



A Lost Love

(A Qualitative Auto-ethnographic Research Story)

Love Joshi

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MY WORDS

I lost a loving one. I want to share my feelings of traumatic situations. So one of the outstanding ranked M.Phil. Dissertation of 2011 at faculty of Education in Tribhuvan University, Nepal is published in the form of story eliminating most of the theory portions.

I heartily request the readers to send feed backs.

Love Joshi
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DEDICATED TO MY LOVING SON ROSE JOSHI

*“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.*

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EPISODE 1

Soul is Spiritual and Never Dies

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. Kamala 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 to deposit extra fees in the hospital. I rushed to the hospital though it was a minute walk from 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 was waiting me. He caught me by my arms.

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

"What ! " Oh, My god!"

I began to shake and tremble. My feet were not on the floor. I couldn't take a breathe. 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 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 Lord Krishna preached in the Geeta? *Aatma* (soul) never dies. It is immortal. Humans eventually must depart from the earth. It is a natural law.

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

Sarose, my younger son is 23. I remained stunned by his knowledge of texts of the Geeta. Often he carries the Geeta with him. He bought it in Kochi, India at a book fair. He had told me that he used to go through the book, when he was in leisurely place and felt lonely. It created a great peace and comfort in his heart. It consoled him 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 in 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. They were women, especially mothers.

By 11 a.m, 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 helped me to go round. 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 was too young at that time. So I had no memory. I had also attended many neighbours and colleagues cremations. I had expressed obituaries and extended condolences. Death itself is a grief. It saddens a person for many many days. All of the events made me depressed.

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

The verse reads-

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.

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 ashes within two hours.

I told Kamala, "Our 'light' extinguished off for ever".

All of a sudden, the verse of Gita 2:22 came into my mind. It tells-

"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". The above verses 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 2:23 texts of the Bhagawat Geeta. 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-

“There is no death. Only a change of world.”

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, written by Laxmi Prasad Devakota, Poet the Great.

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 in the verse as-

*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 2:24

"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."

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. I kept on watching 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 that Rose's soul would be missing on the way if we cry so hard.

The verse of Geeta 2: 25 reminded me -
*"Soul is invisible, inconceivable and immutable.
Knowing this, you should not grieve for the body."*

However, my problem was that I was attached with my son since his conception.

I found that the major thing lies in 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.

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 , died and will never be older than 27. My understanding once again reminded me the Bud-dha's four harsh realities of life : an old man suffering from the natural weakness 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 which is temporary. Therefore, he set out in search for peace. He saw the scene that I saw, but he turned out to be a sage 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 could not I do as Buddha did. May be I was different. I am *sansari*, worldly. 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’. One of the stanzas in this book 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 stanza 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. From the memory. From the feeling. The first love I planted 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.

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.

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 had been self-reliant. He had been holding not only jobs but also doing social and philanthropic works. The sudden and traumatic loss inflicted tremendous pain in our heart. I fell into deep depression and complicated grieving process. I withdrew from my social life. I have even not taken any pride on my son. I assisted him at any moments of his life. Every time he visited abroad, I had flown him on my sponsor, at least with the air ticket. I used to think that let my son could see the world though it was the fruit of the sky for an ordinary teacher, like me. When he returned, he bagged 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 one of the first batch students of Faculty of Education. He managed me to bring 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 ABC of computer in the notebook. Rose used to guide me time and again. I tackled the Power Point programmed and presented my assignments in the class. I became a crazy of Information Technology. It is the sole contribution of Rose. After his passing away, I dared not to touch the laptop. Simply because I wanted to keep it as it is. When I used it, I felt, 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.

