<i>ghat</i>	riverbanks
<i>Hakim</i>	the officer
<i>Jajaman</i>	the person who engages the priest in the worships
<i>Kaibalya mukt</i>	emancipation
<i>Kamandalu</i>	a pot to carry water,
<i>Karmayogi</i>	an action oriented person.
<i>Kharau</i>	a wooden slipper
<i>Kiriyaputri.</i>	A person who observes the funeral rites.
<i>Kshatriya</i>	a member of the royal or warrior Hindu caste
<i>kul deep</i>	light of the family
<i>lakhe</i>	a demon.
<i>Lama</i>	a Tibetan or Mongolian priest of Lamaism
<i>lapsi</i>	a kind of sour fruit
<i>malami</i>	funeral processionists
<i>Mnha pooja</i>	festival of body/soul worshipping of Newar community
<i>Namaste</i>	a greeting by joining two palms/ hands
<i>narak</i>	the hell

<i>Nepal Mahatmya</i>	a religious book that describes the holy places
<i>neta jee</i>	leader
<i>nhenuma</i>	Newar community ritual to offer favorite food on the seventh day of departed person
<i>Om Benkateshowraya Nama</i>	Vedic words to be chanted along the way to Tirupati Balajee Temple, India
<i>panchapatra</i>	the copper pot to put water for worship
<i>Bala Chaturdasi</i>	Mass parade takes place to illuminate the oil-lamps to enlighten the souls during the time span of one to three years
<i>Pinda</i>	the balls of barley flour offered to the departed souls
<i>pitri</i>	departed soul, spirit
<i>prarthana sabha</i>	prayer assembly
<i>punya</i>	meritious action
<i>Sa Paru</i>	cow festival, a carnival
<i>saal</i>	a kind of tree
<i>sata beej</i>	seven seeds
<i>shaiya dan</i>	the bed donation
<i>Shastras</i>	Hindu religious bookslike Vedas etc
<i>Sudras</i>	the untouchables

<i>Surya</i>	the sun
<i>tanneri</i>	youth
<i>tapari, bauta</i>	leaf plates
<i>duna and khory</i>	leaf plates
<i>tapasya</i>	penance
<i>teeka</i>	a mixture of red vermillion, curd and rice, a sign of auspiciousness
<i>teel</i>	sesam
<i>tirtha shraddha</i>	a religious ritual to be performed on the sea/ ocean shore
<i>Vijaya Dashami</i>	the victorious tenth day of Hindu festival Dashain
<i>yagya</i>	a religious offering, an oblation.
<i>Yamaraj</i>	God of Death

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PROLOGUE:

In Memory...



Rose

Joshi

*I did M.Phil. 2nd Semester,
The result published yesterday (July 14, 2007)
Ist was done earlier.
Now I have to do with the "Thesis".
But couldn't begin-
As you're in the hospital,
I'll do it,
Soon you'll discharge.
The computer you bought, for me from Japan-
Did help me a great."

"That sounds nice,
It is good news,
You did it,
Go ahead-*

You'll do that, too."

I noticed a light in his face,

In addition, breathed a long.

Alas! On the seventh day (July 21, 2007)

You said "Good bye".

What a sudden!

What an unexpected!

I made you sleep the day before,

Then backed home at half-past nine,

Mother hadn't seen you for four days,

You have forbidden her to visit the hospital,

As she'd been suffering from cold and fever,

I told her, "Rosé's well and discharge you next day-

On a leisurely day- the Saturday.

We had two more handful of rice that very evening.

Your brother was with you until 2 am.

He was pleased

To see you fast asleep,

Your friends let him go home,

So he did.

From five a.m.

You struggled,

To live; to win life,

At 8:35 am-

The death won the battle.

Completing the rituals-

I sat on my table,

To review my thesis work

Tried best to console my heart,

However, I could not.

I tried to move the pen,

I remembered-

I made you tried to write,

Your initial homework.

I try to read the book-

However, I recalled-

Made you to read the books.

The vivid pictures;

Of naughty stubborn acting,

Quickly moved
Around my face,
Tears dropped on the book
And formed your recent face
I stared and stared;
I was dumbstruck.

We observed the Sa Paru
The Newar tradition to commemorate
The departed loved ones
Holding your tattoo coated website photo
Moved around the Basantapur Darbar square
Prayed the Almighty
You rest in peace and,
Get company of god 'n sages
Seen many giving an eye to you
And said, "Passed away in the young"
We were Lost in the crowd
As the rivers in the Ocean.

Festivals came to the doorsteps,
Mother's outcry awakened the family at midnight

Missed my ideas-

Of making my thesis finish right.

What a desert created in home!

Not forgotten ever,

Better no festives come

We live a mourning surrounding-

Lasting long-ever and ever.

So prominent was,

Your social health.

You made so many survived.

Rescued youths.

Mates commented, "You fought a war."

Bravo! My son,

I am proud of you.

Many mothers came to salute you.

Friends obey and respect you.

You'll remain alive in hearts of those-

Who have taken rebirth in this world!

The Gita rightly says-

"Body dies, even soul remains immortal."

If the laws make you reborn,

And if same to us –I urge the God

Let you be born,

As our elder son.

I need strength to bear your absence

Breaking the rooted taboos

We forbade 'her' dress in white.

I assure you,

To provide patronage to your beloved-

Moreover, to loving Marline.

We've given a choice to your loved.

Either she'll remain as- a chori or a buhari

Let her discharge her karma,

You had better bestow her

As she sees you everywhere.

(September 9, 2007 (Bhadra 23, 2064)

EPISODE 1

My Journey towards Evocative Auto ethnography

Once varieties of research methodologies that are in practice in Nepal were discussed in the class. Among them, one was auto ethnography. I showed my curiosity to write the thesis following 'autoethnography'. I got inspiration from Prof. Bidya Nath Koirala and Laba Dev Awasthi. I began to learn about auto ethnography; a light bulb went off in my head. I found the way to tell my stories as my live experiences. I found a home and place for my story and my healing process. I became interested in 'auto ethnography', though it is a novel research in Nepal so far. At this point, I knew that positivists practice quantitative method-the old, and postmodernist apply method- the new one. The third way of doing research is the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. However, mine is a qualitative research that used auto ethnographic approach to inquiry. The qualitative research is an improvised technique. It is empirical. Its base is taken from the ground. It counts and gives importance to the grounded knowledge. It is fresh and it has sensory value. It is cultural value added. The method is related with the researcher's perspective. Knowing the importance of this qualitative research, I have followed "auto ethnographical representation of my knowing"(Luitel, 2003, p.4) to represent my lived experiences. "Reconceptualising relationships between self and other took me into the word of auto ethnographic genres."(Ibid, p.5) I derived ideas by reading Denzin and Lincoln (2005 & 2000) moments of qualitative research, especially the process of crystallization of narratives and critical (auto) ethnographic research enterprises.

Etymologically the word 'auto ethnography' contains three words: auto+ ethno+graphy. Simply 'auto' refers to 'self'; 'ethno' refers to 'race' or 'ethnic'; and 'graphy' refers to 'something written or represented in the specified manner, or about a specified subject' (word web). It describes self-representation of a cultural race or group. Qualitative methods also known as 'soft methods' (Alasuutari, p.605, Seale & others, 2004). It is a method for analyzing life stories (Ibid). By the late 1970s, however, researchers were beginning to look for 'softer' approaches that took account of peoples' everyday life (Ibid, p.605). Michel Foucault, Ronald Barthes, Jacques Lacan and Louis Althusser contributed to name the qualitative method as 'poststructuralist' social theory (Ibid, p.605).

Auto ethnography is described as (a) multiple layers of unveiled information; (b) personal narratives to critique the situatedness; and (c) self conscious introspection. My first understanding was related to Ellis and Bochner (2000), the second with Spray (2001 cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.765); and the third reflection was associated with Newman (1996, p.189, cited in Ibid).

Auto ethnography is also understood as an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural. It is a process of going back and forth to gaze, first through an ethnographic wide-angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, the ethnographers look inward,

exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

Ethnography is also a form of "autobiographical personal narrative that explores the writer's experience of life. It studies the awareness of the self within a culture". (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page). People also view that it is a "research, writing, and method that connect the auto- biographical and personal to the cultural and social. This form usually features concrete action, emotion, embodiment, self-consciousness, and introspection... [And] claims the conventions of literary writing. (Ellis,2004,p.xix, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.765) Moreover, it is a "self-narrative that critiques the situatedness of self with others in social context". (Spray, 2001.p.710, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.765). Some authors also believed that ethnography is a "texts [that] democratize the representational sphere of culture by locating the particular experiences of individuals in a tension with dominant expressions of discursive power" (Newman, 1996, p.189, cited in Ibid.).

According to Greetz (1983), auto ethnography is referred to as a blurred genre, it overlaps with, and is indebted to, research and writing practices in anthropology, sociology, psychology, literary criticism, journalism, and communication, to say nothing of our favorite story tellers, poets, and musicians (Ibid, p.765).

Linda Brodkey writes, "Ethnography attempts to bring stories not yet heard to the attention of the academy."

Influenced by the authors above I have tried to make sure that my story is related to the essence of my daily life philosophy and it is shaping my beliefs. I deal with emotions that occurred to me in my life recently. In so doing I have traced the traditional, religious, moral, emotional and contextual natural human values.

Multiple Textual Representations

Auto ethnography demands legitimate ways of representation. In this consideration, I explained my lived experiences, grounded facts, practiced rituals, and customs, journal; memoirs; self composed poems, letters/e-mails, reviews, autobiographies, photographs, dialogues and hearsays, and diaries as practices of self-formation.

Crisis

I accepted Denzin and Lincoln's (2005, p.765) concerns on the lawfulness of representation. In order to ensure my representation I figured out the crisis. These crises were nothing but a triple threat, a triple crown of thrones: representation, legitimization, and praxis.

And these crises had come to me from the loss of my son. Who could represent my emotion at the death of my son? Who could legitimize my knowledge and the feelings that I hold because of the demise of the beloved one? And how could I translate my theoretical baggage at the death of my son? These questions themselves managed the triple crisis. In each of these questions I tried to bring literature, others grief, and personal reflections over them. There were facts and reasons related to these questions. Let me begin with the Death. Death is a true phenomenon. Grieving more or less is emotional and sentimental in all living creatures. It is

where I used auto ethnographic texts that focus on creating a palpable emotional experience as it connects to, and separates from, other ways of knowing, being, and acting in/on the world.'(Bochner, 2001; Ellis, 1997, 1995; Jago, 2002; Spray, 2001, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln (2005, p.765). The impact of death of a loved one in the family life lasts long. Especially to the parents, it lasts until they survive. Furthermore, the mother bears the in-depth impact.

I have narrated death of my son and its mourning rituals. It may be appealing for homogenous communities and paradoxical to the heterogeneous ones. In doing so I might happen to be more subjective but I have tried my best to maintain objectivity in the entire subjectivity narratives." Narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society"(Barthes, 1977, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.651).

The knowledge that I possess is not enough and final. Whatever I experienced in the due process, I have put them in black and white. I extend my hands to future investigators or researchers to enrich the storehouse of knowledge, i.e. grief journal. I did a little, very little beginning only. I am unable to reach the end. Auto ethnography implies self-investigation of an author's role in a context, a situation, or a social world. This implication was observed with me as well. According to Richardson (2000), autoethnographic reviewing what she calls creative analytic practices(CAP)consists of five criteria:(a) substantive contribution to an understanding of social life, (b) aesthetic merit, (c) reflexivity, (d) emotional and intellectual impact, and (e) a clear expression of a cultural, social, individual, or communal sense of reality.

I have endeavored to give impression of all these five reviewing criteria so far.

Auto ethnographical performances provided me an opportunity to "create, empower, and emancipate"(Langellier, 1999). Langellier asserted, "Stories are made, not found." I do not agree at this point because events of life itself are stories. We narrate to give it a shape .We adorned it with colorful words and dialogues. Life stories are told artfully or written aesthetically. Molly Andrews and co-writers also opine-"I do believe that, indeed, we are storied selves (Sarbin, 1986; Bruner, 1990; Rosenwald & Ochberg 1992; MaAdams, 1997; Eakin, 1999); this means there is a close relationship between the stories we tell and hear and who we are; and that our stories are the cornerstone of our identities (Widdershoven, 1993; Holstein & Gubrium, 1999, as cited in Seale & others, 2004, p.112).

A researcher wants to establish his/her own positioning in the research field. So do I. Therefore, I used an auto ethnographic methodology to inquiry within myself. Scholars like Bal Chandra Luitel (2003) and Shashidhar Belbase (2005) have presented their dissertations using auto ethnography method. Mine will be of not new one but I hope, it will add a tiny drop in the form of "grief journal." It is not my choice of topic or subject. It was the results of a sudden or an unexpected traumatic circumstance. I think I have invested my deep emotions in the entire writing. It may have reflective effects at least to those who have gone through the death of the beloved family members.

Molly Andrews and Others (2004) are of opinion that "it seemed that the people habitually made deep emotional investments in their personal narratives, particularly when their lives had been disrupted by something like divorce". So was the opinion of Susan E.Chase (2005), who said that a narrative may be oral or written and, may be elicited or heard during

fieldwork, an interview, or naturally occurring conversations. In these situations, a narrative may be, (a) a short topical story about a particular event and specific characters such as an encounter with a friend, boss, or doctor;(b) an extended story about a significant aspect of one's life such as schooling, work, marriage, divorce, childbirth, an illness, trauma or participation in a war or social movements; or(c) a narrative of one's entire life, from birth to the present (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.652).

Auto ethnography provides the "mental furniture"(Hillman, 1996) of the narrator that shapes and color his/her thinking. In this process, knowledge is created in active, participative engagement with the world, through different forms of individual and cultural practices.

I agree with the writer's above arguments. However, my narrative falls under the category (b) as mentioned by Denzin & Lincoln, 2005. I encountered an unexpected trauma. I lost my son. He was a *kul deep*, a light of the family. He had facilitated me to join M.Phil. He was my source of inspiration. When I passed out the second semester, he was in the hospital. He was so happy with my performance. He had undergone a minor operation on his right leg. He had almost recovered his health. We had planned to discharge him on Saturday. I left home on Friday late night seeing him in a sound sleep. At five a.m., he started getting multiple abdomen infections. He left us at 8:35. The emotional wound or shock hit my family. It had long-lasting effects for nearly three years. The third semester thesis writing lagged behind. The traumatic situations inspired me to write a grief journal as a thesis to pay a tribute to my loved son." I wrote in my heart when I was in deep mourn, I did not have sleep, and I wrote a memoir"(Ghimire, 2008).

I have mentioned emotions of grieved parents-me and my wife and my younger son. 'Psychological' knowledge may be derived from (my) personal narrative accounts.

My Field

"...Researchers go to the field and gather up the pieces of reality lying around waiting to be gleaned". (Golden-Biddle, Locke, 1997, p.8)

I declare," I am the field." I possess many realities. Grief is one of them. I wrote grief because it is my saddest and unexpected reality. It has deep impact on my life than any thing else. On the other hand, I spent thirteen days in the Pashupat Chhetra one of the mourning locations of the Hindus, as my field visit .I have depicted the accumulated data in the form of dialogical discourse.

My Data-Text

I have used multiple genres of representation such as, autobiographic, impressionistic poetic, dramatic, dialogic and commentary (Luitel, 2003, p.10), narratives; and grief as real story. The data texts were generated through narratives or tales of day-to-day life-, live experiences; journal or diary; poems; semiotics; E-mails/letters; photographs, hearsays; extracted verses and poems; travelogues; conversations; and stories.

My Tools

I have used these four tools to do the research. The tools were: (a) Self-Participating Observation; (b) Focus Group Discussion; (c) Interview/discourse; and (d) Photography.

Let me discuss about the tools I chose.

(a) Self- Participation/Observation.

"Observation can be either direct or mediated"(Thomas, 2003, p.60). Mine was of direct observation. I immediately saw and heard what was happening. I used this tool because it was natural and compulsion to me as I was the ' study field' and at the same time, I was the 'studier/ researcher'. It is regarded as" the fundamental base of all research method"(Adler &Adler, 1994, p.389 as cited by Angrosino, 2005, Ibid, p.729). It has "naturalistic characteristics" It is an "eyewitness testimony"(Ibid, p.729/30). Therefore, it is convincing to the readers. I agree with P.V. Young when she stated," Emotional reactions are so deeply embedded and so subtly expressed"(1979, p.183). The readers of this thesis will realize it. This tool 'gazes inward' (Tedlock, p.467, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). According to Tedlock, my study 'is a cultural performance that transcends self- referentiality by engaging with cultural forms that are directly involved in the creation of culture'. This tool emphasizes (a) relational over autonomous patterns, (b) interconnectedness over independence, (c) translucence over transparency, and (d) dialogue and performance over monologue and reading (Ibid, p.467).

(b) Focus Group Discussion (FGD).

Sociologist Robert K. Merton first initiated this discussion method. The word was first introduced by psychologist and then by the marketing expert Ernest Ditcher. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page).

I searched the concerned religious literatures on *Bala Chaturdasi*, one of the Hindu's death ritual festivals. I asked several priests where to get the source. A few suggested me to read

"*Nepal Mahatmya*", religious book that describes the holy and pilgrimage places of Nepal. The noted publishers informed me that now it has stopped to print in Varanasi. I couldn't find an authentic one. *Bala Chaturdasi* is related to the 'cultural studies' (Seale & Others, 2004, p.65) field. Therefore, I applied this tool to acquire the reliable information on it. There are various focus groups. I have used mini focus groups composed of five members. The members were *Purohits* who provide services to the mourning families at Pashupati Arya Ghat and perform religious worshipping. I asked them about their perceptions, opinions, and beliefs towards *Bala Chaturdasi*. They were all one voice that *Bala Chaturdasi* is religious practice to emancipate or liberate the departed soul of the dead person during the time span of one to three years. They narrated the common 'hearsays.' What they narrated I have mentioned under the topic '*Balachaturdasi*'. Here I wanted to transfer this responsibility to the future researchers. They need to accumulate more reliable data on this matter. Besides the FGD, I tried to quench my curiosity with other purohits, too. Whenever I had an opportunity to take part at any pooja occasion, or to share grief, I found uniformity in the hearsay. However, the non-Hindus do not practice this tradition. There is no prohibition, inspection and restriction regarding cast, race or status. Preference is not laid based on untouchability. No discrimination is made during the mass parade. Let me name it as "religious collectivism or communism".

(c) Interview.

Interview is a "face –to-face and one-to-one"(Thomas, 2003, p.63) interact method. My interview was solely based on conversation or dialogue between the informants and me.

I considered that an interview is a talk in the form of questions. I talked with the informants. I introduced myself. When the talk reached at a climax, I asked some questions. My

procedure was oral. I stored the data in my mind. Later, I wrote it on a piece of paper or sometimes on the notebook.

(d) Photography.

Photography is such a tool that captures the natural and happening scene. It creates "a more equal balance between words and images"(Seale & Others, 2004, p.402). The photograph reveals: (a) the relationship between image and text"; (b) reflexivity; and (c) subjective and intersubjective situation (Ibid, p.403) .The "photographic "eye" views with authenticity and impartiality"(Young and Calvin , 1979, p.178). I have enclosed a few photos to show my cultural heritage and death rituals. I used the photographs, as they are so obvious that I need no other evidence.

Rationale

My conversations with the individuals engaged in death and dying rituals indicate blending of Cultural Anthropology, Sociology, Psychology, Religion and Economics related data.

It is said that the tragedies are the best subjects of the tales. I have also encountered such things in my life. Therefore, I wrote the tragedy, the sad events, and the sad story of my life. Ghimire has rightly stated," Sad song is the sweetest song; I am singing the same sad song of my life"(Ghimire, 2008, P.8).

In this writing, I am presented as protagonist. I have acted as an actor somewhere. At sometime, I have played the role of an observer of others' action (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.657). In this context I strongly agree with Bruner (1986) and (Polkinghome, 1995 as cited by

Chase, in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.656). The knowledge I obtained from my reflection over the grief made me interested to do this research.

My Epistemological Consideration

The Scottish philosopher James Frederik Ferrier (1808-1864) coined the term.

Epistemology as a,

(a) "Source of knowledge" (Koirala, 2007/2064, p.1, 415)

(b)"the branch of **philosophy** concerned with the nature and origin of knowledge.

Epistemology asks the question "How do we know what we know?"(<http://dictionary.reference.com>).

(c) "The branch of **philosophy** that studies knowledge. It attempts to answer the basic question: what distinguishes true (adequate) **knowledge** from false (inadequate) knowledge."(Ibid)

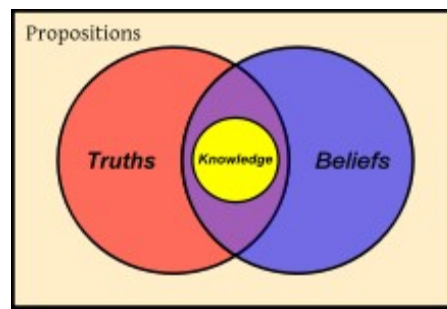
(d)" one of the core areas of philosophy. It is concerned with the nature, sources and limits of knowledge. It is concerned with the nature, sources and limits of knowledge (<http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/P059>)

(e) "Is theory of knowledge is the branch of **philosophy** concerned with the nature and scope (limitations) of **knowledge**. It addresses the questions:

- What is knowledge?

- How is knowledge acquired?
- What do people know?
- How do we know what we know?

Much of the debate in this field has focused on [analyzing](#) the nature of knowledge and how it relates to similar notions such as [truth](#), [belief](#), and [justification](#). It also deals with the means of production of knowledge, as well as skepticism about different knowledge claims.



([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)

Main_Page)

In my opinion, the individual or social belief is acquired from the universe to academic process. An individual acquires it from the lap of the mother and the process ends when the life dies. People know knowledge by communicating language or signs from formal and informal ways. Insights and experiences of the individuals are also sources of knowledge. When we utilize our knowledge to solve our problems, we then know our knowledge's utility.

A researcher gains field knowledge by observing, using methods of natural science and social science. Social phenomenon is so complex and flexible that we cannot control them by

applying positivist methods and cannot perform in depth study. So I constructed my epistemological beliefs under "postmodern constructivist stand point"(Belbase, 2005).

While I was in the mourning period, I acquired knowledge on death and dying rituals by conversation analysis (CA) or talk with the homogenous social members. "Though, CA is not a theoretical, but a very complex, and empirical enterprise. In conversation analysis, methods of the study of social-interaction and theory concerning social interaction are very closely intertwined"(Perrakyla, p.165, Seale & others, 2004). The talk created and maintained intersubjective reality. I realized they're that real knowledge grows with the blending of theories and experiences. It is the knowledge that differentiates between animal and human. Moreover only knowledge can bring *Kaibalya mukti*, salvation from three miseries-births, old age and death (Garuda Puran, 2009, Chap.16 / 87, p.222).

My Ontology

Ontology refers to the branch of philosophy. It deals with nature of existence. It explains how life exists, what are reality and its relationship with life. When I surfed the net, I agreed with Wikipedia. It reads:

This means "the philosophical study of the nature of **being, existence** or **reality** in general, as well as the basic **categories of being** and their relations". (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page).

Another viewpoint of ontology is attitude to life and the world of a particular individual, group or culture. It deals with the ways to obtain knowledge. In this regard, I agree with this

quote like," ontology is an outlook to view the reality /a process of acquiring knowledge."(Koirala, 2064/2007 BS, p, 415,).

In the same way, ontology is related with the philosophical study of nature of the world and human life, truth and knowing. A dictionary quotes; it is "the branch of metaphysics that studies the nature of existence or being as such and (loosely) [metaphysics](http://dictionary.reference.com)'(<http://dictionary.reference.com>).

According to *www-ksl.stanford.edu*, "Ontology is a specification of a conceptualization."

Aristotle called ontology as "first philosophy." In the 18th century, [Christian Wolff](#) contrasted ontology, with special metaphysical theories of souls, bodies, or God, claiming that ontology could be a deductive discipline revealing the essences of things (www.answers.com).

Here, I agree with the ideologies of Christian Wolf because the art of dying is abstract. What is soul and where does it go? When does it leave the body? Is there re-birth? Is there heaven? Why don't we visit the God when we are alive? These queries are based on metaphysical theories. People believe in the theories that persuade supernatural beings.

Literatures tell, "The word ontology was used in the early 20th century. Practitioners of [phenomenology](#) and [existentialism](#) such as [Edmund Husserl](#) and his student [Martin Heidegger](#) used this term. Gradually it emerged as a central discipline" (Ibid).

I have undertaken the subjective path for the understanding of nature of being. In order to reach my destination, I used auto ethnographic genres. I have used poetries; monologue; dialogues; stories; narratives and photography to give my grief journal a bodily shape.

My Axiology: My Ethics

A qualitative research includes the values and value judgments. I have considered the following ethics in my research process:

(a) I have invested my deep emotions and sentiments in the entire writing due to the nature of the subject matter.

(b) I do not want to claim that I have fully maintained objectivity.

© The thesis is based on subjective interpretation. Therefore, I do not say that there are objective realities in the writing, though I have not neglected to maintain it.

(d) I am very much cautious of plagiarism and intellectual corruption. Credit has been given to the concerned authors / writers.

(e) The literatures and references that I referred in my study have been mentioned.

(f) I have not misinterpreted and misrepresented the socio-cultural contexts, which

may defame or hurt the particular informant(s) or the institution(s).The injured one cannot injure others.

Because of the above axiological declaration, I believe that the readers of my thesis will find:

- (i) Trustworthiness: "I have tried to make the accounts as open, honest and transparent as I can.
- (ii) Reflexivity: The thesis has qualities of reflexivity. One can reflect his/her Stories.
- (iii) Heartfelt: This thesis is an example of a 'heartfelt.'
- (iv) This writing possesses enough incompetence and lackings.

My Research Questions

The followings are my research questions.

1. What is death?
2. What is the relation of dream between the Living world and the Dead world?
3. How do literatures console us when we loss our loved one?
4. What are the educational implications of death rituals?



EPISODE 2

Soul is Spiritual and Never Dies

It was Saturday, 21 July 2007. I finished my bathing and called my younger son, Sarose. I inquired of his brother's latest health condition. I asked if I should come to hospital soon. He told me to come after the lunch. Then I engaged in my daily routine –*pooja*, worshipping. It took about an hour. I was just in the process of *aarati*, illuminating the deities. I was holding the bell on the left hand and the *aarati* on the right hand.

The phone rang out. My wife received the call.

"Send daddy hospital right now," Sarose calling, she said.

I was in a dilemma. I could not leave the *aarati*. I decided to complete the *aarati* first; then attend the hospital. Within a few minutes, I got over the *aarati*. Put some pocket money in case it needed for medical expenses. I thought I ought to put my signature in some testing paper or I had to deposit extra fees in the hospital. I rushed to the hospital though it is a minute walk

from my home. At the gate, I saw a friend held Goma tight and she was sobbing, her body was out of control. I was heart-stricken to read the grave situation.

I went towards the ward. On the first staircase Sarose, my younger son was waiting me. He caught me by my arms.

"Take care, be patient daddy, I am afraid, Rose is no more." dilemma

"What?" Oh! My god!"

I began to shake and tremble. My feet were not on the floor. I couldn't take a breath. Nearly I fell over the stairs.

"Please, please, daddy, I will be no where, if something happened to you. For the god's sake control yourself."

"Okay. Let me see Rose. Where is he now?"

"He's on the bed. He's in deep rest. He said us goodbye. It's so quick. I did not even believe my eyes. Before fifteen minutes, he was saying he's bearing the pain. It would calm down and take discharge. All of a sudden, he got respiration trouble. I immediately called the doctor and sisters. They, too, attended fast and did the best. But it was beyond their reach. I was patting Rose on his forehead. He caught me tight, looked me with puzzled eyes, and stared me. I called "Dai, Dai". He tilted his head. Kept eyes opened. He was only my brother. I missed him."

I burst into tears. Began to cry. Sarose escorted me to the ward. Rose was calm. He gently lay on the bed. I shook him. Called, "Babu, Babu, Rose." No reply at all. I called home, "Kamala...!"

"How is Babu? Hello how's babu? Why don't you speak?" What happened to you?"

With a crying thunder voice I said, "Rose is no more. Come to hospital, take care, please..."

I heard, a deep cry, " *Hay, Bhagawan, launa ke aai paryo!*" (Oh, God! Help, what came upon?)

I was very hopeless and went on crying. Sarose consoled me citing the important text of Srimad Bhagawat Geeta. What Krishna Jee preached in the Geeta? Aatma (soul) never dies. It is immortal. All humans eventually must depart from the earth. It is a natural law.

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिन्
नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूय : ।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो
न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥

(श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, २:२०)

*Na jaayete mriyate va kadachin,
Na yam bhutva bhavita va na bhuyah
Ajo nityah shasvato ayam puraano.
Na hanyate hanyamane sharire. (Geeta 2: 20)*

The verse reads-

For the soul, there is neither birth nor death at any time. He has not come into being, does not come into being, will not come into being. He is unborn, eternal, ever lasting and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain."

My younger son is 22/3. I remained stunned by his knowledge of Texts of Geeta. Often he carries the Geeta with him. He bought it in Kochi at a book fair. He had told me that he used to go through the Geeta when he was in leisurely place and felt lonely. It created a great peace and comfort in my heart. It consoled me to a greater extent.