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. The last ashes and the *astu*, the residuals bone of the 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 Brahamin 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 pm. the open sky turned into cloud. I experienced the clouds were covering my mind and heart. It started to rain. The monsoon wind blew with a sudden and heavy rain. We took shelter in a near by 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 Brahamin, were with me for 12 days. He gave me his company as a facilitator. At night, he served me with fruits, black tea and hot water. We talked on different topics. It included religion, death and birth, the Ramayan, the 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 open. 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. Moved my eyes near and far. I noticed a dead 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 came back into 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 lamp post. My heart was saddened. It was crying. Tears rolled off my face. Repeatedly, I heard sound of human crying. Women were crying in pain and grief.

*

I woke up early in the morning. 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 pandit. A photo of Rose was placed on the chair. An oil lamp was lit. Agarbatti sticks were burnt. A garland, a bouquet of flower and a glass of water were offered to Rose. A condolence register was placed there.

The Death and Dying Ritual Zone (DDRZ) at Pashupati Development Region is a place of mourning. According to Hindu rituals, most of the bereaved families observe mourning for thirteen days. Some perform this ritual at their residence. Some mourn 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 Pandits provide easy but professional services. The holy Bagmati River is beside there, too.

I went to the near by market with Achyut baje. I had to buy some foodstuffs for Kiriya putri. 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* , bread 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 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. Have 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.”

The context changed when one of my relatives talked about a youth who had scheduled to fly to the 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.

A 22 years girl whose has been studying in the UK, died in a car crash after she tied knot with a 24 years old native engineer. The girl's mother has been suffering from paralysis in her left leg since she got the news. So was the experience of my neighbour. The neighbour of mine visited us in the mourning place. She is from Far- Western Development Region. She told – "A family of four members was en-route tour to Sauraha Safari. The father got car-

diac arrest. While he was being taken to the hospital, the wife fainted and finally left the world."

The experiences of my neighbour 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 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 English 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 and packed up. The clock struck 2 a.m. I utilised the sleepless time to discharge my assigned works. I felt fatigue. I could not 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 would submit them to the concerned authority. 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. 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 and hands. 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 the whole night from engaging in grief and

grief. I recalled Vivekananda's view, "Every good man follows the dictates of his conscience". I did the same.

Mine is the cause of both bondage and liberation. I welcomed sorrow and did my duty. There again I realised 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.

*

Human being Borns amidst Grief

It rained in the morning. The weather was chilly. My body was aching. I felt my body became very light. Weight lost, and weaker. 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 the child. He also used to act stupidity when he was a baby boy. Alas ! I won't 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. Entered inside the room. Picked up a pot. Handed it to her. She poured the milk, left in the verandah and moved away along her path.

Then I went to the tap. Had a cool bath. Pandits came with flowers and pooja materials, I put a fresh garland on Rose's photo. Lit a candle. I followed the pandits. Offered pooja as directed by them. 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 a 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 talked to her, "Being is grief. Human being born amidst grief. Grows up in grief. Lives in grief. Dies in grief. Does not get happiness until one lives. One, who dies happily, is a happy person".

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 neighbours. He told that he would leave the world on a particular day at around six pm. He suffered from 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, somebody 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

I did my routine work since I settled down in mourn place. My physique bore laziness. I felt I had no energy. Later I realised that I had not taken salt for three days. According to our customary practice, the salt 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 situation in one's life. But nothing can be done against the law of nature. We have to bear it" Then he read out a stanza of Kabi Shiromani Lekh Nath Paudel in the following lines. The poem reads as following -

*When the time is over, the death comes up, picks instantly up,
no one can prevent him.
Even Indra appeals bowing at his feet, it doesn't obey him.*

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

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 struggled against myeloma, a type of incurable blood cancer for nine years . 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."

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 internalise that leaving out this material body is a natural phenomena. Whenever our loss is compared to another's loss, then we realise that our severe pains and griefs are lessening to some extent. I also felt that heart is consoled at this if we find our loss is lesser than the loss others suffer. 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 hospitalised. We usually rush to the hospital. There we raise many questions about the incapacibilities of the driver and the school administration. We also show out worry about the injured'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 realise 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 realise that everything is relative. This realisation 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 half an hour. The weather cooled down. Everybody kept silent. Paused our mouths. The friends and relatives left for home amidst drizzle. I gave a look around the premises of the mourning place. 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 baja served me two bananas; a mango and a cup of black tea. During mourning periods, I relied on fruits, juice and black tea. It went for eight more days. I had avoided two meals in a day. Achyut baja informed me that *Garud Puran* - a tale of bygone ages related with death rites of the Hindus - 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 smell 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.

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EPISODE 2

Close Observers are there:
Nothing is Secret

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 the 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-five 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 fixed 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 alternatives 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 story 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 Garud Puran?" I asked Achyut.
"No, Purushotam guru has it. He will bring it in the afternoon," he replied.

At 12:30, I took my lunch. It rained in the 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 harvest a quintal. Peasants are busy in planting rice. It rained rather late. All mourners welcomed the rain. No well-wishers came to visit us.. The weather was chilly. At 2:30 pm, I sat in the verandah. Picked up the leading dailies and read the important news.

Kamala, Goma, Bidya, Radha and Sarose all 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 Puran. Purushotam guru came at 3 pm. We furnished a place for him to recite the Garud Puran.

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

According to him, Garud Puran 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 the 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 length of chapters.

The Garud Puran 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. Saunak respected and offered 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.

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

We listened to the Garud Puran. The Puran 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 Puran 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 or *Yamaraj*, the god of death, gives justice to the deceased souls according to their sinful and noble deeds. Chitragupta, 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. They are the close observers.

The Puran alerts human beings that nothing is secret. Dharmaraj treats equally to all whether they are learned or stupid, rich or poor, capable or weak. Chapter 3 of the Garud Puran 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. 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 had 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 the Garud Puran, that day there was no grief sharing and talks on death and life. The Puran itself talked to us a lot.

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

"The Puran encourages 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 hide their ill deeds. They mislead the society."

"You are right. You can wake up the slept ones. But we cannot wake up 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." I had forgotten to laugh, indeed.

"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 Purans. I have heard and recited them many occasions. Oh ! Its already 9:30 pm, 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 ?"

"No, not, yet."

"Where is *bajai*, better 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 the 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 life partner. 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 woollen rag. Pulled the blanket up to my neck. I recalled the stories of the Garud Puran.

In the Garud Puran, Hindu's death ritual has been described as one of the 16th sacraments (religious ceremony). 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 Puran is an inspiration to live a moral life. It threatens the immoral actors 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 people to maintain ecological balance as well. For example, it gives preferences to plant *Tulsi*; a herbal plant 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 Garud Puran. But I found a series of contradictions in this Puran. 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. The Garud Puran on the other hand stresses the importance of son for the continuity of the heredity. The book 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 Puran is filled with charitable acts such as the King Babhravahan performed the last ritual of the spirit Sudev and liberated his soul. The Puran 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.

The gender shift is being sought in the feminist field of Nepal. The women, who have earned university degrees, study Sanskrit, the Vedas and the Upanishads. They conduct Bhagavat Mahapuranna Saptaha, marriages and naming ceremonies. A more convincing discourse is that the sons of traditional pandits 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 pandits' 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. Therefore, the Garud 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. Many Jamaicans also believe that when someone dies, the soul goes to God; the body goes into the ground. The analysis of these belief systems persuaded me that Rose also took the journey towards God.

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Knowledge is Open to All

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 Patrika*" a vernacular daily newspaper. We shared the pages.

"The paper is full of flood victim stories. The Eastern part of Nepal 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 want to donate our clothes and some money. Where should we hand them over?" I asked him.

"You can bring those in our office at Banakali. Within a fortnight; we set out 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 Puran." 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, my home town. 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 3pm. Purushotam guru was ready to recite the Garud Puran. 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 Puran turn by turn.

A context is found in the Puran. If Shudras read Vedas, they fall in the Vaitarani River. 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 Puran 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 Puran. 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. 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. 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. Sikh 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.