The deceased had to be lifted from the bed. The cabin attendant called me to clear the hospital dues and collect the death certificate. I had to do .I did with a heavy heart.

All the near and dear relatives, kins gathered at the hospital. His colleagues and close friends thronged. A death body carrier van drove into the hospital. His friends brought the necessary things. My hands were tightly jammed. I hardly pulled out a few thousand rupees to pay the bills. Within an hour, the news spread as fire in the jungle. Most of my relatives and friends arrived there were women, especially mothers.

By 11am, Rose was taken to Pashupati Arya Ghat for cremation. A priest was appointed to perform the last rites according to Hindu ritual. He and his aides built a funeral pyre. Ravi one of Rose's friends wished to add more sandalwood on the pyre. I gave permission for it. Rose was laid on the pyre. The priest asked us to offer a handful of water in the mouth of Rose by going round the funeral pyre. So did everybody. After that, the priest told me to offer *daag batti*, the process of placing burning fire upon the mouth of the deceased. My hands and feet trembled. The lips dried. The eyes stunned and kept opening. I witnessed total darkness in front of my eyes. I could not move my feet. I felt so heavy that I could not hold them. I lost the way. I lost myself. I became senseless. Someone gave me a company. Carried me to the pyre. I dropped the lighted fire on Rose's mouth. I said, "RIP, my son."

I sat down nearly two meters away from the *Cheeta*, the pile of burning wood where my son's body was being burnt on. Lots of scene of funerals started to move over my face.

I had attended many funerals in my life. My grandpa passed away. I was at the riverbank. My grandma left me only due to fever of a few days. I attended her at the last moment. I tried to cry but could not. All of a sudden, my father-in-law departed. I worked and assisted the last ritual. Tears did not fall down off my eyes. I was sitting beside her body when my mother-in-law

left the world. I knew nothing of my parents and brother's last breathings. I had also attended many neighbors and colleagues cremations. I had expressed obituaries and extended condolences. Death itself is a grief. It saddens a person for many days. All of the events made me depressed.

Prayer helps in the hard times. There was no way, and only to prayer. I recited the verse in faint voice and with trembling lips.

मैनमग्ने विदहो माभि शूशुचो मास्य त्वचं चिच्छिपो मा शरीरम् ।

शृतं यदा करसि जातवेदोऽथेमेनं प्र हिणुतात् पितृरूप ॥

(अथर्ववेद, अथाष्टादशं काण्डम्, सूक्त २, श्लोक ४ , पेज ४९९॥)

Mainagne vidaho mavi shooshucho maashya tvochai chichhipo ma shariram.

Shritam yeda karasi jatavedoathemrenam pra hinutat pitrimrupa. (Atharva Ved, 18th Chapter, psalms 2, verse 4, p.499,)

The verse means-

O, divine of fire! Perform the last rites of this soul of the spirit without inflicting any pain. Do not cut or scatter this spirit into pieces. O omniscient god! After burning this dead body into ashes, send it near to the departed paternal ancestors.

यदा शृतं कृणव जातवेदोऽथेममेनं परि दत्तात् पितृभ्यः ।
यदो गच्छात्यसुनीतिमेतामथ देवानां वशनीर्भवाति ॥
(अथर्ववेद, अथाष्टादशं काण्डम्, सूक्त २ श्लोक ५, पेज ४९९ ॥)

Yeda shritam krinava jatavedoathemamanam pari datttaat pitribhya

Yedo gachchhatyasunitimetamatha devanam vashanirbhavati (Ibid, verse 5, p.499).

O, omniscient god! Hand over the soul of the spirit to the departed paternal ancestors, after you burnt down the dead body into ashes. When this soul of the spirit holds another physique or body, at that time, let it remain in the shelter or the company of the gods.

The flame gutted the young body. I was quiet watching and watching. It took me several years to build up and nourish but it became ash within two hours.

I told Kamala, "Our 'light' extinguished off forever".

All of a sudden, the following text of the Geeta came into my mind.

वासांसी जीर्णानि यथा विहाय
नवानि गृहाणति नरोऽपराणि ।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णा-
न्यन्यानि संयति नवानि देही ॥
(गीता २: २२)

Vasamsi jirnani yatha vihaya

*Navani grhnati naraaparani
Tatha sharirani vihaya jirnanya
Nyani samyati navani dehi. (Geta, 2:22)*

The verse means-

"As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, the soul similarly accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones"(Ibid, Chapter 2 Text 22). These verses above consoled me for a while but the dire truth was that the young body of my son was burning on the pyre."

He was not yet too old. He was just in the middle of youth. He had to enjoy the life more and more. Then how he became old or aged? Yeah, I am father of over 50 and am I not older enough? The Hindu Tradition seeks the sons' shoulder when deceased is processed to the ghat, the riverbank where the cremation rituals take place.

I was constantly watching the cheeta. I recalled some texts of the Bhagawat Geeta.

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥ ऐ. २।२३॥

Nainam

chindanti shstrani nainam dahati pavakah.

Na chainam kledayantyapo na shosayeti marutah. (Ibid, 2: 23)

The verse reads-

"The soul can never be cut to pieces by any weapon, nor burned by fire, nor moistened by water, nor withered by the wind."

But at the very moment, the fire was burning his body into ashes. The flames were flying in the air and in the sky. I stared and stared. I could not find meaning in the text. Say, I was completely incapable to create meaning.

I agree with Jossef Brown who said-

“There is no death. Only a change of world” (Ghimire, 2008, quoted by Bhattra in introduction, p.xv)

Human being is the Almighty's finest creation and how can he spoil it. At the very moment, I recalled a few tragic verses of Muna Madan:

ईश्वर ! तैले रचेर फेरि कसरी बिगारिस् ? सृष्टिको फूल रचेर त्यस्तो कसरी लतारिस् ?

(देवकोटा, पेज ३८, वि. सं. २०५९)

Ishwor taile rachera pheri kasari bigaris? Sristiko phoola rachera tyesto kasari lataris?

(Devakota, p.38, 2059BS)

The stanza reads-

God! Creating thou, again how you spoilt?

Constructing such flower of creation how you dragged?

In this poetic epic, there is a story of Muna and Madan. Muna is a newly married girl and Madan is her groom. On arrival from Lhasa, Tibet, Madan came to know that his beloved passed away. He asks with his sister-

कसरी खायो आगोले दिदी ! कमलको शरीर ?

कसरी खायो निठुरी भई कमलको शरीर ?

(ऐ. पेज ३८)

Kasari khayo aagole didi ! Kamal ko sharira ?

Kasari khayo nithuri bhai Kamalko sharira? (Ibid, p.38)

The verse says-

How the fire engulfed, sister! The body of lotus?

How devoured mercilessly the body of lotus?

Individuals cannot bear the touch of the fire when they are in sense. Now the pyre was devouring the handsome body of my son.

Krishna says in the Geeta-

अच्छेद्योऽयमदाह्योऽयमक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च ।

नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुरचलोऽयं सनातनः ॥ (गीता २:२४)

Acchedyoayamdahyoayamkledyoasosya eva cha.

nityah sarvagatah sthanurchaloayam sanatanah (Geeta 2:24).

The stanza says-

"This individual soul is unbreakable and insoluble, and can be neither burned nor dried.

He is everlasting; present everywhere unchangeable, immovable and eternally the same."

The above stanza of Geeta can be summarized as with the line of Martin Heidegger who said, "Life is the life of death"(Ghimire, 2008, p.xx). I remembered many more verses and statements to console me. At the same time, I was watching the pyre where my son was "sleeping". The "cruel fire" broke his heart. It burnt the material body completely. We kept on seeing and his body went on burning. Sarose burst out, "I possessed only an elder brother, now I am alone." His crying brought tears in every body's eyes. Kamala went on crying. I could not stop doing so. The relatives, the friends and the near and dears consoled us Rose's soul would be missing on the way if we cry so hard.

This reminded me the Geeta once again that said,

अव्यक्तोऽयमचिन्त्योऽयमविकार्योऽयमुच्यते

तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं नानुशोचितुमर्हसी ॥ऐ. २।२५॥

Avyakttoayamachintyaoayamavikaryoayamuchyate.

Tasmadevam viditvainam nanushochitumarhasi(Geeta, 2:25)

"It is said the soul is invisible, inconceivable and immutable. Knowing this, you should not grieve for the body."

However, my problem was that I was attached with the soul of my dead son.

I found that the major thing lies in the mourning is the attachments with the departed soul. Bearing and bringing up the offspring in ones own conjugal life's milestone. It is a fusion of love, caring, affection and material as well as spiritual attachment.

I began to write the thesis as an" obituary" to my loved son- Rose. Human life passes through infancy, childhood, adolescents, youth and adulthood. It is not necessary that everyone should depart at an older age of 80, 90 or 100. Whenever a person dies at any stage, it is considered that s/he became old, and it is his/her ultimate life or age. When Rose, who had so much promise and such a zest for life, is dead and will never be older than 25. My understanding once again reminded me the Buddha's four harsh realities of life: an old man suffering from the frailties of age; a sick man suffering from disease; a beggar suffering from hunger and a dead body.

When Siddhartha observed a dead body, he became curious and asked his charioteer. He replied that one, who came onto the earth, must depart from here. Buddha asked him if his father, his mother, his queen, his son and himself would have to die. He got positive answer. He came to realization that life is only a dream; it is the image of wax and momentary (Tiwari, 1972, p.68-69). Therefore, he set out in search for peace. He saw the scene that I saw, but he turned out to be a sage (Mali, 2004, p.108/9, edits. Kondanya, 2004, p.5) and here I am as a grief-holder. Finally,

he concluded that nothing is permanent in life. He set out in search of truth that eventually changed his life. He became a Buddha .I thought why I could not do as Buddha did. May be I was different. I am *samsari*, worldly (www.buddhisttoursindia.com). I could not ply from my homely responsibilities. Alas! I could have turned Buddha.

‘The dead ones would not bear ageing and of its suffering. He departed at the right time. He is evergreen. Soul is spiritual; never dies. We can say that he is young. He is living and he does not count days, weeks, months and even years. He got *moksha*, salvation from earthly attachment. Those who die become immortal. Humans should leave their material body at a very capable and energetic period. S/he should not be burden to anyone. My emotional position led me to remember Madhav Ghimire who wrote a sad literature called Gauri. In this book he wrote,

जो छाया पहिले पस्यो नजरमा खुर्केर खुर्किन्न त्यो

जो माया पहिले बस्यो हृदयमा विसेर विर्सिन्न त्यो । (घिमिरे, २०५७, ८।२३)

Jo chhaya phile pasyo najarama khurkera khurkinna tyo

Jo maya pahile basyo hridayama virsera virsinna tyo (Ghimire, 2057/2001, 8/23).

The stanza reads-

The Image which seen at the first sight,

Trying to omit, can't be omitted,

The love, which seated first in the heart,

Trying to forget can't be forgotten.

The stanzas above gave me a sense of human attachment to the loved ones. The loved image, the beautiful image, the innocent and meaningful face, cannot be cleared off or rubbed out. The first love we plant in the heart cannot be forgotten. I was also holding that type of love with my son Rose as Ghimire had with his dead wife.

There I realized that human beings are trapped in maya, the affection. We cannot go far from the material world. I have devoted my love, affection and abundance of sacrifice to bring him up to the grown up stage. How can I forget those all instantly? The grief lasts long." Grief is a process not an endpoint" (Clements, et. al. 2004, quoted in Wells's, 2005, p.127).

The death of my son had a serious impact on the family life. So I have felt a vacuum, irreparable as well as infallible depth in the loss of my loved elder son, Rose. So was the case with my family members. The possible reason was that Hindu tradition relies on the offspring. The parents hope that their children, especially sons will take over the responsibility of the ancestor; they take care of their parents during their old age. They provide patronage to their elderly parents. They will intensify the clan. Moreover, the sons will maintain the parents' *paralok*, the afterlife, too.

Contrary to this traditional hope, I was not doing so. This means, to our expectations, we have hoped and thought nothing. We just wanted the son to be matured and seek his future on his own. We have brought him up. We have made him capable to his best. He has been self-reliant. He has been holding not only jobs but also doing social and philanthropic works. The sudden and traumatic loss inflicted tremendous pain in our heart. My situation is completely related when Wells expresses-"After suffering a sudden and traumatic loss many bereaved individuals, fall

immediately into a deep depression and withdraw from social life, while others project anger towards the cause of their loved ones death"(Weels, 2005). Here Weels relates someone's saying that goes on," Sudden and traumatic death results in a more complicated grieving process" (Lord, 2000, quoted in Wells, 2005, p.98).

I have even not taken any pride on my son. I assisted him at any moments of his life. Every time he goes abroad, I have flown him on my sponsor, at least with the air ticket. I used to think that let my son see the world though it is the fruit of the sky for an ordinary Nepali teacher, like me. When he returns, he bags me a pair of shoes-even I have not worn those all pairs, and now have no wish to wear them. I wish they would remain as his Koseli, the gift.

It was the summer of 2006; I enrolled myself as the M.Phil. Candidate at Tribhuvan University, as the first batch student of Faculty of Education. He managed me a Japan made hp laptop. The faculty teaches us using hi-tech machines. I knew nothing about it. Since I got one, I began to learn my ABC of computer in the notebook. Rose used to guide me time and again. I tackled the Power Point programmed and presented my assignment in the class. I became a crazy of IT technology. It is the sole contribution of Rose. After his passing away, I dared not to touch the laptop. Simply I want to keep it as it is. When I play it, I feel, Rose is beside me. Telling me new things. Guiding me new techniques. Making me know an advanced way to surfing the net. Now all these have turned into my grief.

Here I want to share my grief with Wells. What she felt when she lost her loved classmate Chad? -

"With his loss, I felt that I had lost a part of myself and therefore was no longer whole, causing me to pull away from others and place all of my energy into mourning"(Ibid).

The last ashes and the astu, the residual bone of a cremated body, were excreted in the Bagamti River. I shaved my head. Took bath in the dhunge dhara, a stone made traditional tap or spout where water flows from the natural sources. A professional Brahmin youth (28) was appointed as a kiriya putri, a person who performs funeral rites for the departed soul for thirteen days. At first, I insisted to do all the rites myself but the purohits forbade doing so. According to the rituals, a father cannot do such an act if the (elder) son departs earlier. It was almost four mother sky was cloudy. I experienced the clouds were covering my mind and heart. It started to rain. The monsoon wind blew. We took shelter in a room, No. 108 at Kiriya Putri Ghar, a place of mourn to do rites for thirteen days. Dr. Upendra Mahato, the NRN President and philanthropist contributed to build it. We rented a few mats, blankets and a heater from the trust.

The *kiriya putri* and a hired *kuruwa baje*, an add-on Brahmin, were with me for 12 days. He gave me his company as a facilitator. At night, he served me with fruits, tea and hot water. We talked on different topics. It included religion, death and birth, Ramayan, Mahabharat, Jajamani systems, politics and wedding procedures. He used to sleep by 10 pm. I lay down for sleep; the sleep ran away far from me. My eyes remained opened. The entire past vivid scene dramatized in front of my face. I could not do any thing. I walked for a while along the verandas. Looked around. The surrounding was silence. I looked at a lamppost. The rain was spattering on it. There was darkness under the lamp. I watched it for a few minutes. I returned to the room. The *kiriya putri* and the *kuruwa baje* both had been enjoying sound sleep. They were representing us and also habituated. They had been there for making money rather than serving motive. I gazed them several minutes. I murmured, "It is also a profession, it is a partial job." The room was bright. I was under the darkness as the lamppost. My heart was saddened. It was crying. Tears rolled off my face. Time and again, I heard sound of human crying. Women were crying in pain and grief.

Coming and Going: the rhythm of Life

It was Sunday, 22 July 2007. I 'woke up' in the morning. I tried to write something but could not do so. I had no sleep the whole night. I showered under *the dhunge dhara*, stone faucet. Then offered a handful of water to Rose, as directed by the guru. A photo of Rose was placed on the chair. An oil lamp was lit. *Agarbatti* sticks were burnt. A garland and a bouquet of flower were offered to Rose. A glass of water also offered to him. A condolence register was placed there.

The Death and Dying Ritual Zone (DDRZ) is a place of mourning. According to Hindu rituals, most of the bereaved families observe mourning for thirteen days. Some perform this ritual at ones own home. Some at the public place managed by religious trust. It is more convenient than the home as all the necessary stuffs are made available there. The *Purohits* or the Pundits provide easy but professional services and the Bagmati River is at hand there. DDRZ at Pashupati Development Region is one of the places.

I went to the near by market with Achyut baje. I have to buy some foodstuffs for Kiriya putri, a Brahmin youth who was appointed for thirteen days to perform all death rituals on behalf of me, as I was not permitted to do such things according to Hindu religious practice. The utensils were hired from the trust. He cooked the meal himself. He took unadulterated pure meal in the daytime. He took fruits etc in the evening. I bought quality rice; ghee; sugar; tea; potatoes and other necessary things for two weeks. I got home for my morning meal. In the evening, I was instructed to take fruits, *rotis* and tea.

Many bereaved families hire one or two rooms to stay for thirteen days. They are seen in the white clothes. They mourn for their loved ones. It seemed that the loss and the death are

natural. Many come there to express condolence and share the grief. They narrated a lot many true stories of death.

By 11:30 am, people started coming to extend their condolences. It continued up to 6 pm. almost all of them asked the following questions-

How did it happen?

What was he suffering from? For how long?

Didn't you go for good treatment?

How old was he?

Was he married? Did he bear children?

What did he do?

Is he the only son?

I replied all the usually asked queries. In response, they were stunned. They remarked, "Death is unavoidable. One must go, when comes on the earth. Birth is death and death is life. The world is running in this criterion. Be patience. Their saying reminded me Shakespeare who wrote in his book King Lear-

“Human being must endure

Their going hence even as their coming hither."(Ibid, in introduction, p.xv)

The context changed when one of my relatives talked about a youth who had scheduled to fly to US. One day, he wished to visit a deity of desire and wish. He proceeded with his relatives. On the way, his van collided with a lorry and he breathed his last. The boy was 20. He was the only son of his parents. The family light was put out forever.

One of my friends told another story. According to him,

A 22 years girl whose has been studying in UK died in a car a crash after she tied knot with a 24 years old native engineer. The girl's mother has been suffering paralysis in her left leg since she got the news. So was the experience of my neighbor. The neighbor of mine visited us in the mourning place. She is from Far- Western Development Region. She told – "A family of four members was enroute tour to Sauraha Safari. The father got cardiac arrest. While he was being taken to the hospital, the wife fainted and finally left the world". i.e. died".

The experiences of my neighbors and friends showed that tragedy brings tragedy. Many told many death stories in the mourning period. Our family members listened them with patience.

Listening others' tales and myths, I realized that I could console myself in the daytime, but when the night grew dark, I felt suffocation. There was no way to pass the nighttime. I asked Kamala to send school textbooks. In case, I could not go for sleep, I read and work on them. It really happened. I set the question papers with broken heart. First, I turned the pages of the taught units. Made a mind plan. Allocated the marks for each questions. Then I put my pen on

the paper. The scene of funeral rites moved around my face. I set three question papers for the first terminal examination, revised them. The clock struck 2 a.m. I utilized the sleepless time to discharge my assigned works. I felt fatigue. Tried to go for a sleep. It was 4 a. m. when I heard a woman crying.

In the afternoon, I handed the question papers over one of my colleagues. He submitted them to the concerned person of the school. I did not exceed the deadline. I worked even in the mourning period. What a teacher am I? I have practised, "God is duty, work is worshipped" in my entire teaching career. There I remembered Krishna's preaching in Geeta. He has encouraged humans to do *karma* or work without expecting its result (Geeta, 2:47). Lord Krishna has given me life and the best form of worshipping him is to work and do my karma. God wants worship not only on our lips, but also in our hearts (www.wcg.org).

With the previously mentioned understanding, I have to attend my duty after the legitimate period of *kiriya bida*, death ritual leave. I controlled my mind that whole night from engaging in grief and grief. Yet remembered Vivekananda's view that "Every good man follows the dictates of his conscience"(Vivekananda, 1921, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/kyog/index.htm>). I did the same."

Mind is the cause of both bondage and liberation. My Pundit said to me. There I welcomed sorrow and did my duty. There again I realized that human beings are habituated only to welcome happiness. But both happiness and difficulties are the two parts of the same coin. Happiness is derived only from difficulties, but human being wants only happiness, not difficulties. I was sharing both at the same time. In fact, the happiness that we derive out of

pleasure is negligible compared to the happiness that results from difficulties
(<http://www.eaisai.com/baba/docs/darshan.html>).

Human being Born amidst Grief

It rained in the morning of Monday, 23 July 2007. The weather was chilly. My body was aching. I felt my body became very light. Weight lost, Ill, and weakened. Because of sleeplessness, my eyes were hot and red. I saw monkeys taking shelter under the roof holes of the shade. Mother monkeys were taking care of their babies. They were jumping and joking with their moms. I felt that I had lost a child. He also used to act stupidly when he was a baby boy. Alas! I will not have such an opportunity ever.

"Here is your milk. Have a glass. I shall pour it into it", the milkmaid diverted my attention from the monkeys. "Ok. Just a minute," I uttered. Got inside the room. Brought a pot. Handed it to her. She delivered the milk and left the verandah.

Then I went to the tap. Took a cool bath. Pundits came with flowers and pooja materials. I put a fresh garland on the photo of Rose. Lit a candle. I followed the pundits. Offered pooja. The *kuruwa baje* had prepared black tea. A glass was offered to Rose. We had the tea.

At 12, well-wishers started coming. My Headmistress and some colleagues came to see me. They put their signatures in the condolence register.

They asked, "How did it happen?"

He had undergone a surgery on July 6 in the leg in local hospital. The operation was successful. But multiple infections caused his death. He was just 27.

One of the relatives remarked, "Son died, father lives, no one knows the act of the god."

Kamala talked to her in soft voice. "We cannot make our life's schedule. Who goes at first; and who goes at last, nobody knows."

I said her," Being is grief. Human born amidst grief. Grows up in grief. Lives in grief. Dies in grief. Do not get happiness until one lives. One, who dies happily, is a happy person". (Ghimire, 2008, p.236). In the same way, Rose left the world

A teacher came to me to extend condolence. She narrated her father's death.

"My father forecasted his departure time a few days earlier. He bade farewell with our family members, relatives and neighbors. He told that he would leave the world by six pm. He suffered with asthma and fainted at last. He had no desire of admitting in the hospital. However, our family members did it. He talked the same topic with the medical persons and the patients in the hospital ward. He said, "Goodbye" to all fifteen minutes before his estimated time. He prayed the god and chanted some mantras. He experienced somewhat trouble in his heart. He chanted, "*Hare Ram, Hare Krishna*", joined two hands to say *namaste*, goodbye. In the end; he left the material world in front of all".

This story made me think twice, some body die of interest and some others are forced to die. The question occurred to my mind, why is this? This unanswered question could not last long with me; I was hanging over the death of Rose.

Death cannot be Avoided Anyway

It was Tuesday, 24 July 2007. I did my routine work since I settled down in *Kiriyaputri ghar*. My physique bore laziness. I felt I had no energy. Later I realized that I had not taken salt for three days. According to our customary practice, it is inedible during mourning period. It will go for eight days more .I assigned Kamala to receive and reply the people who come to share our grief.

An aged relative approached at 1pm. He is regarded as a knowledgeable person among our relatives. He had a poetic mind. He was a graduate in Nepali literature. He talked to us. He told us to bear the loss and pain. He said," Losing a son is the greatest sad in one's life. But nothing can be done to the law of nature. We have to bear it" Then he read out a stanza of Kabi Shiromani Lekh Nath Paudel (2034 BS) in the following lines.

आयो टप्प टिप्प्यो लग्यो मिति पुग्यो टारेर टर्दैँन त्यो ।
इन्द्रै बित्ति गरुन भुकेर पदमा त्यो बित्ति मान्दैँन त्यो ॥

(पौडेल, २०३४,पृ ३१)

Aayo tappa tipyo lagyo miti pugyo tarera tardaina tyo.

Indrai bunti garun jhukera padama tyo binti mandaina tyo (Poudel, 2034 BS, p.31).

I spoke to him, "Yes, the poet had expressed universal fact that *Kal* (time) comes in no minutes and takes the things out for good. You have timely reproduced the time". I had also studied the above poem in Nepali Literature.

I was aware that actually, the death could not be avoided any way. The poet had also described the Deeds of the Death in his poem, "*Kalmahima*"

The poem reads-

*Whenever duration completed,
Came, grabbed dragged, saving, cannot be saved,
He (Death) does not obey Indra, the king of the gods,
Even he bends and bows his head upon -
His feet.*

Contrary to the saying of the author, I felt that death does not have any fault. It comes timely. It is solely upon the humans. With this stanza of Lekh Nath Paudel, I liked to relate his feeling with Jagadish Ghimire, who is fighting against myeloma, a type of incurable blood cancer. At the very moment, he had accepted the death. He was of opinion that time is the principal factor. In his words,

Time gives birth. That time is auspicious moment. Time makes alive.

Time becomes life. Time kills. That time becomes death. Birth, childhood,

Youth, adulthood, death-all are the separate names and synonyms of the same-time. All the same, only one" (Ghimire, 2008).

Time heals almost everything. We should give time, only time.

At 2:30 pm, my colleagues arrived. They signed in the condolence register. They stared at me. Nobody spoke. I noticed tears in the eyes of the females. I narrated all the happenings. They consoled us and gave words to assist in needy time. They left at three to attend the school.

One of my friends told the story of his or her loss and destruction to another and vice versa. There I found that the social phenomena of expressing condolence and sharing grief are considered as a panacea. They heal the panic situations. There is a popular saying in the society-"*Dukha ma sunera janu, sukha ma bolayera janu.*" It means, "Attend grief by listening, attend happiness by inviting". The saying stimulated the concerned friends, families, fans, fraternal, and fellow workers in both the distress and in happiness.

The collective pain and traumatic conditions convinced me to internalize that leaving out this material body is a natural phenomena. Whenever our loss is compared to another's loss, then we realized something and we can ourselves. Our severe pains and griefs are lessen to some extent. I also felt that heart is consoled at this if we find our loss is lesser than the loss other suffers. Referring to Middle-Range Theory, Sociologist Robert K. Merton (1975) commented:

When few are hurt too much the same extent, the pain and loss of each seems great; where many are hurt in greatly varying degree, even fairly large loses seem small as they are compared with far larger ones.

The probability that comparisons will be made is affected by the differing visibility of losses of greater and less extent (Merton, 1975, p.41).

Merton's idea enabled me to reflect over the accidents that my colleagues shared with me. Elaborating the accident, one of my colleagues narrated, when we are informed about the school bus accident that had gone for excursion and the injured were being hospitalized. We usually rush to the hospital. There we raise many questions about the capabilities of the driver and the school administration. We also show our worry about the insured's future. However, when we are told that he/she was not only the case and there are many more injured, we observe that five had got both legs fractured, some got head injury and some had both hands broken. At the same time, we realize that our ward is not seriously injured. There we compare our ward's injury with others. The broken hand can be better after a month. But we would start thinking about those who have both the legs broken. Then our reaction would be the accident as "an ill-fate."

The narratives above helped me to realize that everything is relative. This realization also made me relieved because it was the story of my colleague. Their visit also added vitality in my body and mind. It rained with hailstones for a half hour at least for my intellect but failed to address my emotions. The friends and relatives left for home amidst drizzle. I gave a look around the premises of the Kiriya putri ghar. Only the mourners were moving here and there. A dead silence had landed there. At the same time, a strong wind blew. The monkeys jumped on the roofs and hid under them.

We went inside the room. At 8:30 pm, Achyut *baje* served me two bananas; a mango and a cup of black tea. During mourning periods, I relied on fruits, juice and black tea. It will go for eight days more. I have avoided two meals in a day. Achyut *baje* informed me that *Garud Puran* would be recited from the following day. Before going to bed, he talked to me about the Bagmati River.

He said, "Joshi Sir, now the river is flooded. The dirt and the garbage will flow along the flood. Tomorrow the river will be clean. It will be looked as beautiful. There will be no bad odor for a few days".

I said, "Yes, you are right, guru. Will the priests use the water to shower the god?"

Achyut: "No, definitely, not. The river water had not been used for many years. A well has been dug. The well water is used for showering and other worshipping procedures".

I added: "Kathmandu is over populated; hence, all the natural rivers are also polluted. The city's sewerage system is joined in the rivers. Kathmandu needs scientific planning. The people of religious region have forgotten that Devapattan, the place of the gods, should be kept a holy place. Let us be positive, one day the Government of Federal Republic will pay a special attention at Pashupatinath region."

Achyut *baje* started snoring. Therefore, he did not reply. Moreover, *Kiriya Putribaje* had already enjoying sound sleep. He was a professional pundit. He was habituated. He performed his daily routine as pre-planned. He needed not to bear loss, pain and grief in heart and in the mind. He had not any sentimental or physical attachment with the deceased. He was neutral. He

cared only for his contract period and remuneration. It is natural that he did not possess any biological attachments with the deceased. I closed the door. Pulled the blanket over my body. I stared at Rose's photo.