Impact of Son Child in the Society

A noble son who is gained from wedded wife 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 enables to attend heaven whereas son gained from unwedded wife takes one to the hell. There is a dialogue in the Garud Puran between Babhrubahan and Sudev. The former is a King whereas the latter is a spirit. The dialogue has 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 requests 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 says 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?

I raised a question, "Doesn't Garuda Puran 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 Garud Puran". The capable children are solace in parents' old age.

I found that most of the bereaved Hindu families recite the Puran. 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 , Mura-ri , 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 . 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.

"What is the position of daughter in case she has to do the 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 names 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 father/mother breaking old traditions. The educated or socially/ politically influenced daughters are showing their courage to change the social norms. They have been also coming forward to perform the death rituals of their fathers. They also get tonsured - shaving off - the hair of the head. 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.

We listened the Puran 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 was on leave for two days. Nava Raj 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.

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Service to Fellow Friend is Service to God

It was 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 favourites 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 type of 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 indications.

It was 2:30 pm. We were sitting reluctantly. Purushotam guru arrived to read the Puran. 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, "Excuse me. I could not recognise you."

"Rose is a *devadoot*, 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 treat 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 (present everywhere), omniscient (knowing everything) and omnipotent (supreme). This is the *dibyadarsan*, revelation. God is here and heaven is here, too. We only need thoughtful and insightful heart/ or mind. 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 say, "When you are in the service of your fellow beings you are only in the service of your God." This is the service that counts, brethren."

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 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 person righteousness (morally high). With these mental occurring, I heard pandit by saying, "Now its time to start the Garud Puran. First, I read out the verses of Sanskrit, after that explain it in Nepali.

"The pandit first recited the prayer before beginning the Puran. It is written in Sanskrit language. He read the stanzas and summarised them in Nepali language.

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Importance of Donations

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

In the earlier days, people used to donate things made of gold. They 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 Puran also talks about land donation. It says 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*, meritorious action, and everyday. cow donation emancipates one from the sins done in childhood, adolescence, youth and old age.

Religion earns wealth. The wishes are fulfilled by the religion. Religion offers *moksha*, salvation. Let religious or good deeds be done. The same book also mentions about the importance of Tulasi and Kush, shaligram and Ganga water. The house that possesses the shrine of Tulsi is regarded as *Tirtha*; pilgrimage spot. The messenger of Yamaraj cannot approach there. Tulsi, Kush and Saligram have great importance in Hindu rituals.

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. In the sraddha or at special poojas, 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 an 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, God Vishnu resting period and celebrate *Tulasi Vivaha*, marriage, with Vishnu on *Haribodhani Ekadashi*, God Vishnu awakening period. 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.

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 (produces) oxygen and not carbon dioxide at night, unlike other plants.” 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 favourable ceremonies.

Like Tulsi, Kush has also the botanical name i.e. *Eragrostis cynosuroides*. On Vedic rituals like Havan or Pitri pooja, one need to wear a ring made of Kush on his right hand ring finger or forefinger. 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, rituals for the deads
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.

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 Brinda's *sati dharma*, chastity. When he did that Sati Brinda gave four

curses to 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 danger 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. The Saligram is available in Mustang, the Kali-Gandaki River, Mukti-nath, Damodar Himal, Damodar Kunda, Devaghat of Nepal. Ridhi, in Palpa district is also famous for Shaligrams. Serving Ganga-water at the time of dying, releases the individual from all kinds of sins, gets fruit of taking bath in all the holy rivers.

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 charitable job done.

After the Garud Puran, 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 mourning place 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.

*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 ! No body forecasts;
In memory until the life lasts.*

Jagat, my brother - aunts's youngest son - 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 sound 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 Mecca; 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.

*

EPISODE 3

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

I woke up at 4:30 am, 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 Putri 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*. It means wife should be before the eyes; and the wealth in the hand. 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 analysts. When the woman does not get continuous caring, equal relationship with a sympathetic man she leaves such husband. The same might have happened with him. Love is the key ingre-

dient in love, which results in understanding, respect, forgiveness and humility. When you learn to accept and forgive with humbleness, love wins over pride. 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.

"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 Puran. 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 Puran 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 to en route 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. If capable, one should also donate house, land and vegetable garden.

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 .

It was 7 pm.

"*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 honour 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 *sinika*, 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. 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.

*

Puran Imparts Family, Social-Health, Moral and Reproductive Education

I came over 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 mangoes. I rolled two off. She picked them up; and began eating. Two other came to snatch the food. I threw a few more mangoes and bananas at them. They are habituated to feed themselves wondering amidst the grievers. 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 goers, Rose's friends, relatives, neighbours, friends, mine and Kamala's colleagues and sympathisers.

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, Garud Puran 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 even days (6,8, 10,12,14,16) after menstruation, the conception signifies the son, whereas the odd periods bear the daughter. Furthermore, the fourteenth day's conception bestows with the fortunate and religious son.

It is an interesting aspect of the Puran 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 favour of Personal and social health education, population, and sex education."

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

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

"Yes. Purans are based on the conversational style and story-telling 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 is based on scientific knowledge on the birth of a boy and girl child. 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. The scientific practice of fertilization between x-x and x-y chromosomes is similar to the advice of the Brahmins given during the Garud Puran 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, reproductive education should also be made a part of religious gatherings such as Bahagavat Gyan Maha Yangya.

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Knowledge Only Can Bring *Kaibalya Mukti*

Guru turned the sixteenth chapter that read on matters like knowledge, *mukti*, the salvation, and the sacred places of neighbouring India that offer *mukti* to the people. The Puran 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; Chhinna-masta; 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.

The Indian religious scholars did not pay attention to it while the Nepali scholars were not assertive. As a result, every year many peo-

ple 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 writes, wealth is like a dream, youth is like a blossomed flower and age is flexible as the electricity. Here my 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. 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.

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 neighbour, 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*, the elite caste get *Vidya*, Knowledge,

Kshatriyas, warriors get the ability to safeguard the earth, *Vaishya*, business class become rich / get wealth, and *Shudra*, the untouchable attain purity from the sins." 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.

Garud 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 nut shell, the Garud Puran can be named as "social conduct."

*

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".

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

After completing my everyday routine, I opened the laptop which I consider "it" as a 'souvenir' from Rose. Unwillingly I checked the E-mails. Professors and classmates wrote me -

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

Dear Love Joshi Sir,

I am extremely sorry to hear this news.

May God give you and your family courage and strength to bear such an unexpected grief.

My wife and myself express condolence to you and your family.

We remain,

Tirtha Raj Parajuli and Sharada Devi Parajuli

Tirtha Raj Parajuli [mailto:tirtharaj_parajuli@yahoo.com]

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

T.U. Education <tumphil@gmail.com >

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.

-pawan bimali <pbimali@yahoo.com

Dear love sir,

It shock me hearing such matter of that tragedy and may god be with you to 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

Sir/Madam,

News as I heard is not really tolerable but has to bear as mortal human being 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>

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 their precious time 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. 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.’ I realized that message of the Geeta is hidden in their writings.

*

Grief Brings Transformation

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 *pan-chapatra*, 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.

Life is Transitory

*Day and night;
I stayed at DDRZ.
A traumatic place;
With the incessant-
Cries of the kins.
Observing unpleasant scene.
Dined unwillingly.
Expressed sympathy.
Extended condolences.
Narrated death stories.
Shared grief
Grievers were preached to-
Rectify wrong conducts; and
Evil course of life.
Life is transitory.*