Close Observers are there: Nothing is Secret

It was Wednesday, 25 July 2007, the 5th day of Rose's demise. It was raining. I did not have an umbrella at that very moment. A relative had borrowed it. I put a towel on my head and went to the tap. I was about to take a bath.

"Babu, launa ekaichin, jado le thamnai sakiyena", a white dressed man uttered with trembling voice. He meant, " Oh, dear, for a moment, I can't resist cold."

I let him take bath. He put his head under the water for a moment. Then he kept out.

"What happened to you?"

"I am a Kiriya Putri. I am doing this for a *neta jee*, a leader.

"Why did you do this?"

"I was waiting my turn. At the same time, I got it last week. It was only a coincidence. I am discharging my duty."

"If I am not mistaken, you are sick, not feeling well."

"Yes, yes. I am suffering from asthma for a long time. And now I am ill with fever and cough."

"How old are you?"

"I am sixty over."

"Oh, my god! Why have you agreed to be Kiriya Putri at this age?"

"It is my own will. Nobody forced me. I have registered my name in the Trust. I am here for three years."

"So you have chosen this as a job?"

"Yes. This is my profession."

"There is no fix salary."

"Is it a contract basis?"

"Of course, a Kiriya Putri gets six thousand for the period of each thirteen days term. We have to pay a certain percentage of money to the Trust."

"Don't you have alternative jobs too?"

"No. Who'll provide us job at this old age? I have a piece of land and a small house in the village."

"You are so old. Your health won't permit you to carry this profession longer. If you fall sick, you'll be in trouble, won't you?"

You're right. Nevertheless, for the heaven's sake, I have not fallen sick since I joined here. I am suffering from asthma. It's an ancestrally inherited disease. My grandfather had it. My grandmother passed away because of the same. I am suffering, too. I would have left this world, if I had not joined this job. I get good meals here. The mourned families, whom I serve, provide me pure meal, seasonal fresh fruit, dry fruit and ghee. On the final day of the rites, they even provide me clothes, extra tips and other commodities. They donate with open hearts. This is the very occasions that maintain my health. Although, I look very thin and weak, actually I am not in reality. I am fit and fine. I have thought to continue this work until I can work.

"Thank you very much. Your saying is very interesting See you again. I have to go to a flower shop," I left him there.

I returned with a garland and some fresh flowers. I cleaned Rose's photo with a soft handkerchief. I garlanded the picture. Placed the flowers on the plate. Offered a fresh glass of water. Lit four *agarbattis*. Achyut prepared black tea. I offered a glass of water to Rose. Then I offered prayer for a while. We had the tea.

"Do we need to buy a book of Garuda Purana?" I asked Achyut.

"No, Purushotam guru has it. He will bring it in the afternoon." he relied.

At 12:30, I took my lunch. It rained today afternoon too. It is the monsoon season. Rain is inevitable. There is a folk saying, "*Mana ropera muri falaune*." It means plant half a kilo and harvests a quintal. Peasants were busy in planting rice. It rained rather late. Rain was

welcomed. No well-wishers approached. The weather was chilly. It is 2:30 pm. I sat in the verandah. Went through the leading dailies.

Kamala, Goma, Bidya, Radha and Sarose all relatives came. They have brought four bundles of *saal* leaves. The women were supposed to knit the *tapari*, *bauta*, *duna* and *khory*, leaf plates and bowls to use in the pooja procedure while they listen to the Purana. Purushotam guru came at three pm. We furnished a place for him to recite the Garuda Puran.

He lit two sticks of agarbattis and chanted prayer and mantras. At first, he briefed us about the importance of Purana.

According to him, Garud Purana is a Hindu traditional tale. It is based on ways to perform various rituals for the peace and freeing of deceased person's soul from the position of spirit or ghost. It is recited within ten days of departed soul. Some recite it from the third and others from the fifth days. A learned purohit recites it. This act begins in the afternoon and ends before evening. The bereaved family members and mourners gather to listen it. Everyday it takes nearly one or two hours of time, depending upon the chapters.

Garud Purana is a dialogue between God Vishnu and Garuda. It is in the form of dialogue-questions and answers. According to this Puran there was a sacred venue called, Naimisaranya. Saunak and other saints were performing daily *yagyas* and attending *tapasya*, penance to obtain heaven. Suta jee, a religious pandit arrived in the venue. Saunaks respected and offer pooja on him. They asked him, "How is the path of *yamalok*, the abode of the god of death?"

Sutajee narrated the ditto story as Vishnu told to Garuda.

He recited its every chapter in Sanskrit language. Then, told the summary of the verses. The nearby mourners also came to listen the Purana.

We listened to the Garud Purannna. The Purana stated to offer *Pinda*, a ball made of barley flour or cooked rice in the milk-for ten days in order to free, the deceased from his ghost position. The Purana also directed the son of the departed person to execute the responsibilities. In my case, it was contrary. The eldest son passed away and I had to perform the sacred deeds.

Dharmaraj, the god of death, gives justice to the deceased souls according to their sinful and noble deeds. Chitrugupta, a record-keeper, keeps the records of humans' good and bad deeds. Nobody can hide his or her performances. The sun, the moon, water, wind, fire, sky, earth, heart, yama, day, night and evening all are the witness of humans' actions (Garud Purana, 3/16, p.31, 2009). They are the close observers. The Purana alerted human beings that nothing is secret. Yamaraj, the god of death, treats equally to all whether they are learned or stupid, rich or poor, capable or weak,(Ibid,3/29,p.33)

Episode 3 is full of many fright stories, tortures and punishments for the sinners. There are 8.4 million *naraks*, the hell or the world of the dead (Ibid, 3/60p.38). It further says that except the physical body, only good deeds assist to travel to Yamalok.

There are four paths to go to the Palace of Dharmaraj. The sinners are taken along the south door that is full of miseries.

Guru closed at Chapter 3 for the day. We felt downhearted. I found Kamala saddened. She has yellowish face. Since Rose's demise, I gazed her for the first time. She went on knitting the leaf plates. Radha prepared the tea. She served all. The other listeners begged permission to leave. I nodded my head.

Because of reciting Garuda Purana, today there was no grief sharing and talks on death and life. The Purana itself talked to us a lot.

In the evening, I talked to Achyut baje on Garuda Purana.

"The Purana warns everybody to do noble deeds in life".

"Yes. Individuals are stubborn. They are ignorant. They are innocent. They don't look before they leap."

"Lay people are innocent and ignorant. The educated and literates are conscious."

"They are the cleverest. They know the tricks. They hid their ill deeds. They mislead the society."

"You are right. You can wake up the slept ones. But we cannot do so who pretends to be slept."

"So they are treated accordingly in the court of Dharmaraj."

"Who knows the facts?"

"Can't you see the beggars, the shelter less people, the leprosies, the blinds, the cripples or lames, the deaf, the dumb and the lunatics? They are consuming the penalties imposed by Dharmaraj."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"*Buba*, you laughed for the first time in this room."

"I'm sorry. I forgot. I should not laugh in the mourning period. Laugh burst all of a sudden. I could not control it. Baje; you made me laugh. What an interesting thing you told me. Your answer is so prompt and justifiable in some cases."

"Haven't you seen the paralyzed individuals?"

"Yes." "What's their fault?"

"They were corrupts in their previous life." Dharmaraj gave shocks on their heads."

"What will happen to the present corrupts of our nation?"

"They will suffer the same punishment after they visit Yamalok."

"Oh! Sure. Baje, you are a forecaster. But we won't see them paralyzed in our present life."

"There is delay in the court of god but not injustice. There are many such stories in the Puranas. I have heard and recited them many occasions. Oh! Its already 9:30. Please, take something for your meals. We shall talk further tomorrow."

He served me a few pieces of cucumber, an apple, three bananas and about hundred grams of grapes. At last, a cup of black tea, too.

I felt I had over diet.

I asked Kiriya Putri Baje, "Are you comfortable? Do you need anything else?"

"No, it's all right. I need nothing", he said.

Then, I had a conversation with Achyut guru.

"Achyut guru, "Are you married?"

"Yes, I am. I got married two years ago."

"Do you bear any child?"

"Not, yet."

"Where is *bajai*, other half?" Is she in the village with your parents?"

"No, she is with me. She is in the rented room at Gaushala."

"Who stays with her?"

"She is alone there. The room is safe."

"Oh! That is not good."

"Guru, I have heard a few stories..."

"What do you mean then?"

"I came to know that some women used to leave their husbands until they stay at Kiriya ghar. I had read such stories in the newspapers. Also heard a real one. I had a talk with a Kiriya putri baje in this premises. He had self experienced the incident. Have you heard such stories, too?"

"No, I am quite unfamiliar."

"You are a new couple. You should develop better understanding with your better half. Please, accept two days leave- tomorrow and day after tomorrow. Stay in the room."

"You will be alone here at night."

"Don't worry. I shall manage it. Take care of bajai."

"Okay, thank you."

Achyut baje slept soundly. I lay down on the woolen rag. Pulled the blanket up to my neck. I recalled the stories of Garuda Purana.

In Garuda Puran Hindu's death, ritual has been described as one of the 16th sacraments. So, it is regarded as a Code of Conduct of the death and dying rituals. It guides Hindus how to live and spend the finest human life. It talks about the after life world. According to the story, the religious and philanthropic persons attend the heaven after their death whereas the wrongdoers or the sinners attend the hell. This shows that Purana is an inspiration to live a moral life. It threatens the malpractioners to push them down in the hell if they commit crimes. It also helps society to maintain social and moral law and order in the Hindu world. It has enabled us to maintain ecological balance as well. For example, it gives preferences to plant *Tulsi*; a plant with an herbal with medical values. It has also created public awareness to protect environment. It also stresses to keep rivers, water sources, gardens, and shrines neat and clean. It cautions people to fall into the hell if they do contrary to the Garuda Purana. But I found a series of contradictions in this Purana. It has given too much emphasis to the son child. It has created discrimination between the son and the daughter if we see from the gender lens where one to one relation was sought out between the boys and the girls (<http://www.eurofem.net/info/AccountOf.html>). The Garuda Puran on the other hand looked the importance of son for the continuity of the paternal leanage. The Purana reads about the importance of donating cash and kind in the name of the deceased. From the economic point of view, it can be an extravagance for the bereaved family. In such cases, the departed soul of the marginalized family could not be benefited and be liberated. Even though, the Purana is filled with charitable acts such as the King Babhuvahan performed the last ritual of the spirit Sudev and liberated his soul. The Purana has also given the importance to casteism. It strictly prohibits the *Sudras*, the untouchables, from reading the Vedas. Previously, the females were not allowed

to recite the Vedas. This established the privileges of the Brahmin male Purohits only. The stereotypes practices in the religious fields in Nepal and India are now crumbling down (<http://www.outlookindia.com>). The gender shift is being sought in the feminist field of Nepal. The women, who have earned university degrees, studied Sanskrit, the Vedas and the Upanishads conduct Bhagavat Mahapurana Saptaha, marriages and naming ceremonies. A more convincing discourse is that the sons of traditional pundits do not want to continue their fathers' "Purohit profession," and instead they have turned to Science, Engineering and Computing programming as more lucrative and prestigious means of employment. The religious communities are also deeply interested in the speeches of the females. It gave them a taste change over the hegemony of the male purohits. They have recognized the female pundits' intelligence. The society has given them high respect. A huge mass of people attend their programmes. I have also experienced that a female's speech can quietly control the audience. Various *Dya Maas*, Mother Gods provide treatments and tell fortunes of people. At present five girl students of Kalpeshwor Secondary school of Vilando Village Development Committee Ward No. 1& 2 of Okaldhunga are practising *Dhami*, wizard ritual. They are teenagers of 12 to 16 years old and study in class V. They are learning under the local wizard-guru, Dilip Gurung. They attend various village festivals with their Guru. (*Kantipur*, Vol. 18, 18 Jan 2011, p.5). Therefore, the Garuda Puran has become the Charter of the Brahmin elites. As the Hindu Puran believes that after death, the person's spirit travels to the god. The same view was there in North Africa. There the Africans believe that death completes an elaborate life cycle. For them a rite of passage allows the person's spirit to travel on to its next life or world (<http://www.lovetoknow.com/>). Many Jamaicans also believe that when someone dies, the soul

goes to God; the body goes into the ground (Ibid). The analysis of these belief systems persuaded me that Rose also took the journey towards God.

Knowledge is Open to All

It was Thursday, 26 July 2007. Lighting and thunder woke me up. The time was 4:30 am. I was shivering. The blanket rolled the body off. I pulled it up to my head. Both the Kiriya putri and Achyut baje also woke up. It was raining heavily. I sat down for meditation. But I could not be concentrated. My attention diverted moment to moment. The rain stopped. Carrying a towel, I went to take a bath. I was lonely at the tap. It took no time.

I went to a flower shop. I could not buy any flowers and garlands. All were faded ones because of rain. I cleaned Rose's photo. Filled the glass with fresh water. Lit a few sticks of incense. At 9 am, we took tea. Purushotam guru has brought "*Naya Ptrika*" a vernacular daily newspaper. We shared the pages.

"The paper is full of flood victim stories. The Eastern part of the country is under massive flood attack. There are many casualties," I said to guru.

"Our organization is collecting clothes and foods to distribute to those troubled people," answered guru.

"We are ready to help them. We donate our clothes and some money. Where to hand them over." I told him.

"You can bring those in our office at Banakali. Within a fortnight; we set for Sunsari and other affected districts. Give us Rose's dress also, if any." guru told me.

"Sure, sure. It's an opportunity to help in the needy time, to the needy people," I assured him.

"Ok. I come at 3 pm to recite the Garud Purana." saying this he left.

At 11:30 am, I went home to have my morning meal. Some of my relatives and friends had come there from Butwal, the field of my work. I talked to them. They consoled us. Seeing them, we felt relief and comfort. We had not imagined them to see at this mourning moment. I got a call from Purushotam guru. I begged for an excuse and thanked them for gracious visit.

I arrived at the Kiriya putri ghar at 3. Purushotam guru was ready to recite the Garuda Purana. Two more gurus had come that day. Purushotam guru introduced them. They belonged to his fellow purohits. He had invited them to perform ritual pooja on the thirteenth day. They also recited the Purana turn by turn.

A context is found in the Purana. If shudras read Veds, they fall in the Vaitarani River (Ibid, 4/22, p. 44).

This prohibits the scheduled castes to read the Vedas, the oral teachings of the God. When I showed my disagreement to this stanza the Pundit accepted it and told that now the time has been changed. An educated and formally trained individual can recite the Vedas. Knowledge is not anybody's private property or jointure. It cannot be barred. Knowledge is open to all.

However, the character willing to study the Vedas must change their customized habits and conducts. Everyone becomes untouchables at the time of birth and purifications make them elites.

The Purana warns to those who pass urine, stool on the fire, in the water, in the garden and in the shrines; are sure to fall in the hell. It has greater impact on the environmental issues in the society. The rural inhabitants have been practising this teaching for ages. It is a very good moral preaching of the Purana (Ibid, 4/42, p.48). Human beings are self-motivated to follow the religious rules rather than state rules.

After wandering into *chaurasi lakh yoni*, 8.4 million births, the living being regains the human life. The humans, who have come from the hell, have various marks or signs in their bodies such as goiter/scrofula, leprosy, and blindness by birth and cancer (Ibid, 4/63-64, p.51). Scientifically, there is no concrete proof that physical abnormalities are the curse of the past sinful life. But some persons suffer. They seek to escape suffering, but they do this by following the worldly way of pursuing the path of ego, wealth, power and worldly knowledge (www.info-sikh.com/DDP). While a person sleeps in sin and worldliness, no understanding of truth comes to him /her. All the time s/he looks away from the truth. His/ Her stay in this world is like a dream, and that his earthly relationships and possessions are momentary and of no avail. Seikh philosophy, which is a sub-part of Hindu religion, overlaps with Hindu philosophy on many points, one being the concept of transmigration of the soul and the circle of Chaurasi Lakh, the 8.4 million life forms(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page).

Impact of Son Child in the Society

A noble son liberates all twenty-one parentages. The son safeguards entire humankind. The parental debt is immediately indebted or cleared by noticing the face of the son. Three debts: god, parentage and guru are released immediately touching the son-in-law. If one obtains grandson, great grandson, s/he gains heaven. The son gained from wedded wife enables to attend heaven whereas son gained from unwedded wife takes one to the hell (Ibid 7/10-13, p.72/73).

There is a dialogue in the Garuda Purana between Babhuvahan and Sudev. The former is a King whereas the latter is a spirit. The dialogue lauded the important status of a son in the society. The spirit cannot be freed from the hell because he does not have any son or brotherhood. He requested the King to perform rites in order to free him from the hell and his acts. The spirit offers the King with a precious *Mani*, the gem. The spirit said that the King is the brother of all the four castes-Brahman, Kshayatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. The spirit would be freed if the King performed the rites. Upon his return to his Kingdom, he accomplishes the said rites and rituals sincerely. As a result, the spirit is liberated from the hell. He goes to the heaven. It is obvious that non-relatives can free the evil spirit, then why can't the patronage be emancipated with the sraddha performed by the son? (Ibid, 7/67, p.83)

I raised a question, "Doesn't Garuda Purana stimulates the people to give birth to a son?"

Guru replied, "The dialogical context between the King Babhrubahan and the spirit Sudev has left a strong impact on the Hindu society. It stresses on the birth of a son in every family. Without a son, the ancestors cannot attend *mokshya*, the salvation. Hence, every Hindu couple desires and determines to give birth to a son child. There are many instances that in temptation of a son, some couple gives birth to even five or six daughters. This is the solely impact of Garuda Puran". The capable children are solace in parents' old age.

I found that most of the bereaved Hindu families recite the Purana. Those people who attend to listen it, are influenced by the importance of a son child. Therefore, it is natural that the society hopes for a son to liberate the parents after they leave the material world. The society has been practising the principle of giving birth to a son child. The son is regarded a medium to obtain the heaven.

On the other hand , there is a practice of naming the son by the god's names like; Krishna ,Narayan , Hari , Ram ,Gobinda , Murari , Basudev,Damodar , Acyut, Keshab etc. Even the sinner obtains the heaven if s/he calls his son at the time of dying "Krishna" or "Narayan". For the example, when Azamil, a devil was breathing his last, called his son "Narayan","Narayan" many times. As a result, he was liberated and gained the heaven (Ibid, 7/17, p.87). Actually, he was not chanting any god's name. He was calling his loved son "Narayan."

Gods worship the religious noble son. Good son should donate all the (necessary) things if the parents are in the last breathing. (Ibid, 8 / 113, p.103)

"What is the position of daughter in case she has to do last rituals, guru?"

Guru:" The Puran has also made a room for the daughters. If the parents do not possess a son; the daughter can perform the funeral rites as well as all the other procedures". Guru further said," However, the *pitrikarya*, rituals performed in honor of the manes of one's father and ancestors, is obstructed if the daughter undergoes menstruation. This is very natural occurring that hinders the death rituals. Thus, daughters are not preferred for the death rituals. The nature has freed the son from the physical obstructions".

From Guru's narration, I understood that as per the Hindu tradition, and according to its sacred texts, only a son has the right to perform the last rites of his father/mother. Now-a- days, in case, the deceased has no son, Nepali daughters have been performing the last rituals of their fathers/mothers breaking old traditions. The educated or socially/ politically influenced daughters are showing their courage to change the social norm. They have been also coming forward to perform the death rituals of their fathers. They also get tonsured their heads. They, unmindful of criticisms, light the pyre and undergo all kinds of rituals. For instance, when Girija Prasad Koirala, the former Prime minister and President of Nepali Congress, passed away on March 20, 2010, his daughter, Sujata Koirala lit the pyre at the Pashupati Aryaghat (<http://www.telegraphnepal.com>). We listened the Purana up to seventh chapter. The curiosity and discussions lengthened a great deal of time.

It became evening. I brushed the floor. Some monkeys were chattering and jumping on the roofs. Electricity was interrupted. I managed to light two candles alongside of Rose's photo. I served Kiriya putri some fresh litchis, two mangoes, a cucumber and two bananas.

Achyut guru is on leave for two days. Navaraj Gautam, my brother-in-law came to hand me over my evening meals- chapattis, milk and mangoes. He gave his company to me when he knew that Achyut baje was on leave. I told him the reason.

Service to Fellow Friend is Service to God

It was Friday, 27 July 2007, the seventh day of Rose's demise. According to Newari practices of death and dying, we have to offer "*nhenuma*." It means offering 'seventh days' meal to the deceased soul. It is mandatory. All woke up early in the morning. Kamala brought all the necessary foodstuffs. Sister Arpan, aunt's daughter, dedicated herself to cook the meal. The meal included almost all the favorites of Rose. A part of the meal was fed to the cows and the next was floated in the Bagmati River. If we had grieved at home, the meals would have hung under the ceiling or roof or served the dish in the peaceful and clean room. It is a belief that the spirit compulsorily comes to take the food at midnight. It leaves its symbolic prints on its most loved food. In the next morning, the family members watch the marks, if any. The marks indicate what life is the spirit living at the very moment. Sometimes human fingerprints are seen. Sometimes bird's claws. Sometimes bird's beak. It means the spirit has taken birth of a human or a bird or it visited in the form of human, the animal, or the bird. We could not observe any such signs after offering "*nhenuma*" at the *Kiriyaputri Ghar*. We had to moderate the *nhenuma* approach. Kamala burst out. We had gloomy faces.

Next day, Arpan told us, "Yesterday night, Rose came in my dream, He said," *Nini*, (father's sister) you are the only person to cry for me. "People believe that the soul resides at home until the rites of thirteenth day or more. Some even see the soul in the form of shadow. It

appears visibly or produces some sounds. I did not have an opportunity to experience such an indication.

It was 2:30 pm. We were sitting reluctantly. Purushotam guru arrived to read the Purana. At the same time, a woman came in the room.

She asked me, Rose's dad?"

"Yes, please sit down," I requested her.

She gazed at Rose's photo. She opened her bag. Took out a garland, placed over the photo and bowed her head on the floor. She moved near to me and sat on the rug.

I saw her eyes filled with tear. She did not utter a word. The well-wishers over there looked at her. Breaking silence, I spoke to her, and "Excuse me. I could not recognize you."

"Rose is a *devedoot*, an angel, for me. He rescued my son from Bangkok prison three years ago. He paid the penalty money and freed him. He did a noble deed. I respect him as my elder son. I heard this sad news yesterday evening. He was a human rights defender," she said showering praise on Rose.

"Yea! Rose used to tell this story repeatedly. We had appreciated him for the good work he did abroad, though he missed his conference in Japan. His compassionate action will inspire other youths to rescue fellow friends. "

Purushotam Guru interrupted," This is the example of 'Service to fellow friend is service to God.' Such a fellow gets heavenly world. God cannot be defined. God might have inspired him to do such a noble service. God is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent (Joshi, 2008, Page 39). This is the *dibyadarsan*, revelation. God is here and heaven is here, too. We only need thoughtful and insightful heart/ or mind (Shakya, 2008, p.282).

What Rose did, was a precious duty towards his friend! This type of service is recognized in Mosiah (Moslem), Old Testament (Hebrews) and Jesus (Christ) that says, "When you are in the service of your fellow beings you are only in the service of your God"(Mosiah, 2:16-17.). This is the service that counts, brethren" (<http://www.ldschurchnews.com/home/>).

Isaiah, (a prophet in Old Testament, 8th century BC), Micah (A Hebrews prophet) and Jesus (Christ) also affirmed that acceptable worship of God must be accompanied by service to God's creation, our fellow person. There the word Worship has been interpreted in different ways as (a) divide the bread with the hungry is worship; worship is to treat employees fairly; worship is to bring into our homes the helpless, poor and destitute; worship is to help our relatives; worship is to clothe the naked; worship is to visit the sick; worship is to visit the prisoner; worship is to live a life of personal righteousness (John Bower, (<http://www.directionjournal.org/>).

With these mental occurring, I heard Pundit by saying, "Now its time to start the Garuda Purana. First, I read out the verses of Sanskrit, after that explain it in Nepali.

"The Pundit first recited the prayer before beginning the Purana. It is written in Sanskrit language. He read the stanzas and summarized them in Nepali language.

Importance of donations

Death and dying rituals persuade society to donate gold, gold and silver ornaments, bed, land, cow umbrella, *kharau*, and the wooden slipper. The Purana inspires to do so. "Gold donation precedes one straight to the heaven; need not go to Yamalok, the world of the death" (Garuda Purana, 8/43, p.91).

In the earlier days, people used to donate things made of gold .It were cheaper. People were generous and the receivers were very noble and religious. But nowadays this is not practised due to preciousness of gold materials.

The Garud Purana also talked about land donation. It said that such donation liberates all the sins of the doer. Kings must donate land if they have committed sins in the state affairs. Donating land to the Brahmins obtains Indralok, the world of the King of the gods. Land donation increases *punya*, meritious action, and everyday (Ibid, 8 / 52, p.93).

Cow donation emancipates one from the sins done in childhood, adolescence, youth and old age. (Ibid, 8/58, p.94)

Religion earns wealth. The wishes are fulfilled by religion. Religion offers *mokshya*, salvation. Let religious or good deeds be done (Ibid, 8/109, p.102). The same book also mentions about the importance of Tulasi plant, Kush, shaligram and Ganga water. The house that

possesses the shrine of Tulsi is regarded as *Tirth*; pilgrimage spot. The messenger of Yamaraj cannot approach there (Ibid, 9 /9, p.106).Let me discuss the importance of *Tulsi*, *Kush* and *Saligram* in Hindu rituals.



Tulsi Plant

Religiously, Tulsi is considered to be very pious plant. No Hindu home is considered complete without a Tulasi plant. So do mine, too.

Its botanical name is *Osmium tenuifolium*. It is called Holy Basil in English. It is planted either on the ground or in the vase. Hindus worship Tulsi as the Goddess Lakshmi, the consort of Vishnu (<http://www.sanskrit.org>). In the sraddha or at special pooja, Tulsi leaves are offered to

please the God Vishnu or the souls. The wood of Tulsi is carved to make *japa mala*, chanting beads. It is also worn on the neck as a symbol of peace or ornament. The Tulasi plant is worshipped in the courtyards of many homes every day. Every year I sow seeds on the day of *Nirjala Ekadashi*, plant its plants on *Harishayani Ekadashi* and celebrate *Tulasi Vivaha*, marriage, with Vishnu. Tulsi is beautifully decorated. On this occasion, a fair is held at Budhanilkantha in Kathmandu. Thousands of devotees thronged to have a darsan and pooja of Lord Vishnu.

Tulsi is also regarded as a "Queen of Herb. "We receive medicinal fragrance from this plant. The plants keep the house premises clean. Tulsi is a prime herb in Ayurvedic treatment, for its diverse healing properties. It is considered as a kind of "elixir of life" and believed to promote longevity

In modern time, Tulsi extracts are used as remedies for common colds, headaches, stomach disorders, inflammation, heart disease, various forms of poisoning, malaria and mitigate over bleeding in women. It is also consumed as an herbal tea, dried powder, fresh leaf, or mixed with ghee (<http://www.sanskrit.org/www/Sanskrit/sanskrit.htm>).

There are two variety of Tulsi, white and black. The fragrance from this plant keeps the house premises clean. It is a Hindu belief that the evil spirits do not wander the area where there is Tulsi plant. Its leaves have been mixed with stored grains to repel insects. Tulsi emits oxygen and not carbon dioxide at night, unlike other plants (Mala, <http://www.indiastudychannel.com/>). "Tulsi plant is thought to open the heart and mind, and

bestow love, compassion, faith and devotion. With such belief, it has been widely incorporated in religious rituals and favorable ceremonies throughout the continents (<http://tulsiplant.org>).



Kush Plant

If Kush, shaligram-water etc are administered or served to the dying person, s/he goes to the heaven even though the person has no any so (Ibid, 9 / 9, p.106).

Like Tulsi, Kush has also the botanical name i.e. *Eragrostis cynosuroides*. On Vedic rituals like Heavens or Pitri pooja, one need to wear a ring made of Kush on his right hand ring finger. The number of Kush leaves reflects as followings.

Single leave ring = for death

Two leaves ring = for auspicious and daily routine function

Three leaves ring = Pitri pooja and tarpans

Four leaves ring = temple prayers and poojas

During the Eclipse time, these kusha grasses are used to cover all food items to protect them from the harmful ultra violet radiation. Grass absorbed about 60% of the (x-ray) radiation (www.trsiyengar.com).



Shaligrams

Saligram, fossil-stones are the next group of pious things to the Hindus. According to the religious text of Devi Bhagwat (and other scriptures) to kill Jalandhar Lord Vishnu had to destroy Sati Brindha's *sati dharma*, chastity. When he did that Sati Brinda gave four curses to

**Sitting with reluctance;
The day made me without stance;
Offered up to Rose 'nhenuma';
O, Almighty! Take care of him.**

**He became a past;
Can't miss him fast;
What a life! Nobody forecasts;
Be in memory until the life lasts.**

Lord Vishnu to become stone, grass, tree, plant. To wash away the curses Lord Vishnu took four avatars or incarnations. He became stone (Saligram); grass (Kush); tree (Pipal) and plant (Tulsi). Since this time, the Saligrams are considered as the most auspicious to behold and to worship. The worshipper knows no fear and by Saligram's mercy. The worshipper is blessed to attain all desirable things; worldly comforts, good wife, good sons, good health etc. It is all by the

blessings of Lord Mahavishnu that His pastimes are being served. It is an excellent service for devotees of Lord Narayana (Shaligram.com.in). The Saligram is available in Mustang, Kali-Gandaki River, Muktinath, Damodar Himal, Damodar Kunda, Devaghat of Nepal and a (<http://in.answers.yahoo.com>). Ridhi, in Palpa district is also famous for Shaligrams. Serving Ganga-water at the time of dying, realizes the individual from all kinds of sins, gets fruit of taking bath in all the holy rivers. (Ibid, 9 / 23, p.133)

After the Garuda Purana, the gathering dispersed. Kamala brushed the floor and nearby surrounding. She did not utter a word. She seemed that she had lost vitality. Her yellowish face

indicated the situation. Radha, her sister served a glass of lemon squash to all. I let them go home. Kamala intended to stay with me the night. But I did not give her a favor.

Radha and her husband, Rabi, accompanied Kamala to home. I, too, followed them to the bus stop.

Came back to DDRZ with empty heart. I felt a bit fatigue. Sat down on the veranda- floor leaning against the pillar. Some poetic statements hinted my mind. I put them down in the condolence register.

Jagat, my brother came with a bottle of juice. He was with me that night as Achyut *baje* was on leave. We talked about Rose's life history, his obedience and sense of helping others. I had no appetite. Drank a glass of juice. Jagat wanted to add a glass more but I denied.

Jagat had sleep. I was awakening. Vivid scene kept on coming over my face. I asked the Kiriya putri baje if he needed anything. He replied negatively. So far I knew that I was following rituals, sometimes with a hope that Rose will get moksha; sometime with a fear that what my kin and relatives will tell me; sometimes with a curiosity that what the ancestors wanted to offer us; and sometimes with a rational mind that why I was doing all these rituals over the death of the object. Is this the relation of the object and the subject, the first being the matter and the second the mind? Alternatively, it is something else. This question remained a question for me.

The World is Wonderful. Keep Hope. Be Optimistic. Get a Loving One

On July Saturday, 28 July 2007, I woke up at 4:30am, though did not get up. It was raining. At 5; I washed my face and gargled my throat. I sat down for meditation. I had no concentration. I tried but in vain. The figure of the old Kiriya putri came over my face. I had not seen him for two days. Therefore, I made up my mind to see him at the Dhunge Dhara. I completed my morning duty, i.e. brushing and cleaning of the room. With a towel; a vest and a trouser, I approached there. There were many mourners than usual. I searched for the fellow. I could not see him. I kept waiting. After an hour, he came coughing. He saw me and asked.

"Aaja ta nikai hul chha. Rati char pancha pariwar aa'ka chan," he meant to say, "Today is so crowded. Four-five families came at night."

"So I am not getting my turn. At the same time, I am waiting you, too. I want to listen you. *Hataar ta chaina*, aren't you in a hurry?"

"No. We can have talks.'

"What about other Kiriya putr is seen in this premises?"

"More or less they are of the same category alike me." Some are youths, as your one is.

They cannot stay for a long time".

"Do you visit your family, I mean you wife?"

"Yes, of course. I visit home at leisure time. I buy some gifts for her. She is my third wife. I enjoy, be fresh and return to this venue to play the next role. Our turn awaits us. Sometimes, the *hakim*, the officer calls us on our mobile."

"You have three wives!" I wonder.

"No, no. The two had already left me. They got married with other men."

"Why? What's the cause?"

"Time". I could not visit home, stay and engage them. Idiots diverted those telling illusions about my duty. *Najar ki swasni; muthi ko dhan*. I could not keep my wives before my eyes. One can utilize the handy wealth. I gave time to work and I earned money. I could not give time to my wives. Therefore, they left me one after another".

"What about the third ones?"

"The world is wonderful, you know? Keep hope. Be optimistic. You will get a loving one. I trust her. She trusts me. She is loyal to me so far. She is matured than the previous ones.

This discussion led me to think about feminists and the gender analyst's. When the woman does not get continuous "caring, equal relationship with a sympathetic man" (McFarland, 1996, <http://www.wendymcelroy.com/sexcor/index.html>), she leaves such husband. The same might have happened with him. Love is the key ingredient in love, which results in understanding, respect, forgiveness and humility. When you learn to accept and forgive with humbleness, love wins over pride (<http://ezinearticles.com>). The husband was always busy in serving the death rites and rituals to the needy persons. He could not spare time for his wives. His wives were irritated with his occupation." They lost their patience and responsibilities. According to the feminists' and gender analysts, patience is the key to a successful and stable marriage life. Patience is an attitude; it is a positive quality of not the weak or submissive, but of the strong. Patience comes from self-respect and respect for the partner (Ibid).

"Oh, today is to do a lot. Let me shower."

I saw him shivering. Apparent were his ribs. He went straight to his room.

He was so talky in comparison to his physique.

One of my relatives reminded me to write invitation letters. We need to invite all the close relatives and friends who came to share grief in the mourning period to grace the thirteenth day worship of Rose. I drafted a few sentences and sent to print.

In the afternoon, I went to the market to buy some necessary things for *shaiya daan*, bed donation on the thirteenth day. Therefore, I could not listen the Purana. I discussed briefly with guru in the evening.

At six pm, I enclosed the folded letters in the envelopes. Began writing all the visitors names from the condolence register. Purushotam Guru came in the late evening. I talked to him about the Garud Purana that he recited in my absence. He summarized me.

Bed donation: Grieving family donates comfortable, attractive bed and necessary stuffs to the Brahman. It is believed that the deceased receives the stuffs enrooted to the Yamalok travel. The donation is done after an individual's death or in the alive state. Indra, the god of the gods, and other gods are pleased with this donation (Ibid, 13 / 59 /64, p. 162/64).

If capable, one should also donate house, land and vegetable garden (Ibid, 13 / 75

p.165).

Pada dan: Pada dan includes umbrella, shoes, clothes, ring, *kamandalu*, a pot to carry water, *aasani*, the seat; and *panchapatra*, the copper pot to put water for worship (Ibid, 13/ 83, p. 166).

It was 7 p.m.

"*Buba, aai pugen ma ta,*" Achyut *baje* showed his presence an hour earlier in the room after two days. He meant to say, " Father, I have come now." I noticed him very cheered up.

"Is everything fine? How are you feeling?"

"Yes. Very fine. My family was very happy."

"Family is a great thing in the world. Respect and honor her feeling."

"You are right. I shall seek a better job. I do not continue this one for a long time. I will quit it as soon as possible."

He served me some fruit. I wondered that he had pilled the bananas and the mangoes and cut them into pieces. He had put a *sinka*, pointed thin bamboo stick. Earlier he used to serve them in the natural shapes. I noticed a change. Perhaps his spouse trained him. I shared the fruit with him. In the end, he prepared black tea. We had it. Before sleep, I read two newspapers. He was sitting quietly.

"Guru, your mind is not here. It has flown to *bajai*."

"Yes. Absolutely."

Soon he was under the blanket.

What is dan? An interest of the donator or the prescribed work? This question occurred to my mind. It also gave me the knowledge that why Rose needed kamandalu that he did not use it in his life. The philosophy behind the donation is that if one donates the basic stuffs to the Brahmin, the deceased would get in the Netherworld. The soul would use in the time of need. Here, I am not convinced that why the immortal soul needs such human needs. This provision is

designated to satisfy human hearts and minds. It relieves the grieving persons and provides solace (http://www.godrealized.com/vijay_kumar.html). "Spiritual life is a playful interaction between a seeker and the spiritually evolved. In this, one has to offer and the other has to accept. The one, who offers, accepts back again and one who accepts, offers back again"(<http://www.forumforhinduawakening.org/articles/id/about-us>).

Purana Imparts Family, Social-Health, Moral, Sexual and Reproductive Education

On Sunday, 29 July 2007, I performed my all the routine works as usual. A monkey came near the door. She had her baby attached under the breast. I remembered Rose's childhood. We had given him all the needed love and care. Everywhere and in every- matter, he got the preferences. Alas! Now we have only his remembrance. The monkey chattered loudly. I thought she wanted some thing to eat. There were some rotten mangoes. I rolled two off. She picked them up; and began eating. Two other came to snatch the food. I threw some more mangoes and bananas at them. They are habituated to feed themselves wondering amidst the grieverers. A security guard of the Trust came with a catapult. He targeted it to them, pretended to launch a stone. They all ran away in a moment. The monkeys are afraid of the catapult.

I worked to distribute the invitation letters. I divided them into the categories of *malami*, funeral processionists, Rose's friends, relatives, neighbors, friends, mine and Kamala's colleagues and sympathizers.

Rose's closest friends Rabi and others, Jagat, Nava Raj, Ravi Pradhan, Radha, Bidhan, Kamala, Goma, Budha, Bidya, and Rajya and so on simultaneously engaged two days to distribute the letters.

At 4 pm, Garuda Purana was recited. Me, Kamala and Goma listened to it. Purushotam guru seemed reluctant. The population of listeners was thinner as many were engaged in a numbers of important works.

Chapter fifteen of the Garud Puran deals with the ways to give birth to a baby son. It reads that if the intercourse takes place in between the eight even days (6,8, 10,12,14,16) after menstruation, the conception signifies the son, whereas the odd periods bear the daughter(Ibid, 15/9,10,p.190). Furthermore, the fourteenth day's conception bestows with the fortunate and religious son (Ibid, 15/11, p.191).

It is an interesting aspect of the *Purana* that it has been imparting family, social- health, and moral as well as sex education in an informal method to the concerned adult population of the country. Chapter 15 is co-related with chapter seven. It has taught formula to give birth to a baby son.

"Guru, do people really practice the clues to get a baby son?"

"Yes, people follow such methods if they do not possess a baby son. However, they relapse and bear a numbers of girl children. If one follows the clues strictly, it won't go in vain. I have helped an infertility couple. They did not bear child for 16 years. I gave information to follow the clues. They did accordingly. It proved miracle. They gave birth to a son child."

"Our religion is in favor of Personal and social health education, population, and sex education."

"Absolutely right. It is providing such knowledge informally from ages."

"In the form of conversational story telling, isn't it?"

"Yes. Purans are based on the conversational style and storytelling methods."

"Guru, Karmakandi Brahmins can impart population education including sexual and Reproductive health to the masses of people."

"Yes, they can do it, and have been doing it for a long time." Brahmins need a course of population, sex and reproductive training. They can play a role of facilitator. They are respected personalities of the society. The government can utilize them to impart such education informally. They can preach people on safe motherhood and control population explosion."

The discussion above encouraged me to find out scientific knowledge on the birth of a boy and girl child. As I found, a woman does not determine the sex of her child. Every woman has eggs that contain X chromosomes. If the sperm that fertilizes one of these eggs contains another X chromosome, the result will be a baby girl. However, if the sperm that fertilizes the egg contains a Y chromosome, the woman will give birth to a baby boy (<http://www.lovetoknow.com/>).

The scientific practice of fertilization between x-x and x-y chromosomes is similar to the advice of the Brahmins given during the Garuda Purana recitation. In my opinion, the general people hardly understand the scientific formulas but they easily grasp the Brahmins' advice. The religion has in-depth link with science and has incorporated scientific formula in an indirect way. Public have proved it in their day-to-day practice. Scientific research should be carried out to strengthen the public belief. In principle, if the findings are positive, reproductory education should also be made a part of religious gatherings such as Bahagavat Gyan Maha Yangya.

Tributes

Tributes have been pouring in for him.

A close friend of his said-

"A great humble giant".

An INGO programme officer mentioned;

**"A wonderful, generous but modest
Philanthropist."**

One of the relatives expressed;

"An extraordinary man in every respect".

Professors and classmates e-mailed-

"No way except having patience".

"Difficult to bear the pain."

"To bear as mortal human being."

"Pray for the eternal peace."

His mother opined;

**"An Obedient son, devoted and dedicated
worker,**

He used his success to help others;

Moreover, did it without;

Wanting any credit".

Knowledge Only Can Bring *Kaibalya Mukti*

On Monday, 30 July 2007, the Guru turned the sixteenth chapter that read on matters like knowledge, mukti, the salvation, and the sacred places of neighboring India that offer mukti to the people. The Purana has mentioned the following places: Ayodhya Mathura, Haridwar (Maya), Kashi, Kanchi, Ujjain; and Dwarika.

The entire places are located in India. Here my patriotic feeling emerged. So I did not agree at this point because the Puran has not mentioned any divine places of Nepal although the country is known as *Devabhoomi*, god's land. There are many sacred places like Pashupatinath ; Gokarneshwor ; Uttar Gaya ; Dakshinakali; Muktinath/ Mukti Kshetra ; Ridi, Halesi Mahadev; Chhinnamasta; Dharan Baraha Kshetra ; Sworga Dwari ;Gosain Kund ; Damodar Kunda; Janakpur Dham; Devaghat Dham; and Lumbini and so on. The sole reason is that Purans were translated, printed and distributed from Kashi of India. In July 30th, 2007,

the Guru turned the sixteenth chapter that read on matters like knowledge, *mukti*, the salvation, and the sacred places of neighboring India that offer *mukti* to the people.

The Indian religious scholars did not pay attention to it while the Nepali scholars were not assertive. As a result, every year many people kept visiting various places of India in the name of pilgrimage. Contrary to the religious scholars' doing, the pandits in Badrinath and Kedarnath of India asked Nepalis like, "Have you perform *sraddha* in Kagabeni, Muktinath? Yours is the head of the pilgrimage spots." His question made me think that no doubt, we obtain *mokshya* in our native land as well.

The Garud Puran also wrote, Wealth is like a dream, youth is like a blossomed flower, and age is flexible as the electricity (Ibid, 16 / 29, p.121).

Here my patriotic feeling received another aspect of life i.e. knowledge can only bring *Kaibalya mukti*, emancipation, liberation or salvation from three miseries-birth, old age, and death which one is absorbed or concentrated to Brahma, the creator of the misery universe. After attending this stage, one should not take worldly rebirth (Ibid, 16 / 87, p.222).

According to Shiva Maha Puranam, *Kaibalya mukti* is the fifth salvation that is unavailable for the human beings. Only the God of the gods- Shiva can attain it. It further says, the whole universe is originated, the universe is brought up, can bestow it and at last, the universe is absorbed in Shiva itself. (Shiva, Maha Puranam, 2005, p.1852, verse 7-9).

It also reiterated that all should go to India to gain salvation. Following this understanding, people have been going to India for ages for pilgrimage and salvation. Here I want to mention an

example of one of my neighbor, a senior citizen, Mukunda Adhikary whose house is twenty meters ahead of mine. Four years ago, he started getting unwell. He sensed that he would be no more in this world. He wanted to breathe his last in such a holy place where he would attend *mukti*. Therefore, he left Kathmandu, the Pashupati Nath's divine region. He spent his last days in Kashi in India and finally his wishes came true. This is an instance only. Whenever I visit Kashi, I noticed hundreds of old Hindu citizens of Nepal dwelling near the *ghats*, riverbanks until their last breathe.

Why should one listen Garud Puran? I asked this question myself. In response I found the answer in the same book that says, "Brahmans get Vidya, Knowledge, Kshatriyas get the ability safeguard the earth, Vaishya (business class become rich / get wealth, and Shudra, the untouchable attain purity from the sins" (ibid, 16 / 12, p.231). Again, the question remained what is to be obtained for the non-Hindus and Hindu but ethnic (non-caste) groups of the people. May be the author of this book never thought that way.

Garuda Puran reciting completed. We gained a variety of practical knowledge on the death and dying rituals. It warned the wrong doers of the society by saying that their acts should be justified before Yamaraj, the god of death. The Puran also stressed on the conservation of the environment and the natural resources. It has advocated for ethics and morality in the society. In a nutshell, the Garuda Puran can be named as "social conduct."

"... Empathy Helps Relieve and leads to the Mission"

It was the day of Tuesday, 31 July 2007. After completing my everyday routine, today I opened the laptop. Now I consider "it" as a 'souvenir' from Rose. Unwillingly I checked the E-mails. Professors and classmates wrote me:

Dear Sir

I am sorry to hear the bad news. May god keep him in peace? I want to share your pain with my condolences to you. Now there is no way except having patience and pray for god that your son rest in peace.

Mana

On 7/31/07, T.U. Education <tumphil@gmail.com >

i know it is easy to tell but difficult to bear the pain. and yet there is no way out but to bear. what did you did is a great thing because it helps u relieve. go ahead with ur mission.

bnk

The Koiralas!...." <sambedan@wlink.com.np

Mondav. September 24. 2007 6:45 AM

DEAR LOVE SIR,

I AM SHOCKED TO HEAR THE UNTIMELY DEATH OF YOUR ELDEST SON. RECENTLY I CAME TO KNOW IT. I KNOW YOU REALLY HAVE A VERY TRAGIC AND UNFORTUNATE TIME OF YOUR LIFE.

I PRAY FOR THE ETERNAL PEACE OF THE DEPARTED SOUL. FOR YOUR FURTHER STUDY AND THESIS IF THERE IS SOMETHING I HELP YOU PLEASE LET ME KNOW. YOU ARE NOT THE SINGLE PERSON TO BEAR EVERY DIFFICULTY. WE, FRIENDS ARE THERE TO SHARE AND

-pawan bimali <pbimali@yahoo.com

Dear Love Joshi Sir,

Dear love sir,

It shock me hearing such matter of that tragedy and may god be with you to be bear on facing such situation.

I would like to assure for any kind of things to be share, just let me know it and would be happy with you in this situation.

-Mohan Shrestha <mohank20048@gmail.com

News as I heard is not really tolerable but has to bear as mortal human being. Sir/medam I do not have any word to make you relief from this unaccepted situation. Lov sir, I want to meet you. My office near by old Baneshwor. So allow me to meet you. You know my previous problem while learning M.Phil. I was also in great trouble of loosing my baby. At last, request to god for blessing and do not accept such unbearable situation.

*From:
Ram Chandra <dahalramchandra@hotmail.com>
Thu, August 2, 2007 10:37:13 AM*

I did not expect my professors would send e-mails giving moral or emotional strength to bear the difficult time. My heart pleased to read the valued e-mails. My gurus spared sometime for the student in spite of their busy routine. I found M.Phil. Professors are sensitive, caring and empathetic. "Empathy is an ability to understand your own thoughts and feelings and, by analogy, apply your self-understanding to the service of others. It is a sophisticated ability involving attunement, de-centring, conjecture and introspection: an act of thoughtful, heartfelt imagination"(Arnold, 2005, pp. 23, 24, 86, as cited in (<http://www.mindmatters.edu.au/>)). My Classmates, too, provided me solace. A Nepali saying stroke in my mind," *Manis ko pahichan dukha ma hunchha*," human is identified in the trouble. Both the Professors and the Classmates have not forgotten to hint me that "death is inevitable" and have to bear patiently. I heartily

accepted them as 'empathetic healers'(<http://aip.psychiatryonline.org>.) I saw message of the Geeta is hidden in their writings.

Grief Brings Transformation

On Wednesday, 1 August 2007, I cleaned the room and the surroundings. Arranged a spacious place to display materials. Today is *Shaiya Dan*; the bed donation .It includes a bed with necessary stuffs, shoes, umbrella, clothes, ring, *kamandalu*, a pot to carry water, *aasani*, the seat; and *panchapatra*, the copper pot to put water for worship, a stick and a set of cooking utensils.

Shaiya Dan accomplished amidst a gloomy assembly of relatives.

From 12 to 2 pm, I called everyone individually to confirm and urged him or her to attend the pooja and receive the *prasad*. I got positive responses. The twelfth day is the last day to stay at DDRZ. Sitting under the *lapsi* tree, I murmured softly these lines-

Life is Transitory

***Day and night;
I stayed at DDRZ.
A traumatic place;
With the incessant-
Cries of the kins.
Observe unpleasant scene.***

***Dine unwillingly.
Express sympathy.
Extend condolences.
Narrate death stories.
Share grief
Grievers are preached to-
Rectify wrong conducts; and
Evil course of life.
Life is transitory.***

I learned a lesson in the surrounding of DDRZ. The traumatic and grief circumstances make individuals humble, polite and practical in ones own life. It helped transfer individuals: egoist into socio-centric; the materialist into religious; riches into charitable; boasting into modest; and impracticable into practicable and so on. The advanced socializing process concretizes

after the loved one is lost. Grief brings transformation in life. I realized it had transformed me as well. My manners changed. I became more practicable than before. However, in course of meeting with the grieving people I even found that grief brings negative transformation, too. It occurs in the case of killings after kidnapping and murders during chaos. The family members become revengeful and ready for retaliation.

My attitudes changed. I used to indulge in the debates before. Now I give up taking part in such things. Nearly three years ago, I was to some extent individualistic, now I feel I am more social. Traumatic situations transformed some of my worldviews. However, my 'self-actualizations' (Ghimire, 2008, p.93/98) remain as it is. I am an uncompromised rebel against malpractices. I always struggled against injustice. I am a *gari khane manchhe*, person living on hard work. I am a learner for my mental discipline.

Money Matters

The DDRZ is a job-oriented premise. During a discussion, the pundits figured out that approximately one hundred thousand Brahmins relied on religious ceremony as well as funeral rituals. They were self-employed. The stated policy was lacking in this field. Sanskrit and Vedic literature learned and vocationally trained persons were surviving on their performance. They were earning their livelihood by using their version of the Vedic knowledge.

On the other hand, the use of DDRZ was felt beyond the reach of common citizens. The expenditures met within the grieving periods are of an exploited nature. Naturally, the mourners did not bargain for the needed stuffs and services they sought. The habituated funeral service providers took advantage of the grieving families. They targeted for money, and only for money. Every time, money mattered there. It could be named as 'religious corruption' at least for me.

Nobody was bounded under the legal regulations. They entertained the saying, '*Har din Dashahara, har raat Deewali*'. It means, "Everyday is Dashain and every night is Deepawali." I was one of the victims of such entertainment. People tried their best to get rid of sinful acts by performing religious deeds at the tragic periods; but sinful means were used for supposedly noble purposes. It was the result of subconscious minds: selfishness, bigotry, elitism, etc. Here I realized that God's purpose with material life is to overcome sin. And sin develops in a cyclic manner in the spirit world. Similarly, stabilized realities are needed to teach proper methods of relating to objective reality (nov55.com/rel/ovw.html). Moreover, corruption is pervasive where there is no strong hold of law and order. It is where North & Gwin, (2006) write, "We find that the strength of the rule of law and the level of corruption both depend on a country's religious heritage"(www.religionomics.com/o). So did Stark, (2001) who argued that only religions with strong conceptions of God or gods are actually able to sustain a moral order. He also found a higher correlation between morality and religiosity (*Ibid*). There I agree with North, Gwin, and Stark. In spite of our cultural heritage, corruption was taking in an institutional shape. The DDRZ has become the victim of misbehave or corruption. Why people tolerate the day-to-day corruption elsewhere?

Vittal (2003, p.19), answers this question, "Hinduism preaches the concept of tolerance". Therefore, whatever are done people tolerate because they believe that eventually the god will do justices. On the other hand, there is a belief that if a sinner pronounces the name of Narayan or Vishnu, his/ her all types of sins will be forgiven by the god. This contradiction of Hindu doctrine has inspired the corrupts to commit corruptions.

I also reflected that Kathmandu is the capital city, wealthy individuals do not care for minor irregularities as they; too, follow unfair means to make money. It prevents ordinary people from doing sacred acts for their deceased souls. My reflection was similar to Flavin and Ledet (nd.) who had reported," We find that states with a larger urban population have higher levels of corruption," in their research paper entitled, "Religiosity and Government Corruption in the American States"(www.calvin.edu/henry/research/).

The professional pundits had established an organization called Vaidik Karmakanda Sanskrit Samrakshan Kendra. They had provided hassle free services to the mourners and the pilgrims who used to gather at the time of Bala Chaturdasi. The organizers were aiming to safeguard Vedic heritage, culture and rituals. They were also trying to regularize the system and mitigating the unnecessary hazards around Pashupat Area. But for the people like me was an approach to blackmail the bereaved family.

Life is a Drama. A Star Performed 'His' Assigned Role

It was Thursday, 2 August 2007. I woke up earlier than usual. At first, I brushed and cleaned the venue of *homa*, a pyre for an act of religious offering in the fire. The Kiriya putri Brahmin shaved his head and took bath. By 10 a.m., the pundits claimed their presence. The relatives also thronged. The *sraddha*, the obsequial rites, observed for the peace of deceased soul and the purification of the mourning periods. Purushotam guru, the head pundit, spared no stones to perform the final worshipping in accordance to the religious rules and regulations so far. We prayed for the eternal peace of Rose. The pundits completed the *homa*. The head pundit sprinkled the *gomutra*, the urine of the cow, upon us to declare we are purified. I handed the *dakshina*, money offered voluntarily, over to all the pundits as suggested by the head pundit. Then we offered the remuneration to the Kiriya putri, a set of clothes and saw him off. We were overwhelmed with gratitude for his help of being Kiriya putri. He participated in the rituals for thirteen days and discharged all scriptural procedures. We saluted for his contributions that might provide eternal peace to Rose. Amidst these doings, I realized the hierarchy among the pundits, the emotions with the bereaved family, and the duty of the hired kiriyaputri. The three things were working together to ensure eternal peace to Rose.

At 2 p.m., Kamala led the pundits to the hall to serve the *prasad*, the light vegetarian soft meals. I stood on the way to the hall to receive the invitees. The closest, near and dear relatives kindly visited to grace the *prasad*. I received almost all the friends and sympathizers of Rose. Me, Kamala, Goma and Saroj have avoided the salt for twelve days. I persuaded them to take

prasad with the relatives. I kept waiting for my workstation colleagues. I have made my mind up to have prasad along with them. No one came until five p.m. I did not lose my heart. I hoped for their presence. It was half-past five. In the meantime, Mana Maya Sharma, English teacher of my school, came, unexpectedly. My heart filled with joy. I greeted her. She asked whether the staff had come. I replied negatively. I left hope that they would come further. I escorted her to the hall. Kamala served her a plate of prasad. I accompanied her, my only colleague, although there were forty. She told me to take the absence of the colleagues as a normal matter. At 6 p.m., I saw Mana Maya off. I thanked her a lot. I could hardly stand on my feet. The salty food exhausted me because I took it after twelve days. I sat down on the bench reluctantly for a half hour. My mind indicated me about an absence of my friend. I possess a friend of mine. She was always with me in my happy days and in my sad days. She gave me a close company during the time when I was struggling for justice and against the white-collar social workers. She visited almost everyday at DDRZ. She had come on the evening of twelfth day, too. I urged her to attend the thirteenth day pooja. But she made herself absent. Most non-kin individuals do not attend the 13th day prasad. People believe that it is designated for only the kins of the family tree and the closest relatives. I felt, "our mind-set should be changed". I also realized that friendship and kinship do not go together at least in the hierarchical society like ours. Friends were mine but rituals were of the kins. There I saw the mismatch and yet I had no any other options left I just endure the absence of my workstation colleagues.

A staff of the Trust approached me.

He said, "You've done your rituals, don't you?"

"Yes, we did it."

"Please, vacate the room. A mourned family has booked it. They will be there soon."

"Ok. Thanks."

First, I paid up the catering manager. Secondly, I immediately went to the Trust office. Paid the remaining dues. Handed them over the rented materials mats, blankets, pillows etc. Sarose, Kamala and Goma finished packing our belongings. Here I remembered Buddha's way of teaching to the mother Kisa Gotami who lived in Savatthi. She was from very poor and lowest caste. She was very thin and haggard. Everyone called her the haggard (*kisa*) Gotami. One could not fathom her inner riches. She was unable to find a husband. Fortunately, one day a rich merchant who appreciated her inner wealth and married her. However, the husband's family despised her because of her caste, her poverty and her looks. This animosity caused her great unhappiness.

Within a couple of years, Kisa Gotami gave birth to a baby boy; the family finally accepted her as the mother of the son and heir. Her life was drastically changed. She got an important role in the family. However, one day her happiness showed itself to be based on an illusion. Her little son died suddenly. She did not know how to bear this tragedy. Beyond the usual love of a mother for her child, she had been especially attached to this child, because he was the guarantee for her marital bliss and her peace of mind.

She started searching remedy for the son. With the dead child in her arms, she ran away from her home and went from house to house asking for medicine for her little son. At every door, she begged: "Please give me some medicine for my child," but the people replied that medicine

would not help any more, the child was already dead. However, she did not understand what they were saying to her, because in her mind she had eternalized that the child was not dead. Others laughed at her without compassion. But amongst the many selfish and unsympathetic people, she also met a wise and kind person who recognized that her mind was deranged because of grief. He advised her to visit the best physician, namely the Buddha who would know the right remedy.

She immediately followed this advice and ran to Prince Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's Monastery, where the Buddha was staying. She arrived in the middle of a discourse being given by the Buddha to a large congregation.

Totally despairing and in tears, with the corpse of the child in her arms, she begged the Buddha,

"Master, give me medicine for my son."

The Awakened One interrupted his teaching and replied kindly

"I know of a medicine."

"What that can it be?" hopefully she inquired,

"Mustard seeds," the Enlightened One replied, astounding everyone present.

"Where should I go to obtain them? What kind should I get?", Kisagotami inquired.