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 above lines-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 concretises after the loved one is lost. Grief brings transformation in life. I heartily learnt that 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 world views. However, my 'self-actualizations' remain as it is. I am an un-compromised 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 pandits figured out that approximately one hundred thousand Brahmins rely on religious ceremony as well as funeral rituals. They were self-employed. The state policy is lacking in this field. Sanskrit and Vedic literature learned and vocationally trained persons are surviving on their performance. They are 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 entertain 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 situation. 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. Moreover, corruption is pervasive where there is no strong hold of law and order. I agree with North & Gwin (2006). They have opined, "We find that the strength of the rule of law and the level of corruption both depend on country's religious heritage. So did Stark, (2001) who argued that only religions with strong conceptions of God or gods are actually able to sustain a moral order. There is a higher correlation between morality and religiosity. In spite of our cultural heritage, corruption was taking in an institutional shape. The DDRZ has become the victim of misbehavior or corruption. Why people have tolerated 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 justice. 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 pandits 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

I left the bed 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 am, the pandits claimed their presence. The relatives also thronged. The *sraddha*, the obsequies rites, observed for the peace of deceased soul and the purification of the mourning periods. Purushotam guru, the head pandit, 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 pandits completed the *havan*, offering sacred things in the fire. The head pandit 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 pandits as suggested by the head pandit. 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 for his assigned role. 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 knew the hierarchy among the

pandits, the emotions with the bereaved family, and the duty of the hired Kiriya Putri. The three things were working together to ensure eternal peace to Rose.

At 2 pm, Kamala led the pandits 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 had avoided the salt for twelve days. I persuaded them to take *prasad* with the relatives. I have made my mind up to have *prasad* along with them. I kept waiting for my workstation colleagues. No one came until five pm. 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 pm., I saw Mana Maya off. I thanked her a lot for attending. 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 thirty minutes. My mind indicated me about an absence of my friend, Nirmala Upretty. She was only my colleague - friend. She was always with me in my happy days and 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 the mourning place. 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

learnt 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.

In mourning period we got (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 (Strobe and Strobe 1987). I believe that counselling plays a vital role in grieving process.

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.

But we had lost our son, Rose. No way to recover. Never can be regained. Rose is beyond our reach. We were pushed into a vacuum. Here I remembered Buddha's way of teaching to the mother Kisa Gotami who lived in Sravasthi. 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 (measure depth) 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 eternalised 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 were more numerous than the living ones, she was told.

Towards evening, she finally knew 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.

Twilight descended. The dark clouds covered the sky of Pashupati Development 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 neighbours of DDRZ and beg to leave. We exchanged 'sees off'. The grievers grieve the grievers.

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 mourning venu. What a tragic situation knocked us down ! Life is a drama. It possessed 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 mourn period.

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. I may not be wrong if I say a man borns to die, any way.
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 .
3. Words signify the objects. Some are concretely visible and some are invisible. Here I became the follower of the existentialists.
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. Honour 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 mourn place 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 griever.

13. Life and death are based on reality. What we see or perceive in concrete is reality. 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. Therefore, these two words dominate the Hindu religious worldview. I believe that universe exists. Living beings are part of it. Systems of honouring the departed souls are extravagant. It should be reformed and rectified by the educated persons.

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EPISODE 4

Sa Paru : Pathway to Heaven for Departed Soul

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. Once King Pratap Malla's son died. The queen remained shocked and unable to speak. So the King wanted to see little smile on the 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 colourful processions, presented stage dramas full of humours and satires. They began ridiculing and befooling 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 and so on 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. Every family who has lost their 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.

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 had 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 neighbour playing the role of a *sadhu* at Sa Paru in Butwal. But today, I was holding my elder son- Rose's photograph and walking.

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 teach 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. Some nihilist thinkers believe that death is the absolute end; 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." With this realization, we returned home at 7:30 pm. Our cultural festival was observed for the eternal peace of Rose.

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Bala Chaturdasi : A Noted Day in the Spiritual World

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 honour day for the departed souls. It is marked in the 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 complexes. 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. During that, time people used to talk as well. According to a legend, a person called Balananda 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. 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 life came under threat. People regretted the fact that they deceived him and so began to practice Bala Chaturdasi for seeking forgiveness from Bala.