"Bring a very small quantity from any house where no one has died", replied Buddha.

She trusted the Blessed One's words and went to the town.

"Can I get any mustard seeds?" at the first house, she asked.

"Certainly," was the reply? She was told, and some seeds were brought to her.

Then she asked the second question, which she had not deemed quite as important:

"Has anyone died in this house?"

"But of course," the house owner told her.

Therefore, it went everywhere. In one house, someone had died recently, in another house some time ago. She could not find any house where no one had died. The dead ones are more numerous than the living ones, she was told.

Towards evening, she finally realized that not only she was stricken by the death of a loved one, but also this was the common human fate. What no words had been able to convey to her, her own experience -going from door to door - made clear to her. She understood the law of existence, the being fettered to the always re-occurring deaths. In this way, the Buddha was able to heal her obsession and bring her to an acceptance of reality. Kisagotami no longer refused to believe that her child was dead, but understood that death is the destiny of all beings.

Such were the means by which the Buddha could heal grief-stricken people and bring them out of their overpowering delusion, in which the whole world was perceived only in the perspective of their loss.

After Kisagotami had come to her senses, she took the child's lifeless body to the cemetery and returned to the Enlightened One. He asked her whether she had brought any mustard seed. She gratefully explained how she had been cured by the Blessed One (Hecker, 2010).

Twilight descended. The dark clouds covered the sky of Paashupat Region. No doubt, then it caused downpour. Lightning appeared in the atmosphere. No matter to us. Lightning already had hit us. We went to our fortnight neighbors of DDRZ and beg to leave. We exchanged 'sees off. The griever grieves the griever.

We returned home with heavy hearts. We were all in home, our sweet home. Rose was physically missing. In our mind, there was Rose, Rose and only Rose.

We all looked like a defeated army who had lost the battle. We seemed that we have no hope and plans for the future. We lay on the floor. There was dead silence in the room.

My mind started reviewing all those scenes from the hospital to the DDRZ. What a tragic situation knocked us down! Life is a drama. It possesses many plots with a number of stars. A star performed his assigned role.

I have experienced, let me say, I have learnt the following lessons during thirteen days at DDRZ.

1. Death is universal. Life is death. Death is life. Learn to live life. Here I found me understanding the cyclic theory of life that was advocated by the Eastern philosophers

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page). I may not be wrong if I say a man borns to die any away.

2. Life is time. It is short, longer or the longest. Exceptionally, life-depends upon hygiene, food habits and medical cares. I reconfirmed this understanding with the satwik, rajashi, and tamasi food of the Hindus and the relation with the longitivity of the life (<http://www.about.com>).

3. Words signify the objects. Some are concretely visible and some are invisible. Here I became the follower of the existentialists (<http://plato.stanford.edu>).

4. Precious objects exist. It is not handy as our heart, brain, liver, lungs, brain and kidney.

5. So is with God. God is experienced, felt in mind and heart. God always gives justice. God is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent.

6. So is with the death and dying. Philosophies believe that after life-world exists. Spirit and souls are synonymous. Probably, heaven and hell are not reachable. They have no concrete existence. *Na mari sworga dekhinna*. It means, heaven is invisible unless one leaves the material world.

7. Life is the most beautiful creation of nature. Adore it with noble deeds: love fellow friends, work for the people and be empathetic. Enjoy good life now. Suffer bad life now.

9. Try to be an entrepreneur. Do not depend upon others.

10. Honor the departed ancestors.

11. Using one's own house is much more economical for mourning periods if s/he possesses own resident in the capital city. Otherwise, the DDRZ is applicable so far.

12. Sharing griefs and extending condolences reduce the burden of pains. It encourages others to live life. The griever can console other grievers.

13. Life and death are based on reality. What we see or perceive in concrete is reality (http://uncyclopedia.wikia.com/wiki/Main_Page). Heaven and hell cannot be perceived and cannot be reachable. It has the sense of negativity and that negative things have power. The paranoia is always correct (Ibid). Therefore, these two words dominate the Hindu religious worldview. I believe that universe exists. Living beings are part of it. Systems of honoring the departed souls are extravagant. It should be reformed and rectified by the educated persons.



EPISODE 3

Celebrated Sa Paru

It was August 29, 2007 the day of "*Sa Paru*." Sa Paru is a colloquial word of Nepal Bhasha, language spoken by Newar Community. "*Sa*" denotes 'cow', and "*Paru*", means '*jatra*' or 'procession'. In English, the word means 'cow festival,' a carnival. It is marked to pave pathway for the departed soul to the heaven. It is believed that *Yamaraj*, God of Death, opens the gate of heaven once a year- on Gaijatra. If someone passes away on this very day, they enter into the heaven on this same day; they need not wait for a long time. It falls in August-September, a day after Janai Purnima. The festival commemorates the death of people during the span of a year. Gaijatra came into existence from 18th century. The Malla King of Kantipur, Pratap Malla initiated it (<http://www.nepalhomepage.com>, kavreli.com, n95pic.blogspot.com).

Once King Pratap Malla's son died. The queen remained dumbstruck. So the King wanted to see little smile on the lips of his sweetheart. He did all efforts to lessen the grief, but in vain. Then he announced publicly that someone who ever made the queen laugh would be rewarded adequately. People brought colorful processions, presented stage dramas full of humors and satires. They began ridiculing and fooling the prominent personalities of the society. It evoked laughter. The queen could not stop laughing. Hence, her grief lessened. From that very time, the King ensued a tradition of including jokes, satires, mockery and lampoon in the *Gai Jatra* days.

The Newar community with positive self-identity celebrates this festival in the Kathmandu valley and outside the valley such as Tansen, Baglung, Pokhara, Butwal, Dhanakutta, and Banepa where there is strong presence of Newars.

A cow is adorned with red teeka, clothes, a crown and garlands. She is fed with good food. The cow is pulled along the route of the procession. In absence of a cow, a young boy dressed as a cow is considered a fair substitute. "The *gai* or cow is holy to Hindus. She represents *Laxmi*, the goddess of wealth, and guides the souls of the departed to the gates of the Netherworld. According to Hinduism, "Whatever a man does in his life is a preparation to lead a good life, after death(Chettri, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page).





(<http://sanges.h.com.np/blog>)

Every family who has lost one relative during the past year must participate in a procession through the streets of the town or the city. Some bring children or some time adult also with resemblance of Radha Krishna or give those funny looks or resemblance of cow, yogi and other god's idol.



Photo: LK Joshi

Following the tradition, we celebrated Sa Paru. Kamala's colleague sent her son to decorate him as a *sadhu*; saint. We went to Basantapur Durbar Square and participated in the mass procession. Many families had thronged to the historic, religious venue to notify that they have lost their loved one. Someone was singing melancholic and pathetic songs. The procession went round the temples that came on the way.

During the procession, I remembered my old days. It was the event of a day when I was a fourth Grader student; I had served a neighbor playing the role of a sadhu at Sa Paru in Butwal. But today, I was holding my elder son- Rose's photograph. Kamala, Radha and Sarose distributed the prasad and the packets of juice to the decorated participants. The grieving families offered milk, fruit and sweets. Some even gave cash money. Sa Paru enabled me as others to console the grieves and inculcate the idea that human being is mortal. It appeals people to accept the reality of death and prepare oneself for the life after death. This understanding has connection with the reincarnation theories that are popular in Eastern world. Christians also believe in eternal life; it is the hope of their salvation. Christians are assured that if they have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and submitted their present life to Him, and then they will enter into everlasting life after they die (<http://www.allaboutspirituality.org>). Some nihilist thinkers believe that death is the absolute end (Ibid); but contrary to what many might think, most people believe that death is not the end. In some shape, we go on. Sa Paru in this sense imparts a lesson to the human beings that they have to be responsible towards the dead world. Living world is tied with dead world through sentimental feelings. I agree with Steiner, who said, "Life is impoverished if the dead are forgotten"(Lecture Series:[Berlin|GA0181](#), <http://www.rsarchive.org/index.php>). With this realization, we returned home at 7:30-p.m. Our cultural festival was observed for the eternal peace of Rose.

"Ghar Ghar me Deewali hai, Mere Ghar me Andhera"

Festivals knocked at every doorsteps of Nepali. We did not mark Dashain and Tihar. Our grieving period lasts for a year. According to the Hindu tradition; we should not celebrate or

undertake any auspicious events during the death year of the family members. This means Dashain, Tihar and season's festivals did not shed light on us. We faced the same situation as the saying reads- "*Ghar ghar me deewali hai, mere ghar me andhera.*" (Koirala, 1997, p.152). There was light festival in every house but my house and my mind were plunged into darkness. We missed Rose very much. We evaluated his contributions rendered to his fellow friends, society and us.

Bala Chaturdasi

Contrary to the Dashain, Bala Chaturdasi is celebrated on the fourteenth day of Kartik/Mangasir (November/December) every year. It is a noted day in the spiritual world. It is an honored day for the departed souls. It is marked in the *Pashupat Kshetra* or Pashupati Regions of Kathmandu, where the God of the gods, Shiva resides there. This festival is celebrated in most of the Shiva Shrines across the country. But Pashupatinath Temple Kailas and Guhyeswori are the core complex. Thousands of devotees throng around the temple. They spend the night illuminating with oil lamps in the memories of their departed loved ones. They recite religious folk songs and spend the night awakening. The concerns of the deceased go around the Shleshmantak jungle sowing *sata beej*. In the ancient times, the sat beej included hundred types of seeds inclusive of seeds of the plants and the trees. Now the sata beej must be a mixture of at least seven seeds such as paddy; rice; wheat; barley; maize; *teel*, sesamum seed; fruit and flowers and seeds of plants etc. Hindus have a belief that if the seeds are sowed at Bala Chaturdasi, they will grow in the heaven. People believe that the departed souls enjoy whatever they sow in this place. "*Damee*" or "*Sat (d) beej*" is known as hitherto ancient *jatra* in Nepal. It is named as

"Kailashkut" or "Dwarodghatan Jatra. In 'Mrigasthali Mahatmya', the sadbeej scattering is described (Regmi, 1974, p.90).

During that, time people used to talk as well. According to a legend, a person called Balananda (kathmandumetro.com, <http://siddhiranjitkar.com>), used to guard the crematory at *Aryaghat*. Once, when he was burning the dead body, the head burst out, a part of the brain bounced and entered into his mouth. He could not remove it quick, and-instead; he experienced the taste of the brain. He, repeatedly, went on tasting the brain secretly. Thereafter, he started eating secretly the remains from the cremation. He became an addict. "Later on; he even assaulted the undertakers, and took the dead body for his meals"(Kathmandumetro online News Paper). His physique transformed into a *lakhe*, a demon. He used to haunt children and sometime adults, too. He was defamed as Balasur in Kantipur, the ancient name of Kathmandu. To get rid of him, people plotted a deception against him to kill, and finally people killed him anyway. After his killing, he created terror all over Kantipur. Public lives came under threat. "People regretted the fact that they deceived him and so began to practice Bala Chaturdasi for seeking forgiveness from Bala" (www.explorehimalaya.com).

The *tantriks*, the magicians, performed special pooja and started providing him sata beej, one hundred types of raw seeds, in a huge quantity. Coincidentally, the very day was Chaturdasi; a sacred day in the Hindu calendar. The giant was satisfied with the varieties of seeds. Balasur's soul rested in peace. Thereafter, he stopped hurting people and snatching dead bodies. Because of his improved character, he got salvation. In memory of Balasur, from the very day, people initiated to sow sata beej every year on Chaturdasi. Since then, the event was known or

popularized as Bala Chaturdasi. People started sowing seeds to satisfy Balasur as well as for the *pitri mukti*, the salvation of their own departed souls. In the end, it became an event and a tradition.

I followed the tradition. I came from a religious and traditional family. My parents and grandparents grew up in the Kathmandu valley. And they had Hindu upbringing. I did not want to leave any items that used to displease my family members. Family for me is the most important thing in an individual's world.

I had a shower early in the morning. I set out for the noble deed. I purchased a kilo of sadbeej. I entered into the crowd. I sowed the seeds in the neat and clean places. I was not certain that they would grow. On the way, I found quintals and quintals of grain seeds were stepped down by the devotees. They were smashed. Thrown over dirty places. Among the bushes. On the rocks. Along the road and on the paths. Over the bridge. Under the bridge. In the river. I needed not to walk. Gravitational force of crowd pushing and pulling me. I met scholars. I saw comrades. I noticed the social workers. There were political champions. People of all lifestyles participated irrespective of their ideologies and status. They were sowing seeds over the heads of the people. But without any row. My heart hurtled. I thought critically. It is the waste of food grains. If we utilized it, it can feed many hungry people. It has now no scientific evidence. It is a customary tradition. People have practised it for ages to keep it alive.

Might it have had a concrete result in the gone times? The satbeej sowing festival then had scientific and environmental values. Fields were spacious and fertile, it rained during the time, the time was suited to sow the wheat, and there was not a crowd of people. Therefore, the

shown seeds grew and yielded. Plants grew. Trees bore fruits. The areas were afforested and conserved. People did not have to face natural calamities like floods and landslides. They were friendly and had harmony with the nature. I think nowadays neither the seeds grow nor they reach to our loved ones. What is tragedy on the name of the festivals!

I imitated or copied the tradition because all do. Therefore, I accepted it. I realized that "I" am afraid of religion. "I" must continue the tradition because my ancestors had practised it for a long time. A huge crowd practised it every year. So did I. Here I traced myself with Freudian "group psychology", which exercises a decisive influence over the mental life of the individual. I forgot myself. I forgot my ego. In a group, every sentiment and act is contagious, and contagious to such a degree that an individual readily sacrifices his personal interest to the collective interest (Freud, 1965, p.6/ 10). Here again "I" appreciated what the crowd followed. The crowd is considered social strength. "I" was one of the innocent and common humans. "I" was a *dharmabhiru*, god fearing or a coward, afraid of dishonoring the religion. "I" could not neglect the traditional religious practices. My conscious personality disappeared. I was predominated by the unconscious personality. My principal characteristics of individuality altered into a part of a group. I was no longer myself, but have become an automation that has ceased to be guided by my will (Ibid, p.11). According to Freud, the condition of an individual in a group as being actually hypnotic. It (group) has a sense of omnipotence; the notion of impossibility disappears for the individual in a group (Ibid, p.13). I was of no exception. Thus, I had continued this event. May be it is "blind acceptance" or a dogmatism. Here I remembered Pierre Bourdieu's (1930 – 2002) embodiedness. According to him, an individual possesses cultural capital. Cultural capital consists of two categories: acquired and hereditary. Acquired ones can be gained from individual

effort, viz: education and skills where as hereditary is transformed from ancestor, father to son and so on. Cultural and social traits and properties are received from generations to generations. Cultural capital is acquired over time as it impresses itself upon one's *habitus* (character and way of thinking), which in turn becomes more attentive to or primed to receive similar influences. Institutionalized cultural capital consists of institutional recognition (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page). Bourdieu sees human action as being deeply situated in social and cultural contexts. He shows how dominant social structures are constituted through the day-to-day actions and practices of people. Individual action is deeply tied into the reproduction of social structure and the maintenance and reproduction of unequal social relations. Bourdieu embodied culture, as the product of collective human action shapes and constrains social existence (www.aare.edu.au/.../lig01450.htm). Nepali society has embodied the cultural capital. Ethnic to elite groups give top value to this tradition. Moreover, I was one of value-laden individuals; I followed the Bala Chaturdasi celebration without opposing. It was the right way out at least for me.

Therefore, during Bala Chaturdasi, Government and Non-government agencies and institutions engage to ease the devotees. It is recognized as a mass cultural heritage of Nepal. People throng around the Pashupat Region to observe Bala Chaturdasi. This is one of the occasions in the Nepalese Hindu world where no one cares about untouchability and social stigma. When masses of people flow together for spiritual sacred fairs, elite and down trodden class assimilate together.

On the contrary, I noticed that some sweepers were collecting those scattered grains in their baskets.

"Didi, what will you do with this collection?" I asked one of them.

"We cook it and produce liquor," she replied with a smile.

, "Hungers won't be fed, and drunkards will be drunk," I consoled my heart.

I attended the Bala Chaturdasi repeatedly in 2008 and 2009. One should continue it regularly for three years, the culture says that way. In 2009, the crowd was very huge in comparison to the last two-years. It is so because people felt peace and security in the country than the previous years. The quantity of the sad beej naturally exceeded in the same ratio. I saw the same scene of collecting the beej and got the same answers above.

Could "I" improve the irrelevant or impracticable practices of my religion? Definitely, not but I can add and cut something. This process was not stopped in the past time. It is not stopped in the present time. In addition, it will not be stopped in the future. Here I realized that Culture is treasure of the past and the identity of a lived community. Thus, culture lasts longer with unnoticed reforms and amendments. "I" is not a single "me". It is common people of Nepal. Each of us contributes to the culture in one or in other ways but I accepted it unopposed.

I realized that Bala Chaturdasi has been established, as a cultural identity. It has also a key to healing the traumatic wounds for the bereaved family as well as a memory day to the

deceased ones. There I saw the importance of rituals from different angle, the angle to heal the people.

Shraddha Enables the Soul to Find an Unobstructed Way to Travel

It was January 15th, 2007. Rose's departure completed six months. We performed sraddha at home. Purushotam guru accomplished the ritual. On this occasion, I remembered Garuda Puran that reads that the sraddha enables the departed soul to find an unobstructed way to travel to its destination- the heaven. The sraddha can rescue the soul from the sinful acts done during the living period. According to the Puran, *pret ghada*, i.e. ghost pitcher, which is made of silver; and a silver boat are used as the essential objects. The boat helps the soul to cross the Vaitarani River on way to heaven.

दानं प्रेतघटं नाम सर्वाशुभविनाशनम् । दर्लभं सर्वलोकानां दर्गतिक्षयकारकम् ॥ -गरुड पराणम्, २००९, पृ. ८१)

Danam pretaghatam naama sarvashuvavinashanam.

Durlavam sarva lokanam durgatishayakarakam. (Garuda Puran, 2009, p.81)

The Garuda Puran reads,

"The deceased is freed from all the bad omens if the pret ghada is donated. This donation is very rare in this world. Misfortune can be got rid of; and good omens can be achieved as well" (Ibid 7/59, p.81).

In the past, we had celebrated Rose's birthday many times, and now we used the same room for his six-month rituals. We became disappointed. We discharged our parental responsibilities. We prayed the god not to create such a dreadful situation to any parents.



EPISODE 4

Midnight Cry

Losing an offspring causes much more chaotic and grief. It causes in depth pain to a mother. Rose's demise became just a dream to his mother because she was not in front of him at the last stage. Me, too, was absent. She was grief-stricken. "Rose tricked me, I could not listen even a word from him," she always says. She cried at mid night while in sleep. The whole night went on without sleep, recalling his character, his childhood, his performance and his social service. It has been severally prolonging. I accepted it as a routine work. But my wife said that Rose died in the prime time of merriment. Whenever some delicious meals are prepared, my wife used to remember him. She dared not to take the food, and if she did it, she could not swallow it. At this, I read the following stanza of national poet Madhav Ghimire-

लाउं लाउं र खाउं खाउं वयमै आफू कसोरी गयौ

बन्दैमा कति हाइ हाइ सबकी, सारा रुलाई गयौ ।

(गौरी, माधव प्र. घिमिरे ९:२५)

Laun laun ra khaun khaun vayamai aafu kasori gayau

Bandaima kati hai hai sabaki, sara rulai gayau(Ghimire, 2010, 9:23).

The stanza reads-

How you departed, at the age of merrymaking

All loved you; (you) left all crying. (Ghimire, 2001, 9/23)

Even I chanted Ghimire's sad poem, my wife seemed restless every time. She is a community school head teacher. She could hardly attend her duty. She was observed depressed during her duty hours. She did not have a fluent talk with her colleagues. She spoke a little. She did not like to go into a crowd. She went solitude.

She told me, "My mind doesn't concentrate on the day to day affairs of the school. I feel very lonely. I am frustrated."

I sympathetically consoled her by saying:

"Take it easy. You are a mother. You're hurt seriously than me. You gave birth to Rose .You have fed Rose. You are emotionally injured. A mother is hurt every time. Death is not the end of existence; it is only the end of our earthly sojourn. Read some books you prefer. It will cool you. It will divert your attention.

"I want to recite the Shreemad Bhagavat Gita", she proposed.

"Yes, now you've a good idea. But we have Sanskrit-Hindi versions. You'll feel tough reading Sanskrit. Do not read Sanskrit verses, read Hindi translations only. The Geeta will console you. In Geeta, I began to teach her, "Krishna has explained life. He says that physical body dies but soul is immortal. As we change our old clothes and put on new ones, in the same way, the soul changes the new material body. Recite it; you will get the valued messages".

"Let me read Sanskrit, too. Would you guide me if I feel any problems? It will purify my mouth."

"Okay. Recite from Thursday. Read two shloks, i.e. verses, in the morning and two in the evening. You'll complete Geeta in six months."

She heartily recited the Geeta. Days after days, she became cheerful. Smiles appear on her face. She completed reciting the Geeta in two hundred and forty days- eight months. She used to tell me The Geeta gave her mental peace. "Krishna is really "*jagat guru*," teacher of the world, she now says. Here I realized that people in difficulty need counselor, the book, the person, and the place. But, did we teach the people that way? This was the unanswered question to many though this tradition has been handed for generations.

Kamala used to cry at midnight, between midnight to 2 am. She dreamt occasionally. Kamala usually felt anxious, afraid, grieved, angry, depressed, anguished and restlessness. She searched her son during sleep. Her shock lasted for a long time because it was a case of sudden death.

Her psychological needs with Rose enabled to occur dream. There is a common belief that bereaved people dream about the lost person; that their dreams are exceptionally vivid, emotionally packed, and may dramatically alter the life and belief system of the dreamer (Garfield, 1997).

I agree with Garfield that dream world is a medium of communication between the dead and living ones. The dead have some message for living. The living human beings have also some message for the dead. The dream becomes the meeting place for both the parties. They deliver their desired messages to each other. According to Freud (1856 - 1939.), dream is the occurrence of the unconscious mind. He says that every dream represents the fulfillment of a repressed wish (<http://books.google.com.np>, p. 27). Excessive depression in the shape of melancholia and mania, make the most tormenting or disturbing inroads upon the life of the person concerned (Freud, p.81/82).

The rest of the hours, we kept awakening. In the morning, we used to be engaged in our household matters. We attended our profession of teaching in public schools. We forgot our grief during duty hours but night turned furious.

The continued midnight cries deteriorated our health. We, little by little, lost our appetite.

I began tending to her, grooming her, and sleeping nearby. I studied books and did writing, surfing the net beside her so that she could sleep soundly. I kept an apparent vigil. I remained unusually subdued for a long time.

One evening, at breakfast time, Kamala spoke to me.

"Let us sell this house, purchase a new plot of land or a house. This house has something to irritate me. It is not favorable to us. It is an ill-fated house. I lost my son of no reason. I don't want to stay in this house."

"It is not a good alternative. It'll cost a lot to us, if we sell this house. We should not blame and see, time will heal everything. Rose will not come back even we move anywhere else. Everybody must leave the world, which has taken birth. Rose will be in our memory if we stay in this house. We all have attachments with this house."

"We should move to a new location."

"Let's think over this matter patiently."

"We must move from here. Then I might get peace and tranquility."

Next day, she invited a bidder. They photographed our house, measured its length and the breadth and demanded the necessary documents. I handed over those Xerox papers. From next day, they started to bring their clients to show the location and the house. In the morning, they came, in the evening they came and weekends they came to investigate. It happened so rapidly that I could hardly spare the time. It was with Kamala, too. Groups of people kept on visiting. We felt tortured. I was irritated. Kamala felt tedious with this deal. One day I told the broker to settle the deal. A client gave us half a million rupees in advance. He deposited the sum in Kamala's account. Within a couple of days, the client started visiting our house. We had fixed the visiting hours- after the office time, from 5 pm to 7 p.m. But nobody cared. The client came in the morning without prior information. In the evening, his spouse and children came. A couple of

days later, his relatives came to examine the house. We had to open all the rooms and let them look into. In the beginning, we served the proposed buyer. However, this continued repeatedly. Often we were late for our office. We had to go for leaves. We were very much disturbed. Nothing remained secret. One weekend, he came early in the morning. Again without notice. We were just to finish our morning exercise. We invited him in our sitting room. He had brought some bank documents. He asked Kamala (the owner) to put her sign in the designated space. When I inquired of the reason, he told us that he was applying for bank loan to buy our house. Within two months, he would pay us all the deal money. Unless Kamala signed the documents, he would not receive the bank loan. I was in dilemma. How to allow Kamala sign the bank papers without receiving the total deal money. It was not legitimate affairs. It was not fair, even though I proceeded. I went to Kathmandu Metropolis Office to pay the house and land revenue. I applied for a copy of recognition letter. The ownership certificate and the building site map were xeroxed. I collected all the necessary documents needed for the purposed buyer. I spent two continuous days for the processing. I went on leave. I accumulated the papers in a file to hand over the client. I went bed after midnight.

Rose saved us from Ruining

"You seemed very tired. You need enough rest. Lie down on the bed."

"I am easy here with this."

"Lie down on the bed comfortably until you feel better"

"Land is essential. I lie down on the floor cushion. It is comfortable for me."

I woke up. It was 4:30 am. I dreamt Rose after a year from his passing away. I narrated this to Kamala. She became upset. She cried. We were perplexed. We analyzed the dream. A dream is a (disguised) fulfillment of a (suppressed or repressed) wish (Freud, 1965). I dreamt in the *Brahma muhurta*, divine time in the Hindus' belief system. Why Rose prefer to lie down on the yellow cushion instead of the bed? Why did he refuse my words? He was always been obedient in his real life. Kamala remarked, "He preferred the yellow cushion instead of the bed. Yellow color is a sign of a good omen."

The dead lived on in our dreams long after they die. We saw them, yearned for them, talked with them, loved them, feared them, hated them, or hold them. Sooner or later, we have some of these dreams. Perhaps you have already.

"You're absolutely right. Rose's soul knew that we are going to sell the house. The agreement deal was signed. We are in trouble regarding the deal. I guess Rose wants us not to sell the house. He preferred the floor cushion to rest. The departed soul gave us a signal not to sign the final deal. We must consider and accept Rose's 'semiotics' (Alasuutari, Seale and others, 2004, p.605; Golden, 1997). The deal is in the preliminary stage. We can cancel the deal. We can refund the advance money. My heart said that we must obey the signal otherwise we would be ruined and be of nowhere in our future. What do you think?

"Yes, I agree."

We also thought that we would be unable to purchase the equal quantity of land that we possessed now with the total money. We had either to shift to the remote area of the city or buy a congested tiny house in the concrete jungle. We would miss our spacious residence. This means we would fall in debt unwillingly. We realized that the house sale deal would be a double blow as we already had lost Rose. Let us convey this message to Sarose in Hyderabad this evening. We should share his ideas.

"Okay. If we cancel the sale contract, let us repair the second floor," Kamala proposed.

"Let's wait until the evening."

I wrote e-mail to Sarose-

Sep24, 2008

Sarose,

Now wandering / roaming here and there, we came to realize that our house is in prime and center spot. It costs much more. The buyer will pay us from bank loan. He is demanding more documents. He is ready to buy this house because bank evaluates ring road houses on high price. I dreamt Rose. His soul does not want us to sell the house.

May we refund the advance? Send your solid suggestions. We can plan for future. We take decision after your reply.

-Daddy

Sarose replied-

*Daddy,
I agree with you. We cannot buy decent house. I knew that it is a loss deal. We can do one thing. If you think, there are chances of revoking this deal we can talk. I know getting loan from bank is not easy in Nepal. It will take more than 2 months or more.*

*If mummy also thinking the same then we can revoke this deal.
-Sarose*

Sarose replied-

Sep 30. 2008 at 4:41 PM

*Daddy,
It is good to know that we got rid of the possible chaos. We should do proper homework before we take any major decision like this.*

-Sarose

I said, "We do not want to sell our parents. We rescued our house from group rapping." We came to know that the buyer was going to sell this house on double profit, if we have provided necessary documents prior to full payment. We now realized the value of our land and house. Let's repair it and make more comfortable.

I bowed at the front door when we return from the deal.

- Daddy

We reached at a unanimous decision-we do not sell our home, our sweet home. We refunded and rejected the advances. I called the buyer on his cell phone and humbly informed him that we would not sell the house. I requested him to come to the Bidding House Office at 4 pm and collect his advances.

The drama of selling house ended. I got relief. We had a sound sleep since Rose parted from us. I realized that people of every lifestyles are engaged in real estate business. One can meet *dalals*, i.e. brokers, everywhere; they could be our own relatives. At that time, they would not consider us a relative or a kin but treat us as a buyer or a seller who possesses quite a lot of money. They also tried to flutter us. Here my learning is that let us not be a prey of such an ambiguous individual. This means I realized that people have both the sociological and the anthropological backups. The former value kinship and the latter value the self. However, the dream that I had was Lucid. With this lucidity, Rose saved us from ruining. Going through the literatures on dream (Garfield, 1997, Freud, 1856 – 1939), I found that Ancient Egyptians originally thought it as a part of the supernatural world. Dreams were messages from the gods sent to the villagers during the night perhaps as an early warning device for disaster or good fortune. Greeks also believed that dreams carried divine messages, According to Roman; thought dreams are unique to the dreamer. Even the Christians regarded dreams were of the supernatural element. Europeans on the other hand were very curious about dreaming. In ancient societies, dreams were viewed as prophetic messages from the heaven.

Like the literatures above ancient and the medieval Nepali also believed in medieval dreams. Dreams for them were messages from gods or goddesses to the Kings. Pratap Mall received message not to visit the Budhanilkantha Temple (Sharma, 1955, p.168). Since that time, Kings and their family did not attempt to visit the temple.

Freud's dream theories of the unconscious were revolutionary for his day and were accepted with much skepticism. He believed in the unconscious nature of dreams, that they were

repressed desires and wishes and by discussing these with his patients, he thought he could help cure mental disorders (<http://www.realmeaningofdreams.com>).

One of the modern philosophies and Freud's student Carl Jung believed that dreams reminded us of our wishes, which enables us to realize the things we unconsciously yearn for, and helps us to fulfill our own wishes (<http://thinkquest.org/library/>).

Freud further wrote, "All dreams are in a sense dream of convenience, they help to prolong sleep instead of waking up. Dreams are the guardians of sleep and not its disturbers."
(<http://www.experiencefestival.com/>)

My dream was not an exception, which was mentioned above . I that dream make a meaning. It depends upon our correct calculation. In communicating with a dead man, s/he is in us and us in him/her. We are not accustomed and therefore do not understand such a (sign) language or gesture as when the dead speak in us and we from the dead. In the supersensible world, time becomes space. (<http://www.rsarchive.org/index.php>). The souls of those dying young remain with us the souls, at least for me of that dying old take part of our souls with them. On falling asleep we may address the old, on awaking we hear the messages of the young. The dead children bring religious feeling into our life, and their answers to us are universal and less individual than those of older people. We become burdensome to those who died old if we have thoughts they cannot entertain (Ibid).

Ghar Bhaneko Budheskalko Lauro Ho, Home is the stick of the old age

I realized that Rose not only protected our house from selling, but he saved us from the possible chaos, too. He also gave us a message to renovate the house. In the monsoon, we used to

face water leakage problem from the tin roof and jam problem on the floor. It had been taking place for seven years. We had to work hard to remove the jammed water. As a result, Kamala suffered from knee pain. Renovation and repair works became necessary. On the contrary, I was not in favor to indulge in repairing works, as I had to work with my thesis. Kamala every time insisted me to launch the renovation process. I was reluctant.

One morning Kamala became irritated with leakage problem. She convinced, me that the price rocketing of building materials would be severe in the coming days. I agreed to it. But my M.Phil. Thesis was the prime concern of these days. I was dragging my thesis. By the time Kamala uttered,

"What will your M.Phil. Yield? Neither it'll promote your post nor it'll make money. It's enough, whatever you have studied and acquired knowledge. Marxism considers that education is part and parcel superstructure (<http://books.google.com.np>). We are persons of limited means. Don't you want to furnish our house?"

She further said,

"The house is one's life partner, parents, relatives, friends, and fast friends. Home, sweet home is our comfort, happiness, sadness, grief and festival. Home is our shelter. Therefore one should have own home. Life grows progresses and leads under the safe roof of sweet home. Rose parted from us. We need ensured future. We can struggle consuming rough or delicious. There is a folk saying, '*Ghar bhaneko budheskal ko lauro ho*', home is the stick of the old age.

Kamala's saying implied the meaning that 'home is a walking stick of old age'. Therefore, adults suggest the youngsters to build and add comforts in the house while they are physically capable and economically efficient. Otherwise, they have to repent in life, later.

Here Kamala is very critical with my M.Phil. Study. She wished me to complete the house repair works on time in case the price hike would affect our estimated costs. Human is an economic creature and always acts "economically"(Sorokin, 1978, p.530), she persuaded me to bring out the functional part of education. For her an-educated person like me should move with the pace of time. Her words convinced me and I gave priority to her saying.

I had joined the course before Rose's demise. The purpose of joining is to-

- (i) Empower, broaden mind and expand horizon;
- (ii) Keep the mind and the body alert;
- (iii) Equip with research know how, and teaching technique; and
- (iv) Pave way for PhD.

I continued the study though I:

- (i) boycotted all the relational ceremonies;
- (ii) ignored most of the family matters and business;
- (iii) missed many social programs; and
- (iv) Postponed travel and tours.

I accomplished all the requirements: assignments, presentations, mini research and two Semesters of Examinations successfully. But Rose's demise shattered all my schedules. We came

under the grief. It shocked Kamala. I spared no stones to bring her in normality. I valued her feelings. Later, on completing India Pilgrimage, she unexpectedly inspired me to resume the pending thesis that I had almost dropped out. My quest for M.Phil. Degree now seems getting way out. Most of our educational degrees, especially of my time, 1980's, were not considered of functional value. However, I do not complain on this ground. My educational degrees helped me to stand on my feet. I regard M.Phil. as advanced refreshment or supplement Course at least for me.

I listened to Kamala. She is right. She is in grief .I did not want to disappoint her further. I always wanted to see little smile on her lips. "Successful of life depends on the happiness of others, not own self"(Ghimire, 2008, p.235).

We engaged ourselves with full enthusiasm. We repaired our incomplete house. It took more than six months. We mobilized our following resources-

(a) Provident Fund;

(b) Bank loan against gold;

© Loan from Teacher Welfare Fund;

(d) Our monthly salaries;

(e) House rent;

(f) Fund from ornament selling;

(g) The fund Sarose sent us from Hyderabad; and

(h) Loan against as a house guarantee from Karmachari Sanchaya Kosh.

We could able to build a simple house. It took us more than twenty years to complete our shelter, our sweet home because we fall in the category of '*gari khane manche*', i.e. people survive by working. We worked for *noonbhutan*, (Ghimire, 2008, p.144). The two folk words imply for the salt and oil, the basic stuffs to prepare meals in our society. Literally, it means 'bread earning'. We gave birth two babies in a planned way. We spent money in a planned way. Besides earning bread, we saved little, little money. In different stages of life, we killed our desires and interests. Even we cut down the necessary needs, too. Instead, we constructed our house in part and part. We invested our all resources-cash and kind. Thus, we have now our own shelter in the capital city. Our noble profession bestowed us with a normal shelter before our retirement.

As a school teachers of Nepal both of us realized that we did a lot of progress. In order to elaborate, it further let me discuss here in brief on social, political and economic issues or status of Nepali schoolteachers in the contemporary context.

Social Issues Associated with our Profession

Both Kamala and myself are teachers for long. But our life in the 80s were different from today. My experience says that the teachers were more responsible, dutiful, disciplined, committed, strict, high morale, nationalistic and patriotic. They did not give priority to money. They were social reformers. They were role models in the community and could change the total

psychological perspective of young learners. For instance, I was highly influenced by my English teacher late Chandra Dhoj Joshi. So I used to imitate almost every characteristics of my English teacher. This is one of the reasons for me to be an English teacher. I am performing my role until date.

The then teachers were the sole source of every political, economic, cultural and educational information in the society, mostly in the places where there is no access to the internet, print and electronic Media. The villagers used to consider them as wise persons. They call them as "master", i.e. expert in all fields. Sometimes they needed to fix the defunct radios and watches, too from the teachers. They used to receive respect and honor in village whereas in the urban sectors, they are taken as professionals. The decade prolonged insurgence period in the country (1995 –2005) made teachers instable in the villages and they shifted to the capital city and major towns. And yet they are regarded as "generator of knowledge"," distributor of

My Motto

*My aim is to give-
'Light to life'*

*For me-
My profession is,
My worship.*

*Duty is my God.
I strive to give every
child-
A smile,*

*I teach to enhance -
Every pupil's life.*

*In my career,
I do pledge,
I'll give teaching-
The winning edge.*

knowledge" and "controller of knowledge." But the teachers like us are confused in these three roles (Koirala, 2007, p.321). M.Phil. made me realized that teachers are the sharer of knowledge'. However, to me teachers are continuous learners as well. I believe in hard work, honesty, truth, commitment, accountability and responsibility.

Teachers like us are not free from the party politics. In principle, the political leaders and the ministers

admit publicly that teachers should not participate in the active politics, on the contrary; they give shelter and blessings to their followers as well.

Even the teachers' professional organizations are affiliated with their maternal political parties. Teachers' Unions whether they are democratic, leftist or revolutionary, they are directly associated with political parties. In other words, teachers' organizations have been the Trade Unions in Nepal and they are generally quite strong in South Asia including Nepal. Many teacher trade unions are common in low-income developing countries –LICs (Bennell, 2004).

Nepal is not an exception to it. After the People Movement I (1990), many teachers were elected as the lawmakers. The politically allied teachers were found as the spokespersons of their parties. We are aside from political party but cast our vote evaluating particular party's policy and programmes.

Economically speaking, teaching job is treated as "employment of the last resort" in Nepal. This is so with the low-income developing countries -LICs). So they often lack a strong, long-term commitment to teaching as a vocation (Ibid).

In our case, both Kamala and I did not entertain the same work environment as other professionals. The teachers and the government employees get equal salary scheme. However, the former are deprived of other benefits. Often they have to go under serious strikes and sit ins to meet their demands as of provident fund. Ironically, the first class rank Secondary teachers do not get opportunity to be a special class teacher as government employees exercise. I consider it

is the hegemony tendency of the bureaucrats. Teachers are nation builders; therefore, the government should provide them lucrative facilities in future.

Because of the previously mentioned economic situation, the teachers like us felt that their regular remuneration is insufficient to meet minimum household subsistence. Therefore, secondary income source is inevitable for them. Private tutoring was their secondary source. We are the fortunate teachers of the country. I performed my duty as a head teacher in a village in Rupandehi district. I served the Dingarnagar village community. The kids of Jana Jyoti School inspired me otherwise; I could have chosen any other lucrative job. The curious face of the kids and the parents pushed me in the education service. I accepted it as my profession. Teaching field became my ultimate destination. I did my best to make the villagers dream come true by upgrading the Primary School into Secondary School. The village came under the light of education. I spent my twelve years (1975- 1987) of golden time there.

I got an opportunity to work to create educational environment for Adults in the evening time in Butwal, the business, industrial and transportation center of Western Nepal. My role model guru Chandra Dhoj Shrestha recommended me to be appointed as the head teacher of Gyanodaya Ratri Madyamik Vidyalaya, Night Secondary School, and Butwal. I taught factory workers, rickshaw-pullers, school left outs / dropouts and trainees of Butwal Technical Institute. I worked in this school by heart, by words, by actions and with full devotion. I used to return home by 11 pm. Due to cooperative efforts of the managing committees and the colleagues, the school was "a talk of town" for educational, sports and extra curricular activities. As a result, the night school, the only school in the Western Development Region, got government reorganization. At this, I realized that I had paid the debt of my guru Chandra Dhoj because I had

passed the SLC from this very school in 1970 under his headmastership. However, when New Education System Plan, 1972 (NESP) was implemented in Rupandehi in 1971, the then government ordered to shut down the school showing the reason that the plan had no policy for night school. Therefore, the learners were deprived from education for ten years. It had disappointed my guru the most. I had worked with the social workers of Butwal from 1981 to 1992. Butwal is my playground. I was nurtured in Butwal. Butwal is *karma bhumi*, the field of work. Whatever I could, I did to the earth of Butwal. My work and teaching in Gyanodaya Night School was my volunteer career rather than profession. It was dedicated for those who were deprived from education. "This is the meaningful product of my life. The service to all the human beings is the best. This is the *niskam karma*, work without result, so far I have understood"(Ghimire, 2008, p.115). Moreover, I got an opportunity to promote Gyanodaya Lower Secondary School into full phase recognized Secondary School. I worked as a head teacher for four years (1987-1991). Afterwards, I sought my transfer to capital city to continue my PhD. at TU.

Since 1991, I have been teaching in Kathmandu, sometime as the head teacher; and presently as an English teacher. I have been teaching English for thirty-nine years though I do not practise private tutoring culture. Kamala has been a teacher since 1971. She teaches Social Studies .She has been working as a head teacher since 1988.In spite of my major subject; I have not practiced private tutoring culture.

Some of our friends used to take tuition in the morning, in the evening and weekends like Saturdays and winter and summer vacations. Attending more than one institution is becoming alternative source of employment. For instance, a permanent teacher of the public school

becomes a part-time teacher in other schools in the morning, in the evening, or goes to teach in the leisurely time-on holidays. This practice is common in the capital and big cities. I would like to name them, two-tier (involving in two schools/colleges) or three-tier (involving in three schools/colleges) teachers. Because of their hard working or professing, they use to make public school as "rest place." The research report in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia also points out the same case. It says, "A secondary employment activity encourages opportunistic behavior among teachers, which can undermine service delivery in government-funded schools"(Bennell, 2004).

Apart from tuition some teachers used to sell hand outs, guess papers and guide books. Seasonal answer books examining was also an extra income. Teachers also sell food and drinks to pupils at their schools during break times. Common non-education activities include farming in rural areas and trading in urban areas (Bennel, 2004). But in the case of Kamala and me, we are satisfied with what we are earning. We were always so proud of what we did. We consider teaching profession is our luck and fortune.

We have been dedicated to this occupation since we joined it. Our hard work and determination have been materialized.

We have not joined any other jobs. We do not practice "private tuition culture", even though I have long been a teacher of English (39 years). We earn some money from house rent. My son Sarose is an IT professional. At present, he is learning and earning in Hyderabad in India. Recently he even got an opportunity to visit Atlanta, USA in relation to his official responsibility. We have been maintaining our normal expenses as low-middle class Nepalese do.

Amidst this earning hardship, we missed Rose very much. His was not present physically. We felt Rose is doing a minute inspection of the house.

Rose always preferred to give out. He never expected from others .He always said," I take pride to giving. I never calculate to taking. It is one of the symbols how he lived his life. He was always thinking of taking care of his fellow friends .He valued all those who loved him. He was also an instant critic to the situation that exaggerates the reality.

His fans and sympathizers came to mourn at the DDRZ. They expressed their gratitude for his helping attitudes. They told a story. Once Rose was on route to abroad, he halted in Bangkok. He went to visit a friend. He was in jail for visa issues. He inquired of his health and packed his pocket with enough money to return in two months. It was his identity how he lived his life. The story of Rose's friend reminded me Lord, (2000), who studied sudden and traumatic bereavement and pointed out that the main crux /root/bottom line of a sudden loss may take three or four years to normalize(Wells,2005). To us there is no time limit. We would keep mourning Rose forever until we exist in this world.

"Human beings born to die". Rose's mother repeatedly utters the theoretical sentence. But she regrets that it all happened all of a sudden. Death does not come beating drums. Relatives came and consoled us time and again, even at the leisurely periods. They said that nobody knows the departure time of human beings. There is no limitation of age. Everyone is a character of the drama. One must quit when ones role is ended.

Kamala's words were equally powerful to the words of Stroebe and Stroebe (1987) who outlined three areas that support individuals provide the bereaved. These are: (1) Instrumental support, in which individuals help with funeral arrangements, food, and other physical needs; (2) Emotional support, in which empathetic /sympathetic listening and other emotional maintenance; and (3) Validation support, in which individuals normalize grief behavior for the bereaved. (Wells, 2005). I also agree with Wells and I believe that counseling plays a vital role in grieving process and I believe that writing, my colleagues' messages auto ethnographically is the next step necessary to get me through my underpinnings...

For most bereaved individuals, friends and family are most comforting when they are honest in their inability to understand, and their wiliness to listen (Lord, 2000; Hansen, 1990; Sanders, 1992, 1999, quoted by Wells, 2005). They would try to console me thinking they understood and could help me. They could not really understand that with the loss of this man, the loss of the love of my life, that everything was gone for me. Every dream I had was wrapped up with him.

Each time, I thought to work on my thesis, I could not resume myself. I could not manage time. I could not sit fixed at a place I could not control myself. I could not make my mind up. After six months of his demise, I thought the best tribute to Rose is to write a narrative chapter along my auto ethnography in the M.Phil. Dissertation. I agree when Richardson (1990) stated that, "narrative is the best way to understand the human experience, because it is the way humans understand their own lives" (Quoted in Wells, 2005). The traumatic condition with Wells

completely matched with my personnel setting. What the writer experienced is unique coincidence with me. She has stated-

This has been a journey I know I will never forget constructing this auto ethnography has been the most challenging, academic undertaking I have ever experienced. Through this process, I was able to learn a great deal about myself and how the loss of Chad has affected me, still affects me, and will continue to affect me for the rest of my life. Every day of this project has been a struggle, mentally, physically and especially emotionally. I have experienced exhaustion the likes of which I have not known since the time immediately after Chad died. As exhausting and painful as this experience has been for me I have learned more than I could have dreamed throughout the process (Wells, 2005, p.116/117).

Wells' writing encouraged me to write my personal narratives around the death of Rose. At this point, I realized what Denzin said. His words were “Any theory of Society must ultimately answer the question, ‘How do selves develop out of the interaction process?’” (Denzin, 1977, p.114). Auto ethnography it was both a method and a theory for how humans development a sense of self and create and recreate society. This is what I chose as my dissertation.

Annual Ritual

It was July 9th, 2008 that we performed Rose's annual sraddha at Banakali, Pashupati area, in the scriptural method. *Ekaha*, reciting of the Bhagawat by a group of pundits in a day, was one of the core items of the pooja. In Nepali society, Ekaha reciting is an auspicious process

to illuminate the departed souls. The family-tree kins, relatives, our colleagues and friends; all were invited to grace the occasion. All most all the invitees attended the pooja. All the pundits received the remuneration as the head pundit directed. We haven't been rescued from the esteem grief, a year passed promptly. But we realized that time is powerful. No one can detain the time. I am convinced with Ghimire (2008). He wrote, Time gives birth. That time is auspicious moment. Time makes alive. That time becomes life. Time kills. That time becomes death. Birth, childhood, youth, adulthood, death-all are the separate names and synonyms of the same time. All the same, only one.



EPISODE 5

Gloomy Festivals: The Cultural Identity

We filled with melancholy and despondency when the festivals knocked our door. Kamala seemed downcast, disheartened, and hopeless. She did not possess energy, spirit and cheerfulness in her physique.

Dashain is regarded as autumnal festival. During this time, the sunlight brings the sense of autumn season. Autumn is the best season in Nepal (Ghimire, 2008, P.180) because the weather becomes mild. It informs people that Dashain, the great festival of the Hindus is approaching at their doorsteps.

However, we celebrated Dashain in a simple manner. We neither practised animal sacrifices nor entertained liquors. We gave top priority to meditation, prayer, pooja of Durga Bhawani, the goddess of power, and temple visiting. On *Vijaya Dashami*, the victorious tenth day, the red *teeka*, a paste, mixture of rice, red vermilion and curd, is delivered on the foreheads of the family members and relatives as the holy prasad by the elderly personality of the family or the clan. The *jamara*, the ninth day yellow barley plant is offered as the main prasad of the goddess. The head of the family extends blessings of best wishes and every success to the teeka receivers in their life.

We celebrated Tihar, another festival as well. It went for five days. We worshipped crow, as a messenger bird, dog, as the closest pet of human, the cow, as mother among domesticated animals, Laxmi, as the goddess of wealth, Gobardhan pooja, worshipped of bullock and hill. Mnha pooja, worship of ones own body or soul and finally Bhai pooja, worshiping brothers.

Mnha pooja is a major part of Tihar for the Newar Community in Nepal. From this very day new year-Nepal Era 1130 begins, which occurred on 18 October 2009 in Gregorian calendar. In this ritual, the female head of my family conducted worshipping of every member of the family. All the family members sat in a row according to seniority in age. The special invitees- relatives, neighbors, and guests were also heartily included in this pooja. She prayed the god for their personal good health, long life and happiness. She marks their foreheads with red teeka. She showered three times on their heads with a mixture of flowers; vermilion powder, rice; lava, fried paddy flower; *okhar*, walnut; badam, ground nut; *amala*, the hug-plum and a bunch of household keys. She touched their knees and shoulders to indicate that she is offering prayer to the god for their good future. She offered *jajanka*, a sacred round thread and garland of marigold. She did her own pooja as well on a *mandap*, a circle, along with the members.

She handed over the lighted-thread and fruit to all the candidates. Thereafter, she presented the saguna- fried eggs, *bara*, a kind of soft bread, meat, fish, ginger, garlic and *aila*, the homemade liquor. These are presented to them who are non-vegetarians. The vegetarians are presented with *laddus*, a kind of round yellow sweet, *marpa*, a kind of sweet bread and curd. Before the long- lighted threads put off, the delicious meal is served on the banana leaves.

Sarose persuaded us to invite his aunt's family members to add life in *Mnha pooja*. Kamala became our head of female members. She accomplished all the worshipping process. Rose was physically missing. He was in our memory, in our mind, in our heart and in our sentiment. We placed his photograph, offered red teeka and wished him a peaceful and prosperous heavenly place. Moreover, we offered him whatever we had prepared for the dinner.

Tears arose in our eyes. Nobody could speak for minutes. We mourned the moment. We realized that the emotional attachment with Rose would never fade out until we live in this world. Therefore, we found no bright light at home, and inspirations in our hearts and minds as before.

Sarose said, "It's the natural law. All must precede the same path, sooner or later."

We could not do more, except wishing-"RIP (Rest in Peace), dear Rose!"

Sarose was at home for one month's leave to attend the festivals. He made home joyous. He cracked firecrackers with Marline. I played kites with her.

On *Bhai Teeka*, none of us participated elsewhere. I did not have my own sister. So I had an adopted sister in Butwal but I had not visited with her for 17 years. Kamala had not visited her brother for four years. She wished and greeted her brother on phone. She apologized for being absent at the very day. Sarose had not his own sister, too. Thus, we did not have Bhai teeka celebration.

Immediately after Tihar, we observed Sarose's birthday. Three Brahmins performed pooja in the Vedic tradition. It took three hours of time. Hindu tradition of birthday celebration is a unique way in a sense that we follow a ritual with Vedic Mantra. Such celebration keeps traditional customs alive. Sarose, for the first time in his life, participated with full enthusiasm. He was very much satisfied. But the day was sad to us because physical Rose was not with us.

Afterlife and Dream: Dreams Make Meaning

Human beings exist in the spider-web like relationships that exercise since the birth of the offspring. Parental- children ties are attached with emotional as well as psychological instincts. If a child gets hurt, mother's heartaches. Whenever the child is going to fall sick, the mother feels pain in her breast. It is a signal to her that something is going to happen upon her piece of heart. "A relationship does not end simply because one of the individuals dies. It continues in an altered form in the memories and experiences of the individual still living"(Wells, 2005).

All of our family members saw Rose in the dream. I, too, had seen him with me. He was seen at our old house in Butwal. Sometimes he was playing football in the field and I would be backing him. At different times, I used to see him in a childhood manner. He was seen most passive in the all dreams. His brother has dreamt him warring about his NGO's progress. When the Project deadline was about to exceed Rose comes to, his dream and warned him to meet all the requirements on time. His brother, though in Hyderabad, conveyed me the dream. I met the target and the result was positive because he used to do hard labor to be recognized the project. His sole soul was with the project.

Our dreams reminded us Garfield (1997) who said that the dead live on in our dreams long after they die. We see them, yearn for them, talk with them, love them, fear them, hate them, or hold them. Eventually, you will have some of these dreams. Perhaps you have already.

On February23, 2008, at about 4am, I dreamt that Rose was maintaining his NGO office. He was seen reopening the office with new set up. He made the office boy decorate the office. He also ordered him to offer *pooja* to the god. I interrupted and asked him that we should perform the pooja. He just listened and did not speak to me. I told the dream to my

family and hoped the partner would transfer the budget outright. On 24 February, the bank responded affirmatively. There I realized that dreams make meaning.

In ancient times, Egyptians were the first persons to predict the dreams. The-troubled persons would sleep in a temple, if they had dream, they consulted a priest for the interpretations of that night's dreams. In fact, "dream incubation" took place in Egypt ((<http://thinkquest.org/library/>)).

Socrates was one of the believers of the dreaming. He learnt music and arts because of the dream instructions (Ibid). Middle Eastern Dreamers like Gabdorrhachamn predicted his dreams by a person with "a clean spirit, chaste morals the World of Truth (Ibid).

Tibetans also believe that dreams are extremely personal - and transpersonal, too. Tibetan dream is categorized into ordinary, karmic and from previous life activities, thoughts, experiences, and contacts. They predict clear light dreams as spiritual visions, blessings, and energy openings. Lucid dreams, which are characterized by awareness that one is dreaming (http://www.plotinus.com/zhine_tibetan_dream_yoga.htm).

Dream prediction in Christianity depends on the Old and New Testament:

- (i) God declared that he would speak through dreams.
- (ii) God declares that he will communicate through dreams and vision.
- (iii) He will counsel people at night through their dreams.
- (iv) Rather than dreams being fatalistic, dreams are calling people to change so they will not perish.

(v) God does very significant things within dreams.

(vi) God grants supernatural gifts through dreams.

(<http://www.cwgministries.org/index.htm>)

Freud's idea was that our dreams were reflection of our deepest desires going back to our childhood. To Freud, no dream was of entertainment value, they all held important meanings. Dreams were messages, Jung believed, from ourselves to ourselves and that we should pay attention to them for our own benefit (<http://thinkquest.org/library/>).

The Hindus predict dream as symbolic representation. For instance, dreaming of an elephant is always a harbinger of great good fortune (<http://www.experiencefestival.com/>). If someone sees rosary beads in their dream, it suggests that prayer and meditation is needed in their daily life (Ibid).

Dreaming a snake at night is good. However, Day dreaming is mere play of mind, seeing snake in dream is to be ignored (<http://www.hindu-blog.com>).

Accidents involving with vehicles represent insecurities about ones motivation and ambition (<http://www.way-of-tao.com/>).

In the case of my dream, I had a similar experience as Wells had experienced. She commented- "I can talk to him. I can see him smile at me. I can feel him close to me again and I cannot bear losing that on top of losing him" (Ibid). Here Wells cited another example of dream by watching a movie, *Sleepless in Seattle*, 1993. There she said, "Hanks admits that he never believed in an afterlife before his wife died, but since her death he saw her continuously in dreams. For Sam (Hanks) his wife appearing in his dreams is evidence that there is a form of afterlife." This concept was further evidenced by Alice Sebold's novel, *The Lovely Bones*

(2001), in which it is said that after a young girl was murdered her family and friends still felt that they saw her in various places and that she made an appearance in their dreams (Ibid). But my experience told that in most cases, dreams of deceased loved ones have a peaceful effect.

Madhav Ghimire, the National Poet of Nepal has also mentioned about the deceased person to be seen in the dream in his book Gauri, the grief epic. His wife demised at the burning age .The author dreamt her and asked -

स्वपनमा जुन आउंछ्यौ ,भन त्यही सम्झूं कि भिन्नै भयौ !

(घिमिरे, २०५७ ,६।१७)

Swapnama jun aaunchau, bhana tehi samjhun ki bhinnai bhayau! (Ghimire,

2057/2001, 6/17)

The verse reads-

Whatever I dream,

Are you the same?

Alternatively, you have been changed!

The verses and my personal experience led me to believe that humans are symbol-using beings. I have been able to explore the symbols I have used and that have been used in response to my grieving process. These symbols have helped define my world and construct my reality.

Here I remembered Blumer (1969) who pointed out that meaning is created through symbolic interaction between individuals. I constructed my world after Chad based upon what I was thinking and feeling about his death. Those around me influenced me in my thinking and feeling. I constructed meaning from the ways in which others acted towards me with regard to Rose's death. Furthermore, after writing and exploring my narratives I was able to see what Richardson (1997) was speaking of when she described writing as not only a mode of representation, but also a method of knowing the self. I had been able to explore and communicate my feelings with not only the outside world of other bereaved individuals and scholars, but with myself. By using auto ethnography, I had also been able to gaze inward and examine my self, and I had been able to stand outside of myself and explore what I had found.

Mine is just one of many examples of how individuals experience grief, but it is a perspective unique to itself, just as each person's experience is unique and can aid in the process. For those in the counseling community, auto ethnographies of grief could be useful to provide an insight to grieving clients to read and to write their own narratives about their own experience. This was similar to what Carolyn Ellis (2004) stated as , "those who practice symbolic interaction are interested in people communicating in social relationships, people who act back on culture at the same time they're influenced, constrained and liberated by it" (p. 14 ,quoted in Wells,2005).

I realized that individuals acting upon society and society acting back upon individuals create and recreate reality. The grief writing is the most painful and yet rewarding experiences of my life. Rewarding because it gave me insight on life. I had been able to look deep into myself

and it has been an enlightening experience that time could have kept me writing on this project for years. I had left out more than I even realized, but what I thought, I have here is a core of writings that give a unique insight into my experiences. The writing was not comprehensive, but they were indicative of my experiences. There have been some narratives that I did not write because they were not relevant or did not fit into the overall pattern I was creating. Some did not fit into flow and some I just was not ready to tell. After our son died, I was devastated. Rose was also my best friend. I did not accept that, my relationship with Rose will ever end, and while I realized that my grief will be never-ending, "I not only lived each endless day in grief, but lived each day thinking about living each day in grief"(Lewis, (<http://www.about.com/>)). I did realize that this specific auto ethnography needs closure. I did not think I could ever be prepared for the loss of a loved one. Each loss was unique in the emotions that it brings forth because of the unique relationship I have had with each of my loved ones. While I knew that, I could not prepare for future crises I could say that I have been able, through this process, to develop skills and pieces of knowledge about myself, which will allow me to feel better prepared for whatever the future may hold. I was not prepared to lose another loved one, but I was prepared and more confident in my abilities to survive and continue moving forward down the road of life.