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 sad beej. 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 hurt. I thought critically. It is the waste of food grains. If we utilize 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 had 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 other seeds. 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 a 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 con-

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. 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 *dharmabhīru*, god fearing or a coward, afraid of dishonouring 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. 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. 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. Institutionalised cultural capital consists of institutional recognition. 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. 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 recognised 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 for two years. 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 natu-

rally exceeded in the same ratio. I saw the same scene of collecting the bee and got the same answers as 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 realised 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 internalised 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.

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Sraddha Enables the Soul to Find an Unobstructed Way to Travel

Rose's departure completed six months. We performed sraddha at home. Purushotam guru accomplished the ritual. On this occasion, I remembered Garud 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.

The Garud 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".

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 life.

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 performances and his social service. It has been severally prolonging. I accepted it as a routine work. But his mom said that Rose died in the prime time of merriment. Whenever some delicious meals are prepared, his mom 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-

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, Kamala 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 (stay for short). 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. 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 verses in the morning and two in the evening. You'll complete Geeta in six months."

She heartily recited the Geeta. Day after day, she became cheerful. Smiles appeared on her face. Her face brightened. She completed reciting the Geeta in two hundred and forty days- eight months. She told me that the Geeta could give her mental peace. “Krishna is really *jagat guru*,’ the teacher of the world”, she now says. Here I felt that people in difficult times need counsellor, the book, the person, and the place. But, did we teach the people that way ? Kamala used to cry at midnight, between midnight to 2 am. She dreamt occasionally. She usually felt anxious, afraid, grieved, felt 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. According to Garifield (1997), 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.

I agree with Garfield that dream world is a medium of communication between the dead and living ones. The dead has 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 fulfilment of a repressed wish. Excessive depression in the shape of melancholia and mania, make the most tormenting - severe physical or mental suffering - or disturbing inroads upon the life of the person concerned.

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 internet 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 favourable 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, who 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 to 7 pm. 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 proposed 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 to 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 analysed the dream. A dream is a disguised fulfilment of a suppressed or repressed wish (Freud, 1965). I dreamt in the *Brahma muburta*, 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, hat-

ed them, or hold them. Sooner or later, we have some of these dreams. Perhaps you have had 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' The deal is in the preliminary stage. We can cancel the deal. We can refund the advance money. My heart says 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 possess 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 realised 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 -

Sarose,

Sep24

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

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.

Sarose,

Sep 30

Today we had three- party meeting at Bidding House.

We returned the buyer's advance money. We have taken the original agreement paper (Baina Likhat) from the mediator, the Bidding House; and xerox copy from the buyer. All are with us.

We have rescued our sweet home.

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 returned from the deal

-Daddy

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

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, too. At that

time, they would not consider us a relative or a kin but treat us as a buyer or a seller who possesses quiet 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 found 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 came to know 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 Malla 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.

One of the modern philosophies and Freud's student Carl Jung believed that dreams remind us of our wishes, which enables us to realise the things we unconsciously yearn for, and helps us to fulfil our own wishes.

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." My dream was not an exception, which was mentioned above. I think that dream makes 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 super sensible world, time becomes space. 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.

*

Home is the walking stick of the old Age

I understood 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 roof 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 favour 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 of superstructure. 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". 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. Accomplished all the requirements: assignments, presentations, seminars, mini researches and succeeded in two Semesters of Examinations. But Rose's demise shattered all my schedules. We came under

the grief. It shocked Kamala. I spared no stones to bring her in normal situation. I valued her feelings. I listened to Kamala. She was right. She was 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 owns selfishness.

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

- (a) Provident Fund; (b) bank loan against gold; (c) 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 Kosb*, Employees Provident Fund.

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 *noon bhutan*. 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 school teachers of Nepal both of us came to know that we did a lot of progress. Both Kamala and me were teachers for long. But our life in the 80s was different from today. Then 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 Shrestha. So I used to imitate almost every characteristics of my English teacher. This was one of the reasons that I became an English teacher. I performed my all roles.