My experience says that it is difficult to the parents to bear the loss of their children. I also think that grief lasts until our survival. It "gets different, it doesn't get better; grief is a journey, with no necessary endpoint (<http://www.medscape.com/medscapetoday>). Let me reproduce Samuel Butler:

To himself everyone is immortal;

He may know that he is going to die, but he can never know that he is dead.

-Samuel Butler (<http://www.deathdyinggriefandmourning.com>)

Butler's idea consoled me in many ways.

India Pilgrimage

It was the day of Wednesday, January 13 to Friday, 29, 2010. There are many holy places of pilgrimage in India. Gaya, Badri, Kedar, Haridwar, Varanasi, Ujjain, Omkareshwor, Rameswaram, Kanyakumari, and so on. Hindu *Shastras* have emphasized that the obedient sons should visit the holy pilgrimage spots and perform sraddhas for *pitri mukti*, the salvation of their departed parents and other honorable elders.

We had already visited some of the above places and accomplished sraddhas for my departed parents. We planned to visit Rameswaram and Kanyakumari in Januarys 2010.

We set out for India pilgrimage because We were determined to perform *tirtha sraddhas* for eternal peace of Rose and the other departed pitris, ancestors, on the banks of sacred Oceans- Rameswaram and Kanyakumari. According to the ritual, tirtha shraddha should be done after the completion of annual sraddah. Therefore, the convenient time was chosen for January 2010. Our schools remained closed for one-month winter vacation. This time is considerer weather friendly for South India pilgrimage.

The next reason of our pilgrimage was for refreshment: Kamala had been suffering from depression since Rose's demise. My younger son, Sarose, who is presently studying IT and

working in the same field in Hyderabad, encouraged and facilitated our India pilgrimage. He prepared an itinerary, which included our destinations. He was of opinion that the *yatra*, the tour, consists of two practical outcomes. Firstly, it performs sacred deeds like pitri sraddhas; and secondly, it lessens his mother's depression by voyaging on the Ocean, spending some leisurely periods in the hill station and paying visits to some enrooted religious places. My sister-in-law, Radha, who had been to South India before also emphasized us to visit and ensured to give us her company.

I booked three-tier second-class seats in the Indian Railways for January 13; 2010. We caught the train from Gorakhpur Junction. We traveled for forty-eight hours in the same train. Our journey was safe and comfortable. We stayed a day with Sarose in Hyderabad. Next day, with Sarose, we paid visits to the enrooted renowned place Tirupati Balajee Temple at Tirumali, the richest temple in the world (<http://balajitirupatitemple.com/history.htm>).

I was very much impressed with the nature friendly highway construction between Tirupati and Tirumali. The road has been contracted maintaining the all the safety measures of hillside road construction principles. The construction has undertaken the principle of 'nature friendly' concept. It has conversed flora and fauna. "*Om Benkateshowraya nama*" mantra had been displayed in many bends. Smoking, cutting trees, flower plucking, littering etc are strictly prohibited and liable to be fined.

We queued for four hours to book the quick *darsan* tickets at Rs.300 each. Tickets cost Rs.50 and free darshan coupons were available. Those who were busy and capable preferred the first potion. Again, we waited in the queue for three more hours to have the darshan of

Bhagawan Govinda. The golden temple is fantastic. It attracted everybody. After darshan, the Trust distributes bigger laddus to the devotees as the prasad of the God.

At night, we headed towards Puttaparti, the residence village of Sai Baba. People there called him "*Bhagawan*", the Living God. We were lucky because we got an opportunity to attend Baba's assembly. The assembly was celebrating the anniversary of one of the Medical Colleges opened by Sai Baba. The programme lasted for more than two hours. We got pleasant darshan of Baba.

People are of no univocal. What I observed is that of a unique one. Baba has rendered a great social service to the people of all lifestyles. The free heart surgery in his hospital could be counted as one. Sai Baba was of opinion that medical treatment facilities is a human rights and it should be accessed free of cost (www.sathyasai.org/.../saiglobalhealth/SathyaSaiGlobalHealthMission_Small.pdf). Hundreds of visitors-male and female separately- could have their breakfast or meals for only six rupees. A glass of milk or tea or coffee costs only two rupees, a big *dadu*, ladle, of *haluwa* for two rupees! Whatever we took for breakfast cost only two rupees for per item. I had experienced this noble service in my life for the first time. An idea arose in my mind- Who does great social service is actually great person. Sai Baba is a great social worker in reality. Everyone calls him "Baba", father. I find no exaggeration. Here I accepted that who does great service but live, is a God. I found a number of Nepali devotees in the assembly. They were lodged in the Baba's guesthouse for nominal charges. Everyday *prarthana sabha*, praying assembly, was worth participating. Like my wife and me, people might have found mental relief and peace.

I saw Sarose off at 5:30 p.m. He had to appear in the examination in Hyderabad. Formally, he was a critic of Sai Baba, now he too began to laud Baba's social service.

We spent the night in Sai Baba's village, with soft spoken, helpful and disciplined people. The following day morning, we moved for Bangalore-Madhurai- Rameswaram.

Performed Tirtha Sraddha

On January 19, 2010, we reached Rameshowram via Bangalore and Madhurai.

We had to pay a visit to Rameshowram because it is the eleventh incarnation of Lord Shiva. Lord Ram himself set up Rameshowram Shiva Linga (Shiva Puranam, Second Part, 2005, Chapter 42nd, p.1669).

रामेश्वरावतारस्तु शिवस्यैकादशः स्मृतः । । रामचन्द्रप्रियकरो रामसंस्थापितो मुने ॥

(श्रीशिवमहापुराणम्,द्वितीय भाग, वि.स.२०६२,द्विचत्वारिंशोऽध्याय,श्लोक ४६, पृष्ठ,१६१९)

Shivamaha Puran reads as following-

Rameshowravatarastu Shivashaikadasha smrita.

Ramachandrapriyakaro Ramasansthapitomune.

(ShivamahaPuranam, 2062BS, 42:46, p.1619)

It is the publicly recognized place to do sraddha. Its importance has also been stated in the Shiva Mahapurānam:

रामेश्वरस्य महिमाद्भुतोऽभुद् भुवि चातुलः । भुक्तिमुक्तिप्रदश्चैव सर्वदा भक्तकामदः ॥

(ऐः श्लोक ४९, पृष्ठ, ऐः)

Rameshorasya mahimadbhutoabhud bhuvi chatula.

Bhuktimuktipradaschaiva sarvada bhaktakamada. (Ibid, 42:49)

The stanza reads,

Rameshowram Shiva Ling has an incomparable dignity in the world, it always fulfills the wishes of the devotees; and bestows earthly pleasure and salvation.

It was 10 a.m. on January 19, we went to the Ocean shore. We took bathe. A pounce of water entered into my mouth. It tasted very salty. It happened so because we are not habituated of dipping into the seawater. I filled two bottles of water to fetch home to distribute as tirtha jal, water from pilgrimage. Fetching such water, distributing it to the relatives; and neighbors and using it on worshipping is customary practices.

We searched a purohit to perform the worshipping of sraddha in memory of Rose and our parents and known-unknown ancestors.

However, not a single Purohit came into notice. I went for searching. At last, I got one. I requested him to conduct a tirtha sraddha. He was ready. But he promptly spoke out, "You have to pay Rs.300. for it." I accepted his demand.

We had carried the necessary pooja materials from home. The pundit managed some flowers, a coconut and some curd. He completed sraddha within forty-five minutes. I floated the *pindas*, the balls of barley flour offered to the departed souls, on the water. It went on floating far from us. I handed the amount of money to the pundit. He gave one hundred rupees to his assistant. Kamala was seen very cheerful after the pooja.

"Mero manko iksha pura bhayo. Yo thaun aayera sraddha gariyo. Aba arko thaun Kanyakumari baki cha."

She meant to say, "My wishes fulfilled. We did the sraddha in this sacred place. The next destination is Kanya Kumari". She was seen cheerful when she expressed these statements.

India pilgrimage was a form of "transference" (Freud, webpace.ship.edu/.../psychoanalysis.html). Here transference is taken as a change of location or place, environment, people, foodstuffs and visiting deities. Pilgrimage was turned into a therapy that brought Kamala in pleasant mood. Freud felt that transference was necessary in therapy in order to bring the repressed emotions that have been plaguing the client for so long, to the surface. I strongly agreed with his worldview.

I noticed correspondence (Swedenborg, 1749-1756) of spiritual and physical reality in her behavior. After she saw her intention of performing sraddha completed, she spontaneously

turned into both mentally and physically pleasant state. Conducting sraddha is a spiritual reality and the shore of Kanya Kumari was a physical reality to her. In my family matters, she was the influencing figure as she holds access and control over the property and decision-making. Therefore, I agreed with feministic view that "the essential features of feminist epistemology include placing women at the center of inquiry, reducing or eliminating the boundary between the knower and the known (Fee, 1986 as cited by Ruiz, in the website firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/bsi/ p.39, /2150).

Paying visits to pilgrimage places and performing traditional spiritual duties like sraddhas were an act of 'cultural reproduction' (Bourdieu, 1933). It is a form of cultural transmission. "The accumulated culture was passed down, by both formal and informal methods (hidden curriculum) from generation to generation through learning. It was just the inheritance of the ways of acting, thinking, and feeling of a culture" (Scott, 1988, p.95). Our ancestors used to visit and talk about sraddhas they had done in the pilgrimage places. We followed them. Our children will follow this act so far. Thus, cultural reproduction has been continuing in the human civilization.

Theoretically, Bourdieu relates 'cultural reproduction' with economic status (<http://www.jstor.org/>). He believed that the prosperous and affluent societies of the west were becoming the "cultural capital." High social class, familiarity with the *bourgeois* culture and educational credentials determined one's life chances. It was biased towards those of higher social class and aided in conserving social hierarchies. This system concealed, neglected individual talent, and academic meritocracy (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page).

Kamala had shown deep respect for the Pitris, the dead world since we got married. She was of opinion that we should honor the souls of our ancestors who gave us precious life. She persuaded me to perform sraddhas for them. I visited Gaya, a holy place in Bihar, India. I performed the sacred sraddha for the first time in my life on the name of my parents and grandparents. I produced a photograph in case she would not believe me. Every year we had been practising the pitri karya, act of paying devotion to the souls. Kamala was the embodiment of passion, love, care, duty, religion, and ideal life-mate. She expressed her happy mood after the sraddha in Rameshowram. Her wish was fulfilled in Kanyakumari where the last pitri pooja was done on the name of Rose as well as known and unknown souls of dead world that belonged to both of us. She did to her best for her loved son. 'Rose' was in her words, deeds and memories. I gave core value to Kamala. Whatever she was doing in her words and actions were for the betterment for our world and Dead world. Here I realized the importance of feminist theoreticians who believed that "Feminist theory recognizes and emphasizes the fact that "women's experiences are important, and the validity of women's perceptions must be known and valued" (Brown, 1994, p. 52, cited in- (<http://www.radicalpsychology.org/vol8-1/>)).

At 12: 30, we dined at a vegetarian Gujarat Bhojanalaya. They served us to our utmost satisfaction.

We had to spend four to five hot hours of the day. I booked a room at Hotel Sun Rise View. It cost us nine hundred. I left Kamala and Radha in the room to take rest. I rushed to the bus stop to book the tickets to Kanyakumari, the southern tip of Indian border. Luckily, I got the three remaining seats. Had I been ten minutes late I could have missed the seats. We did not have

enough time to complete our destinations. Sarose, our younger son, who was learning (IT) and earning bread in Hyderabad, changed our traveling schedule. So we had to travel at night and visit the designated places during the day. To meet our January 29 return train ticket from Sycandarabad, he booked Indigo Air E-ticket from Coachi Forte.

I got on a city bus to Rameshowram Temple site. Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation run bus charged me Rs.2.for ten kilometers distance. We clicked some snaps from the hotel roof keeping the Ocean on the background. Again, I noticed Kamala very happy and gay. She greeted the sea paying '*Namaste*' for a long time. She was fascinated with the magnificent sights. We had never been to the sea or Ocean before in our life.

We checked out the room at 6pm and set for the Bus Stop. The bus arrived at 7:00 and left at 7:30, the reported time. We traveled our designated destinations in the day and at night without any interruptions. We felt; no jams. We did not face any strikes or bands throughout our journey.

However, unfortunately we experienced many types of band back home. There were political parties general strikes, innumerable sit ins, *bandas* (shutdowns), nationwide transportation strike, student unions strike to get 50 discount on public transport, university students protest against increased fee rate, strike against unavailability of Govt. textbooks, protest rally of Madhesis, violent protests, journalists' strike, medical personnel's pen down and indefinite strikes, school and university teachers strikes for their stability, trade unions' sit ins for better payments, road jam strike demanding compensation against loss of life in accidents,

strikes against kidnapping and murder, and so on. Moreover, each day's band used to cost NRs 1 billion (World Food Programme, <http://www.nepalitimes.com.np>).

At that time, I was in Kerala, South India. We traveled peacefully. No strikes noticed. No jam encountered. The cab driver told us that The Kerala High Court banned the strikes by terming it unconstitutional a decade ago. When we were still entertaining, strike and Nepal band. What a shame on us!

The Seashore is the most Fruitful Place for Performing Yagya and Worshipping

It was the day of January 20, 2010. We arrived in Kanya Kumary at 4:45am. A middle-aged guide in *dhobi-kurta* led us to a hotel. Locked our luggage in the room. Moved to the Ocean shore. We wanted to enjoy the sunrise. A crowd thronged there. We got into the crowd with push and pull. The sun arose from the horizon. Everybody clapped. Some chanted *Surya* mantra. Some paid Namaskar. Some took bath. The crowd scattered soon. Kamala and Radha stepped down to the shore carefully, sat beside the huge rock, catching it tightly. The tides splashed upon them. Kamala started chanting guru mantra. I took my turn. Very carefully, I dipped into the Ocean shore. I could not. The water was very cold in the morning. The tides showered me, too.

In Kanya Kumari, we got a Madras tongued pundit. We urged him to conduct a pitri sraddha. "*Ek sau ek rupaya dakshina lagega*" (must pay one hundred and one rupees), he demanded. Kamala placed the necessary saraddha materials.



The sraddha was especially dedicated to Rose. He asked to name all of my departed ancestors and Kamala's parents. During pronouncing Sanskrit mantras, spits sprang continuously out of his mouth. I did not mind and concentrated in the pooja. The Pundit seemed well

experienced in the rituals. Whatever he chanted perfectly matched with the pundits in Nepal. Radha took a few snaps of the sraddha that we had forgotten in Rameshowram. We paid his remuneration and extended our sincere thanks. We were overwhelmed with gratitude for his help.

At the time of parting, the pundit asked, "You are from Nepal. You must have visited Muktinath, haven't you?" You might have performed sraddha in Kagnebeni. You live at the height of pilgrimages. Those are topmost mukti kshetra, places of transcendental."

Yes, certainly. Our elder son endeavored for it. We had paid a visit to Muktinath in April, 2007. We did sraddha in Kagbeni, enrooted to Muktinath. Unfortunately, he passed away within three months. That is why; we have arrived in Kanyakumari to perform the tirtha sraddha. A week ago, on January 20, we did it in Rameshowram, too. Our younger son facilitated our India pilgrimage. We have been India since January 13th. I told the reality.

"Oh, God! He was great. He will attain a decent place in the Netherworld."

"You seem religious person. Do you have faith in God?"

Yes, certainly. I have a faith on God but not a blind faith. We practiced meditations, do pooja for sound mental health. We brush for oral health. We wash and shower for healthy living. We observe religious practices to keep our body, heart and mind healthy and fresh. It keeps us away from wrong thoughts and evil actions. Therefore, we are on India pilgrimage.

"You have marked your arms and forehead with *chandan* powder. You, too, seem professional, don't you?"

"Sure. I earn my *daal roti*, feed my family. However, I do not trouble the devotees. I serve them. God blesses me. Oh, my next *jajaman* has come. I will be busy now. Bye. Have a nice journey."

"Baba, thank you very much."

The pundit spoke Sanskrit, Hindi, English, Tamil, Telegu, territorial language. He pleased us by his task, and talkativeness. He knows how to cash the psychology of the pilgrims.

A light bulb flashed into my mind. I awaken when the pundit reminded me about the importance of Muktinath. Immediate, an entrepreneur's words stroked me," Nepal is full of innumerable bio-diversity. We could not recognize the rare heritage. We never light an oil lamp to search the wonderful stuffs and the things in our treasures"(Shkya, 2008, p. 91). I cursed myself because of ignoring the virgin holy places of my homeland. I reached to the tip of India following the path- steps of our aged old tradition.

We performed sraddha on the Ocean shores of Rameshowram and Kanya Kumari. Both the places were renowned for religious and pilgrimage fields. The seashore was the most fruitful place for performing *yagya* and worshipping. (ShriShivaMahapuranam, 2003, Fifteenth chapter, p.69, verse 4-5, 2059/ (2003).

वाचिकं यवनं विद्वान्मन्त्रस्तोत्रजपादिकम् ।
तीर्थयात्रा व्रताद्यं हि कायिकं यजनं विदुः ॥ ५७ ॥
(श्रीशिवमहापुराणम् , पञ्चदशोऽध्यायः, पृष्ठ, ७४)

The Shiva Puran has stated the importance of pilgrimage:

Vachikam yavanam vidhyanmantrastotttrajakadikam.

Teerthayatra vratadhayam hi kayikam yajanam vidu. (Ibid, Chapter 15, p.74, verse 57)

"Mantra-chanting and reciting hymns are the pooja performed by wording. Pilgrimage and fasting etc are physical *yagya*." (Ibid, Chapter 15, verse 57, p. 74). This means we had been doing wordy worships by saying.

Kamala uttered, " *He, Ishwor! Sake ko gachhe anusaar gare ka chaun. Chhora lai uttam lok prapta hos. Hamra gyat agyat pitriharu pani sabai moksha houn.* "

She means to say, "O, God! We have done according to our capacity. Let our son attain better heavenly place. Let our all known and unknown ancestors also attain salvation.

We accomplished the physical *yagya*, too.

Kamala appealed the god. She became happy at that moment because we had done our minimal duties towards our ancestors-spirits. She sought solace in the Ocean shore. Actually, my parents departed from me when my sensory-motors were not developed. I performed sraddha on the names of my parents, brother, Rose and my in-laws. I had not imagined to be in Kanyakumari for the sacred deeds.

I noticed Kamala relaxed. Her wishes of pilgrimage resulted in reality. She was consoled. I found that "pilgrimage." As a Medical trip to renowned cities cures disease or relieves pain of the patients in the same way pilgrimage empowers the disheartened. Pilgrimage is a religious therapy.

On way to home, in the air, Kamala surprisingly spoke out, " *Aba lagnu hai, M.Phil. pura garna.* "She means to say, "Keep engaged to complete M.Phil."

My M.Phil. Thesis was pending. I was in dilemma. The traumatic situations did not favor me to work on it. I was about to abandon the study. However, she had been my inspiration in my life.

Here I remembered Aristotle who regarded that women were not complete human beings. They did not possess the nature as of a full person. He blamed them as incomplete and unbelievable. They were to be seen as inferior (<http://www.slideshare.net/>). However, in the eastern world, ideally, women have been placed in equal position but practically they are- not given the same status. So ideally, we hold the knowledge that woman and man are wheels of a chariot. In my opinion, a man is incomplete without a woman and vice versa. My understanding complies with the Hindu philosophy of Prakriti and Purush as complementary force. The reason was that creation ceases in absence of a woman and the man. The Islamic philosophy matches with that of Hinduism. Islam realizes that "there is a single humanity, a single essence, and there are twin halves of which one is man and one is woman"(Ibid).

I often listened that a woman lies behind a successful man. "Women tend to be a bit more emotionally advanced than men that emotion is great and will serve as passion (<http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/standard/>). So is Kamala with my life. I acquired higher education under her love and care. She had empowered me. Therefore, I was lucky that Kamala has been incredibly supportive. Her inspiration was "my new dawn" for M.Phil - completion.

Muktinath Pilgrimage

While returning from Kanyakumari, enrooted to Hyderabad we remembered Rose. The Pundit in Kanyakumari lauded the importance of visiting Muktinath of Nepal. It is a divine place.

**यस्तयोरात्मजः कल्प आत्मना च धनेन च ।
वृत्ति न दद्यात्तं प्रेत्य स्वमांसं खादयन्ति हि ॥ ६**

(श्रीमद्भागवत-महापुराण, द्वितीय खण्ड, पंचचत्वारिंशोऽध्याय,
पृष्ठ ३४४ , गीता प्रेस, गोरखपुर, सं २०६०, पचासवां संस्करण)

Yestayoratmaj: kalpa aatmana cha dhanena cha .

Brittim na dadhyatam pretya somamsam khadayantihi.

(Srimad Bhaavat-Mahapuran, Part II, chapter 45, p.344)

It has historical, mythical, religious and tourism importance. Rose's contribution was not a minor one. I considered worth mentioning our pilgrimage to Muktinath. Otherwise, it would be injustice to Rose.

The stanza reads,

If the son, in spite of his capability, does not serve his parents with his physique and wealth, after his death, the messenger of the god of death forces him to eat his own flesh.

मातरं पितरं वृद्धं भार्या साध्वीं सुतं शिशुम् ।
गुरुं विप्रं प्रपन्नं च कल्पोऽविभ्रच्छवसन् मृतः ॥७

(ऐ.पृष्ठ ३४४)

Mataram pitaram vridham bharyaa saadhuim sutam shishum.

Gurum vipram prapannam cha kalpoavibhrachchavasan mrita : (Ibid, verse 7)

The verse means,

A capable man is regarded, as a dead body even he is alive, if he does not take care of the old parents, wife, children, offspring, and guru, Brahmin and shelter seeker.

Two years before, Rose's demised, I had recited the Srimad Bhaavat-Mahapuran. The verse touched me, and then I highlighted it with the green color. After more than the same time span, I turned the Srimad Bhaavat. The marked stanzas attracted my attention. I read them

carefully many times. Rose had done his duties without reciting the Srimad Bhaavat-Mahapurāṇ. He had not left any stones unturned. Our hearts filled with pride and grief, at the same time.

Generally, parents used to aspire to visit a few noted places of pilgrimage. The sons manage to sponsor. But we did not expect such a thing. Rose did it. He decided to send us to Muktinath. He invited his aunt to join the trip. Muktinath is a unique place of this planet. It is at a height of approximately 12,000 feet above the sea level. It lies amidst the Himalayan mountain range in Mustang district, which is known as a 'no man's zone'. We had wished to visit this holy place once in our life. However, we were not able to manage to go to this blissful region even at our 50s. We were waiting for God's mercy.

The Hindus call the place Muṭi Kṣetra, which literally means the "place of salvation." The Buddhists call it [Chumig Gyatsa](#), which in [Tibetan](#), means 'Hundred Waters'. Amidst all this is Muktinath in all its unassuming glory and greatness; more than religion it is the serenity and isolation that holds key to the road to salvation (Raman Grandon South Asian Media Net). Moreover, Muktinath is an important and a sacred pilgrimage site for the devotees of Lord Viṣṇu as well as to Buddhists offering transcendental liberation from this world.

The unexpected traveling began on April 13, 2007. We took it as a matter of profound pride. Our elder son was sending us to Pilgrimage. First time in life! To Muktinath! A dream for every Hindu! By air! We flew by Gorkha Air Lines' Twin Otter. We flew in between the snow-capped Himalayas. We observed magnificent and mystical mountains on route to Jomsom. It was my first flight. I completely forgot myself during the exciting mountain flight period.

We landed on Jomsom Airport at 11:45a.m. Jhyabling Thakuri, one of Rose's *ista*, the loved friend received us. He had brought four horses from Jharkot, a village below Muktinath Temple. We headed towards Muktinath on horseback. Jhyabling escorted us. Horse riding in the mountainous region is an adventure. We were frightened and excited at the same time. Sometimes the horse climbed steep up hill and again steep down. The horse went to the edge of the cliff time and again. It was frightening because on my left there was deep river flowing, a narrow gape, it trembled my body. Jhyabling was so skillful in handling the horse that we bore no fear. We practiced horse riding.

Whenever Hindus are enrooted to Muktinath, most of them enter Kagabeni, a sacred river resident. They perform *sraddha* in the names of departed souls of the ancestors. We reached at Kagbeni at 5 p.m. The snowy cool wind was blowing. Horses, donkeys, mules and sheep were returning home from pasture. The hills and mountains were shining in red with the setting sun. Kagbeni is reflecting a golden village in its natural settings, full of innocent and hospitable people. The crows here call, "kaag", "kaag", a distinct calling than other crows do. We were tired of horse riding. The day had still some precious hours left. We went to a riverside ashram, the residence for the pundits who take care of the temple, and invited a pundit to perform *sraddha* before the sun set. The pundit told us that tirtha, the holy place, as Kaagbeni is every time accessible for performing *sraddha*. One should not determine the day and the time. I stepped into the riverbank; I felt the water was too cold. I could not dip into the river. Therefore, we all sprinkled a handful of water over our body. The pundit performed our pitri *sraddha*. Our hearts pleased to do so. But our bodies nearly suspended with cold weather. We took shelter at a hotel

at the rate of Rs.50 for per bed and Rs.100 per meals. It was cheap enough in such a remote hilly place.



Next day, we reached Jharkot. Halted at Jhyabling's house for refreshment. We reached our destination M-U-K-T-I-N-A-T-H, a shrine of Lord Vishnu. It took forty-five minutes from Jharkot, partly on horse riding and partly on foot. Madhu Sudan Ramanujadas writes on Muktinath-

We understood why the devotees used to worship the God with many words. For instance, Lord Narayan is considered as the foremost eternal soul. He is the master of creation, maintenance and destruction. He is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswar are his expansions. He is Para Brahma. He is the Lord of Lakashmi. Narayan is the only worship able to deity. He is the sole protector. He is the grantor of all desires. He is the friend of His Devotees. On him should be meditated (Ramanujdas, 2003p.74).

Some were taking bath under the one hundred eight shower spouts. The water is running from the glacier. There is a pond beside the waterspouts. Some dip into it. We had a bath under the 108 spouts. We put towels on our heads to protect from snowy water.

We entered the temple. We found Lord Vishnu between Lakshmi and Saraswoti. We stood in front of the deities. Only a few devotees were there. We got sufficient time to offer pooja. Aani, the virgin girl- priest, guided us to perform pooja. The devotees themselves can worship in their own way and present offerings to the god. It was an excellent opportunity in our life. The Muktinath deity has a transcendental smile. The enchanting beauty of the Lord cannot be described in words.

It is a wide spread belief among the Hindus that unless a person accomplishes the visit to Muktinath, s/he will not reap the fruit of all the pilgrimages visited previously.

I prayed the Lord for Rose's good health, happiness and prosperity because he managed the parents to have a darsan of the Supreme Lord. We had only imagined being here once in our life. The dream came true. So we sought blessings for Rose, only for Rose.

Ironically, within three months of time he parted from us. He left the material world. What an unbelievable incident! Had Rose not inspired us, we could have never visited Muktinath temple. We bless you, son. Many thousand salutes to you! Rest in peace.

To the right of the temple, there was one more shrine worth to see. It was Jwala (Mai) Devi. One can find all five tatvas, the five elements from which everything is made, according to the Hindu tradition: fire, water, sky, earth and air at the same place together in their own and

distinct form. (Wikipedia, the free Encyclopedia). I experienced the reality, the reality that the Yogis seek.

The visit of Muktinath made me realize that human life is very complex. We have to undergo with many social obligations. Our relation is like a spider's web. We have interconnected relationships. I have experienced them in my grieving period. We have no options than to be practical. These relationships are more obvious during the very difficult times. Sharing griefs and being empathetic provide emotional strength to the bereaved individuals. Many anonymous relations came into light. My reflection reminded me a folk saying that read, "*Sukhama bolayepachi janu, dukhama sunepachi janu.*" It means in the happy time, pay a visit, after inviting, in the sad time, and pay a visit after hearing. The experience made me flexible in my daily routine. Since Rose's demise, I have visited more than one hundred grieving relatives, colleagues, neighbors and friends in and outside the valley. I experienced that death is inevitable i.e. an unavoidable event. When the time completes, life ends. There is no 'sudden death. Jagadish Ghimire has rightly, opined, "Life is the plan of time, not mine"(Ghimire, 2008, p.7). Put the dying and the death into the context of the whole life lived (<http://www.goodfuneralguide.co.uk/feed/>).

The saying of the Geeta that says, we have come in the world, thrilled me. We must part from here anytime. Until we survive let, us be *karmayogi*, (Geeta, Chap.3: 8; 6: 46). Here Krishna desired that Arjun should perform his prescribed duty, for doing so is better than not working. For him one cannot maintain one's physical body without work. Arjun was a householder and a military general. Therefore, it was better for him to remain as such and perform his religious duty

as prescribed for the *Kshatriya*. The major duty of a Kshatriya is to fight the battle. After all one has to maintain one's body and soul together by some work. Work should not be given up capriciously, without purification of materialistic propensities (Prabhupada, 2004, p.170-171).

Positioning

Where is Rose now?

I have realized that Rose had been assimilated into *Panchamahabhutas*. According to Hindu beliefs *bhutatma*, human beings, dissolved within Godhead Krishana.

Rose is now in an experience that lives with my family members, his fellow-beings and me. The experience will not end with me because firstly, he himself was engaged in devotional service, free from contaminations of fruitive activities and mental speculation. He was friendly to every living being. In reference to Geeta, one can attain success in his spiritual activity: devotional service (Geeta: Chap.11 verse: 55). Rose falls in such category. He had gone back to Godhead Krishna. Secondly, the rituals whatever I performed helped avail his spirit to choose the light path, I believe so far. The soul that travels the light path rests in peace and does not indicate any sign of discomfort. I have felt this experience until date. Thirdly, this tiny grief memoir (thesis) incorporates the experience of Rose and me. This literature will keep our experiences alive. It will create sensation and provide inspirations to the future researchers. They will be reflected. They will quote my emotions and educational implications. Literature keeps creations long lasting.

Where am I?

Examining the above interpretations, I am partly a traditional cultural being. A Hindu follows *soraha samskar*; I cannot ignore eternal final rituals. I did them so that spirit of Rose could choose the light path. I dedicated those all rituals to Rose as "a Love of Token."

I am partly materialist because when I thought critically over the death of Rose I could not get any scientific evidence except decay theory ([Edward Thorndike](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decay_theory), 1914 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decay_theory - cite_note-kevone-2) and end of evolution ([Charles Darwin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decay_theory), 1854). I could not convince myself that whether Rose had gone to light path or dark path as Hindu described. However, I realized that death is mysterious of all the materialistic things. Heaven and hell are super psychological destination less abstract words. However, the former encouraged me as an individual to do good deeds and the latter refrained me from the evil deeds. And yet I hold the neither view that neither heaven exists nor hell. My parents, brother, son, grandparents, my in-laws, aunts and uncles and many others all left the world. However, I do not know their whereabouts. I have realized that there is nature, sole nature, which gives birth to living beings, decays them and dissolves them in the nature. The seeds must die to grow trees. This simple logic reminded me the concept of rebirth. But at the same time, I realized that we are made of earth or soil and eventually will assimilate into it. The folk saying, "*jeevan mato ho mataima misincha*", life is soil it dissolves into the soil or earth and comes out of it. This folk saying resembles to the religious text's understanding i.e. "*Punarapi janama punarapi marana*" i.e. we born and we die, it is a viscous circle of the living being. That who knows to cross it gets salvation as Buddha understood through his enlightenment process. It has Eightfold Path:

(i) Wisdom (Sanskrit: *prajñā*, Pāli: *paññā*): 1. Right view, 2. Right intention

(ii) Ethical conduct (Sanskrit: śīla, Pāli: sīla): 3. Right speech, 4. Right action,

5. Right livelihood

(i) Mental discipline (Sanskrit and Pāli: samādhi): 6. Right effort, 7. Right mindfulness,

(ii) 8. Right concentration (<http://www.answers.com/>).

Nobody has seen or experienced heaven. The popular Nepali folk saying, "*Na mari sworga dekhinna*", heaven cannot be seen without dying, is the proof. So the hell is. No one has explained how hell experiences.

I had gone M.Phil. Programme with empty-handed, was a treasure on which I should live the rest of my days with this thesis writing. At least, it will keep Rose in memories. Had I not joined M.Phil? Course, I could never have been able to interpret death and shed light on Rose. The course enabled me to think critically. It has transformed my thoughts. It also taught me that nothing should be accepted blindly. The intellectuals should understand the world over it and through it. Yet I as an intellectual was dragging the customary and traditional death and dying rituals in the sense of providing light path to the departed souls. Therefore, I went for pilgrimages. I considered that our rituals are pathfinder for the dead world. I also hold the view that the rituals provide our loved ones a good position. Amidst these rituals, I realized that good deeds or bad deeds remain in the living world. The preliminary death rites are compulsory to perform. The departed souls must be remembered on the special occasions in some way or the other way. I salute them.



Learnings and Findings of My Experience

During the research writing of the grief journal, I would like to mention the following learnings and findings of my experience under major research questions.

1. The people we love or hate-will eventually die, and so will we. Death is natural and certain. There is no possible way to escape death. No one ever has not even Ram; Krishna; Buddha; Jesus or Mohammad. Accept and manage death properly.
2. Hindu death rituals are vague and expensive. Collective and creative efforts should be made to simplify, modify and reachable to average Nepalese. One should perform death rites at his/ her doorstep if one possesses own home. It is very much economy than performing in public places. While performing death rites, do not take decision in emotion and sentiment. Be creative, practicable and flexible.

3. The Geeta preaches us that the soul is immortal, only the physical body dies. We should remember, commemorate and honor the soul of the loved one on Sa Paru, Bala Chaturdasi, Sraddhas, family festivals and ceremonies. In Newari culture, everyday cooked food is offered to the soul before serving to the family members. This is the cultural symbol of "*Pitri Deva Vava*." The departed souls wish or desire nothing. Prey Almighty for his / her eternal peace. I believe in soul.
4. I learnt that in the name of traditional rituals extravagance should be avoided. Rose will be in light and in humanity affairs if I set up a scholarship in a school. That is why, our family set up a scholarship fund on Rose's name at Siddheshwor Madhyamik Vidyalaya, Shantinagar, Kathmandu, 34. It will have social value and last for a long time.
5. Hindu tradition of observing sraddhas is the precious rituals. It is our prosperous symbol of culture; honor it. In the same way, Sa Paru is an ethno-cultural heritage of Newar Community. Culture is ones own identity. If needed, simplify and modify it. The new generation should keep it alive in exception to the modernity.
6. Grieving is natural even in animals and birds. Humans grieve more than any living creatures. Mother is deeply hurt in comparison to the father and grieves longer. The reason is that she bears pregnancy, gives birth and feeds her breast. Therefore, I am reflected to the popular saying, "*Aama ko ghaau gahiro huncha*," mother's wound is deep.
7. Act of extending condolences to the griever and sharing griefs with them can reduce both their pains and ours and add strength to bear the tragic days. Empowerment is the antidote for loss of control (<http://www.goodfuneralguide.co.uk/feed/>). Expressing griefs through evocative autoethnographic research consoled my wife and me and reduced our

pains largely. I found that writing is a therapy (James W. Penne baker, 1990). It is my own way to pay tributes to the lost loved one. Reciting the Geeta as well as other grief literatures provide relief to the grieving family members. I learnt a lesson that pilgrimage empowers the disheartened as well.

8. I gave choice to my daughter-in-law (23), Rose's loved one; whether she would dress in white or follow her own will. She preferred to be dressed in non-white. I supported her will. If you face the same condition, what will you do? This question made me think of the feminist's concerns.

I treated her as a *chori*, a daughter, not as a *buhari*, a daughter- in-law. I let her choose her life; either to remarry or remain as a single. Nearly two years after, she wished she could stay apart. She sought freedom – a wider horizon. My family members and I supported her and assisted at our capacity. I do believe that she is emancipated from the traditional bondage. Love knows no boundary. However, in some exception; culture creates differences.' Culture does not marry'(Sharma, 2006). What would you do if you encounter the same circumstances as I had? This question made me think to review the lifestyle of the Nepali (single women's) society.

9. My belief and findings lay on the ground that probably Heaven and Hell do not exist. They are super psychological terminology. They are destination less space. Hindu as well as other world religions holds the capacity to maintain social and religious health in the living world.

10. The traumatic and grief circumstances make individuals humble, polite and practical in ones own life. It helps transfer individuals: egoist into socio-centric; the materialist into religious; riches into charitable; boasting into modest; and impracticable into practicable and so on. The advanced socializing process concretizes after the loved one is lost. Grief brings transformation in life. I realized I had transformed me as well. My manners changed. I became more practicable than before. I have played the parts of a father, a teacher, a researcher and a participant observer simultaneously in this research.

Hindu Birth and Death: The Basis of My Discussion

Amidst the previously mentioned findings, I remembered Lord Krishna in Srimad Bhagavat Geeta. He said," For the soul, there is neither birth nor death. Soul has not come into being, does not come into being, and will not come into being. Soul is unborn, eternal, and ever-existing and primeval. Soul is not slain or killed, when the body is killed (Geeta, 2: 20). This showed that Hindu philosophy believes that body becomes aged and die but soul never dies. It enters another body. Therefore, Hindus have faith on the soul. The deceased turns into soul or spirit. It is called *Pitri, god*. A saying is established- "*Pitri deva vava*." It means - regard soul as God.

A disease free human being can survive for hundred years of life (Rig Veda, Tenth Chapter, Verse 161, and stanza 4). However, the duration of our lifespan is uncertain. Death comes in a moment and its time is unexpected. The young can die before the old; the healthy before the sick, etc. We are dying from the moment we were born (www.buddhanet.net/deathtib.htm).

I also realized that all Hindu sages of the past and present time have stressed that desire to end the rebirth is "*moksha*, the rarest, most precious, most difficult to achieve of spiritual goals"(Ibid).

I also reflected why Hindus believe that they will be reborn into a future that is based primarily on their past thoughts and actions (<http://mailerindia.com>). There I thought that Buddhists are also similar who believe that death is a transfer of life from present to next life such as a lit candle passes flame to another candle to light. In the same way, death transfers soul to another body.

The Tibetan Buddhists, too, accept that death and afterlife journey. The *Lama*, priest performs the last rituals and guides the right path, according to their tradition.

The knowledge above helped me to imbue that death, dying and rebirth are mysterious phenomenon. [Hinduism](#), [Jainism](#), [Sikhism](#) and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism> Buddhism follow the concept of [rebirth](#) or reincarnation (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page).

Hindu beliefs, the Vedas and Geeta all have described that the soul is immortal while the body is subject to birth and death. According to Geeta, as we changed old clothes and wear new one, in the same way the soul leaves the old and weak body and change new one (Geeta ,2:22). The Bhagavad-Gita also describes two paths along which souls travel after death. One is in the path of the sun (bright path), and the other is the path of the moon (dark path).The souls that travel along the path of the sun never return again, while those, which travel along the path of the moon, return again(hinduism.ygoy.com/).

In the same vein Sikhs believe that the soul is passed from one body to another until liberation ((http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page).

However, in Islam, the dying person is supported and comforted by the close family members and friends. They encourage the dying person to pray for Allah. The German philosopher Goethe wrote, "If Islam means submission to the will of God, then in Islam we all live and die"(<http://www.deathreference.com/>). Charity, fasting, prayers, and pilgrimage are often performed on behalf of the dead and which is natural in every religion.

Some Christians accept reincarnation and others reject it (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page). Liberal Christians believe in Heaven and Hell, an underground cavern where all people, good and bad, spent eternity after death. For them there is "a time to be born, and a time to die". According to conservative Protestants, heaven is a glorious location where there is an absence of pain, disease, sex, depression, etc. and where people live in new, spiritual bodies, in the presence of Jesus Christ. Hell is a location where its inmates will be punished without any hope of relief, for eternity (Ibid).

__However, reincarnation is not an essential tenet of traditional [Judaism](#), but do acknowledge it as a valid teaching.

In the case of Taoism, it believes that birth is not a beginning; death is not an end. There is existence without limitation; there is continuity without a starting-point. Existence without limitation in Taoism is in Space (Ibid).

Like the religions of the east Egyptians also believe in the afterlife and spend their lives preparing for it. Therefore, they (Pharaohs) built the finest tombs, collected the most elaborate funerary equipment, and are mummified in the most expensive way (Ibid).

For the Maoris of New Zealand death was represented as a journey. The Aztecs also have the same faith on death and life as the Polynesian have.

For traditional aborigines, the spirit world was closely interwoven with the physical world. The spirit was believed to have a chance to be reborn at some future time and live another earthly existence.

The religious instances above helped me understand that there is rebirth or transmigration of the soul. But, I was lack of "divine eyes." Here I found that I was a material human with very limited ability. I believed that if there is life, then there is death. For the heaven, my postulate was as average Nepalese say, "*aafu na mari svarga dekhinna*", without dying one cannot observe the heaven. I agreed with this critical saying, "Under fatalism, control lies with the deity and with fate"(Bista, 2008, p.137).

Theories of Death and Dying Rituals

By experiencing, researching, narrating grief circumstances and performing various Newari death rituals under Hindu religion, I explored the following theories from the- grounded realities.

1. Theory of Religious Rituals: I grew up under the *soraha sanskar*, sixteen sacraments or rites of Hindu religion (See appendix I). They have influenced my life. I obeyed and followed them in my life. I have no way out rather than to apply them. Therefore, I accepted as well as implemented them being one of the disciplined members of the community. This means I was embodied (Bourdieu) with the Hindu religion and could not escape from it though I am materialist (Marx) in many sense.

The above *sanskars* helped me for gaining spiritual nourishment, mental peace, and ultimately achieve *moksha*.


2. *Theory of Grief and Traumatic Circumstances*: When sudden grief engulfed me, various traumatic circumstances arose. During the thirteen days' mourn period, I lost my sense. I could not use my wit and wisdom. They became speechless. My heart and mind froze. I could not judge. I could not think critically as Marx, Nietzsche and Freud advocated. I was probably under the hypnotized condition of the rituals (Garud Puran). I simply followed the designated ways. I could not use my conscience.

3. *Theory of Love and Loss*: Losing my own loved son- Rose created passion of love. I became passionate (Berscheid & Walster, 1969, 1978). I did not give value to kind and cash. I continuously went on performing series of rite and rituals. I left no stone unturned out for enlightenment (www.seekeronline.org) of the departed soul. I acted in emotion. I could not be rationale. I spent without pre-estimated costs. I did not bargain with anything and anybody. I thought nothing was valuable than my son. When I returned to normal status, I was stunned to know the ritual expenditure; I had lost my son and my earning. I got double blows. I loved, therefore I lost.

4. *Theory of respect, honor and affection*: Loosing one's own loved one caused to pay a great respect, honor and affection. My community culture respects and honors the departed soul. The

affection attached with the loved son not only stimulated but also encouraged me to serve better so that his soul could rest in peace (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com>).

5. *Theory of immortal of soul*: I realized that meaning that soul is beyond destruction (Geeta, Chap: two, Verse: 20). It enters another body. This philosophy made me lunatic. In order to place the soul in an ideal place, I became enthusiastic in every respect. I went on performing the rites as directed by the death rituals Pundits.

6. *Theory of super psychology: Heaven and Hell*: I came up with the knowledge that heaven and hell are super psychological words. The former encourages doing good deeds to the noble individuals and the latter, fears the evil persons. Neither heaven exists nor hell. Nobody has seen or experience heaven. The popular Nepali folk saying, "*Na Mari sworga dekhinna*," *heaven cannot be seen unless one dies*, is the proof. So is the hell. No one has explained how hell experiences. Only there are sky and earth. The deceased either goes to sky, if cremated or dissolves into the earth, if buried under the ground. Death is beyond science. The life is made of soil and finally dissolves in the soil and comes out of the soil (<http://www.turntoislam.com/forum/index.php>). Life not only creates the soil, it is the soil itself (<http://www.limestonehills.co.nz/Down%20On%20The%20Farm/index.html>).

7. *Theory of therapy*: I have heartily realized that heartfelt expressions in the literature (poem, epics, stories, plays, and thesis) serve as a therapy. I strengthened my mind and heart by writing grief thesis. It consoled me as well as my family members. In other words, I named it "writing as

a therapy." I gave 'a live shape' to my sorrows and sadness. Eventually, if I am not exaggerating, writing as a therapy, became pedagogy of my teaching career.

Grand Summary

Episode 1

In Prologue, I have portrayed my son's childhood, his social service; his reorganization; his demise; death rites *Sa Paru* and his conjugal life. I discussed about my research methodology. I have explained why I chose the qualitative autoethnographic genres. I have defined the term "auto ethnography" quoting the prominent explanations. I have mentioned my field of study; my data; my tools; my epistemological consideration; my ontology and my ethics. I have used the popular web sites to obtain information, as time did not permit me to access the physical libraries. I have to devote time to my teaching profession to earn *noonbhutan*, (Ghimire,

2008, p.142) earning bread. Therefore, surfing Internet is convenient to me, though it is expensive for a teacher like me. I am a novice user. It took me sufficient time to surf the net.

Episode 2

I have narrated my saddened circumstances in connection to my son's demise. On one hand, I was in the perplexed state of world, on the other hand, I tried to console myself remembering the various time-winning everlasting preachings or speeches of Lord Krishna in 'Geeta', sentimental heartfelt poetic expression of Devakota in 'Muna Madan' and sorrow poured by Madhav Ghimire in his tragic epic 'Gauri'. In them all, I found that humans live within the vicious circle of *maya*, affection. In this sense, they are *mayik*, infatuated or bounded with material love and attachment. I am a human, too. I could not be a sage as Buddha. I had biological, emotional and material attachment with my son. Therefore, I grieved, as everyone does.

In the above Episode, I have narrated my saddened circumstances and Hindu death rituals from day 2 to day 13 in connection to my son's demise. The grounded knowledge in the premises of Death and Dying Rituals Zone made me realize that birth and death are natural phenomenon. The Practice of Gauda Puran reciting in the mourning periods has many fold importance in the society. In one hand, the Puran cautions people from doing sinful activities citing the various instances of physical punishments in the court of *yamaraj*, the god of death. It also preaches moral lessons to protect environmental degradation. It teaches that human beings are self-motivated to follow the moral and religious rules than the state rules. The Puran also emphasizes on the birth of a son child because it says that a noble son liberates all twenty-one parentage. It

also highlights the social importance of cash, kind, land and cow donation for socio-psychological justice. On the other hand, I have discussed the role of the Puran to impart family, social health, moral, sexual and reproductive health in the society. The reason is that it stresses that nothing but knowledge can bring salvation to the human beings. It is where I realized that self-realization of the grief transforms the life style as I am heading towards. I also experienced that tragic expressions of the literature and sharing grief among grieverers could heal my pains.

Episode 3

In this Episode, I have used objective description of Sa Paru, a Newar community celebration day for the lost loved ones to pave way to heaven. Avatar theory has been analyzed from eastern and western perspectives. Bala Chaturdasi; another mass celebration for eternal peace of the deceased has been presented on mythical basis. It is evaluated in the light of Freudian group psychology in which an individual readily sacrifices his personal interests to the collective interest. Bala Chaturdasi, the Hindu festival has been understood from Pierre Bourdieu's embodiment and cultural capital. It has been established, as a cultural identity as well. Moreover, it is considered as a key to healing the traumatic wounds for the bereaved family as well as memory day to the dead world. Once a year, Nepalese who have lost their family members go to observe Bala Chaturdasi and pay tribute as the Western societies go to grave to offer flowers to their loved ones.

Episode 4

Dream is the meeting place and medium of communication between the dead and living ones. It is believed that the departed soul comes to dream to convey his/ her wishes. It indicates

either good or bad omen. Dreams made my spouse depressed and restless. I began tending to her, grooming her and kept an apparent vigil. Reciting the holy Epic Geeta consoled her. This made us realize that reading heals the disheartened. Frustration compelled us to sell the present residence and move to a new location. However, Rose's semiotics in the dream rescued us from ruining. Furthermore, dream is analyzed from ancient Egyptian civilizations to Freudian perspectives

Social, political and economic issues or status of the teacher is highlighted in the fourth Episode. I faced a conflict between M.Phil. Study and household affairs. Kamala treated education as the part of Marxist superstructure. Human is economic creature and acts economically. She always persuaded me to bring out functional part of education. Naturally, teachers of the developing countries like Nepal, have to live on minimal facilities. For instance, it took twenty years to build and renovate our home. A safe home is considered a walking stick of the old age. Despite of lack of facilities, we feel pride in our profession. I realized that a wife is more conscious of home affairs than a husband is.

Annual ritual is an auspicious as well as a must process to illuminate the departed souls.

Episode 5

Death is a natural phenomenon though it raises traumatic situations in everybody's life. It happened to me-I lost my son. According to the Hindu religion and rituals, the survivors must perform assigned death and dying rituals to pave way to attend eternal peace and heavenly place for the departed souls of the loved ones. Most of the world religions, inclusive of Hindu religion,

have provisions to pay tributes and heartfelt respect to the deceased for his/ her contribution to the family, community and whole humanity as well. It is our customary practices that the departed spirit is regarded as "*Pitri deva*" i.e. departed soul as god. There are instant and periodic rituals- as endemic and external pilgrimages -in order to secure *moksha*, emancipation for the departed souls of our dear ones. Therefore, we went for pilgrimage to India. Unless humans exercise "*Punarapi janama punarapi marana*"- i.e. born again and die again until the soul does not emancipated. After *moksha*, the soul does not have to complete cycle of birth and death. Garuda Puran, The Geeta, The Shiva Mahapuran, the Vedas and the Upanishads all have stated the different ways of rituals and rites so that the souls could get enlightened in their designated places. However, the rituals are very vague and complicated. It is not reachable to the marginalized people in different forms of understanding. This demands the reformation in the traditional systems. However, I followed the rites without any quarries. I performed them as one of the final and compulsory duty and responsibility. I regarded the ritual process as a love of token for my son. I took it as a symbol of cultural civilization.

In Hindu rituals, there are sixteen rites from birth to death. The death ritual is the last one. Living world and Netherworld both are associated with the human civilization. The first is concrete and visible whereas the second is abstract and invisible. The modern science has understood humans as material. Because of the materialistic characteristics of the human being, it is a solid, liquid, and gas. And Rose turned out to be the three forms. As human, Rose possessed carbon (matter), experience (mind) and spirit. Even in this position, his dead body eventually was a combination of solid, liquid and gas - absolutely a matter. What it lacked of live was sensory motors. By cremating, it was changed into fire, ash (earth), smoke with carbon (gas)

and vapor (air and water). The ash was flowed in the river. By burying it, it was changed into soil.

According to Ayurveda, everything in life is composed of the *Panchamahabhutas* (five elements) *Apo* – water, it creates taste by tongue, *Agni* (Fire), creates the visual, *Akash* (Space), creates the auditory sensation, *Vayu* (Air) creates the sensation of smell and *Prithvi* (Earth), creates the sensation of smell and odor. (<http://www.experiencefestival.com>, <http://www.ayurvedadirect2u.com/index.php>)

My learning and experience helped me to conclude that like me Rose was a materialist until he survived. He was the combination of carbon (matter), experience (mind), and spirit together.

Learnings and findings of my experience anticipate inevitability of death, the humanistic mourning system, religious and cultural impact on death rites, ritual extravagance and feministic approach.

I have explored seven theories from the- grounded realities.

Conclusion and Implication to Education

There are two absolutes; an inescapable pattern in the entire

Existence of Human Kind:

The awareness of life;

The arrival of death.

Of the two, death is the

Most mysterious."

- Adrienne Nater

I accepted the reality of Rose loss. I worked amidst the grief. I adjusted to an environment in which Rose is missing. I have treasured Rose in my memories.

My research writing consoled and gave comfort to me. My heart speaks inside me that "at least you are doing something in memory of Rose."

I hereby imply some educative process as an outcome of this research. They are as followings.

1. As educational curriculum teaches about safe motherhood, population education, family planning and birth spacing but it lacks grief information and managing bereavement support to families. Our educative process should be inclusive of "grief and bereavement" course. It will help children cope with experiences of death and loss (Corr, 2003/2004, <http://baywood.metapress.com>).

2. Health providers such as, medical and nursing students must receive systematic grief education and training. This can be organized as separate session or can be a part of project work to the children.

3. The concerned Ministry should conduct trainings for Social Workers or Community Service Providers, viz: Newar Community Guthi members, all those who involve in service provision to the bereaved, including funeral operators. They already have an organized system; but they need to be reinterpreted. The Guthi possesses experienced work force. In this context, I agree with Breen when she quotes Hansson and Stroebe (2003), and says, "helping professionals are likely to be most effective by providing support to natural helpers." We can raise the issue of reinterpreting the rites and rituals among the Guthiyars and the Newars and make them contextual and understandable.

The *Purohits*- religious spiritual leaders- who perform death and dying Vedic rituals should undergo such trainings. Their professional organization with the help of social reformists can Initiative this process.

4. General medical practitioners; psychologists; psychiatrists; counselors and nurses, the wider community (www.cmapspublic.ihmc.us/rid); and Funeral Management of Pashupati Arya Ghat and so forth should join with them and help common people reform the traditional understanding about life and death.

5. One should practice sending grief related books to the bereaved ones. It can comfort and guide how to resolve grief and heal from such loss. This can be done through bereavement support education at the doorstep of the deceased family members. The reason is that empowerment is

the antidote for loss of control. (<http://www.goodfuneralguide.co.uk/feed/>). Hence, grief should be altered into strength through effective educative process.

Epilogue

My M.Phil. Health

Spider's Web

"Human?"

"Yes-

Of the social web."

"Caught in?"

"Connected with-

all the connectives,

Grieving moments-

grow, expand them."

"Can't get rid of?"

"No-

Like a fly in the

spider net."

"Made efforts?"

"Yeah";

"Sailed as

submarines-

Beneath the water-

in search of the sun:

(the knowledge);

Utilize every pulse.

To maintain my-



M.Phil.

A new road map;

In my journey.

I study for-

Intellectual discipline.

It sharpens my vision.

Empowers the mind.

Transforms me pedagogically.

Keeps mind and body sound.

I am a *tanneri*, now.

Though,

My 'son' had set,

My 'sun' has risen.

I keep up the-

Mission of research.

Until I scale the summit.

Knowledge brings-

***Kaibalya mukti*,**

That is liberation.

(July 11th, 2010)

Training and education transformed me. Before joining M.Phil, I was strict to my students. I was a traditional guru. I pressurized them to listen to me. Now I urge them to speak to put their curiosities, I listen and solve them. I taught to impart knowledge. I made them reproduce the knowledge (Luitel, 2003). Now I inspire them to express their knowledge in an original way. Previously, I played the role of a manager, and now I am a facilitator. Then, I was the knowledge transferor, and at present, I became a knowledge seeker. I value their knowledge. M.Phil.transformed my academic and professional worldviews.

ENDING IS FOR BEGINNING
BECAUSE JOURNEY OF LEARNING
NEVER ENDS.

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Appendix

The Sixteen Sanskars

1. **Garbhadhan:** (impregnation / conception): The couple should perform this rite to give birth to a glorious child. Various Vedic mantras and methods are practiced.
2. **Punsavana:** Marked in the second or the third month of conception for the desire of son-child. Fetus protection
3. **Simantonayan:** Performed in the fourth month of conception. The husband acts for the hair do of her wife by applying scented oil. The old women bless for son child.
4. **Jaat-Karmaa:** It is done on the six to eleventh day from the birth of a child. It is dedicated to lessen the labor pain and the security and protection of both the mother and the baby.
5. **Naamkarma:** It is naming a naming ceremony, which is performed on the eleventh day.
6. **Nishkramana:** It means taking the child outdoors and marked in the fourth month. The child is placed out in the sun in the daytime and under the light of the moon at night.
7. **Annaprashana:** It is feeding the child solid food. The child is fed rice pudding, curd, honey and ghee as the major food. The girl child is fed in the fifth and the son in the sixth month.
8. **Mundan/ choodakarma:** It is shaving the original hair in the first or third year, keeping the tuft of hair on the head. It is done for the development of better understanding of power.
9. **Karnavedh:** It is an act of ear piercing in the third or fifth month keeping the hope of may the child listen to good things and to have a good education.

10. **Yagyopaveet / Upnayan/ Bratavanda:** It is bearing sacred thread. It is considered the second birth of the child. This occasion initiates the child towards an intellectual and spiritual journey. It makes the child elite. The Brahmin, the Kshatrias and the Vaishya entertain this ceremony in the eighth, eleventh and twelfth years respectively.

11. **Vedarambh:** It is schooling. The child is sent to Gurukul for the study of Vedas and Scriptures.

12. **Samaavartana:** It is convocation. The individuals return home after completing essential Vedic and other educational skills. Now one is eligible to get married and access householder affairs.

13. **Vivaah:** It is marriage stage. The persons enter into the family affairs, do business and earn money, bear children and perform all the worldly rituals to indebt from i) Pitra: Debt of parents and ancestors, (ii) Manushya: Debt of society and humanity, and (iii) Dev: Debt of Nature and God.

14. **Sarvasanskaar / Vanprastha:** It is called preparing for renouncing. This is the third stage of Hindu life. One prepares to enter the Sanyas, refrain from the worldly interests, accepts spiritual life and devotes in the service of God.

15. **Sanyas (Awasthadhyan):** It is renouncing. The individual leaves the worldly workloads and engages in the social welfare. Travels for social service. The whole society becomes his/her family and the earth the home. The person is liable leave the body at any time.

16. **Antyeshti:** It is the last rite, or funeral rites. The family relatives or society take part in this rite. According to Hindu religion and rituals, some are cremated, some are buried underground

and some are water buried. (<http://www.godmandir.com/index.htm>,
<http://www.religiousportal.com/index.html>, Verma (1974, p.98-106). The steps I followed under
Antyeshti, sanskar, I have already narrated in the episodes 2 to 4.