The then teachers were the sole source of every political, economic, cultural and educational information in the society, mostly in the places where there was 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 honour in village whereas in the urban sectors, they were taken as professionals. The decade prolonged insurgency period in the country (1995 –2005) made teachers unstable in the villages and they shifted to the capital city and major towns. And yet they were regarded as "generator of knowledge", "distributor of knowledge" and "controller of knowledge." But the teachers liked us were confused in these three roles. M.Phil. made me think 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 organisations 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' organisations 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. 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. They often lack a strong, long-term commitment to teaching as a vocation.

In our case, both Kamala and I did not entertain the same work environment as so 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 centre 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, 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 reorganisation. At this, I realised that I had paid the debt of my guru Chandra Dhoj because I had passed the high school 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 my home town 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. Moreover, I got an opportunity to promote Gyanodaya Lower Secondary School that was conducted in the same premise in the day time into full phase recognised 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 Trivubhan University.

Since 1991, I taught in Kathmandu, sometimes as the head teacher; and sometimes as an English teacher. I taught English more than forty years. I did not practise private tutoring culture. Kamala had been a teacher since 1971. She taught Social Studies. She became the head teacher in 1988. 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 government-funded school as "rest place." 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-educational activities include farming in rural areas and trading in urban areas. But in case of Kamala and me, we are satisfied with what we were earning. We are always so proud of what we did. We considered teaching profession was our luck and fortune. We had been dedicated to this occupation since we joined it. Our hard work and determination had been materialised.

We did not joined any other jobs. We did not practice "private tuition culture", even though I had long been a teacher of English. We earned some money from house rent. My son Sarose is an IT professional. He learned and earned in Hyderabad in India. He even got opportunities to visit the United States and worked for a few years in relation to his official responsibility. We managed our normal expenses as low-middle class Nepalese do.

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

He 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.

When his fans and sympathisers 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 Bang-

kok. 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. His friend reminded me the story. People say that the sudden and traumatic bereavement of a loss may take three or four years to normal. 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.

For most bereaved individuals, friends and family are most comforting when they are honest in their inability to understand, and their wiliness to listen. 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 that 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. Narrative is the best way to understand the human experience, because it is the way person understands his/her own life. This has been a journey I know I will never forget constructing this auto ethnography story which 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 Rose 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 Rose died. As exhausting and painful as this experience has been for me I have learned more than I could have dreamed throughout the process.

Prof. Koirala encouraged me to write my personal narratives around the death of Rose in auto ethnography literature. It was both a method and a theory for how humans develop a sense of self and create and recreate society. This is what I chose as my dissertation.

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EPISODE 5

Gloomy Festivals : The Cultural Identity

We performed Rose's annual sraddha at Banakali, Pashupati area, in the scriptural method. An Annual ritual is an essential part in the customary practice. *Ekaha*, reciting of the Bhagawat by a group of pandits in a day, was one of the core items of the death rite. 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 on this day. All the pandits received the remuneration as the head pandit directed. We haven't been rescued from the esteem grief, a year passed promptly. But we learnt that time is powerful. No one can detain the time. 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.

Festivals knocked at every doorsteps of Nepali people. Our grieving period lasted for a year. Non of the festivals were marked that fell during the year long. 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 because the weather becomes mild. It informs people that Dashain, the great festival of the Nepalis is approaching at their doorsteps. We celebrated the Dashain in a simple manner. We gave priority to meditation, prayer, worship of goddess Durga 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.

Next festival *Tihar*, the Deepawali went in the same way. It went for five days. We worshipped crow, as a messenger bird, dog, as the closest pet of humans, the cow, as mother among domesticated animals, *Laxmi*, as the goddess of wealth, Gobardhan pooja, worshipped of bullock and hill. *Mha pooja*, worship of ones own body or soul and finally *Bhai pooja*, worshipping brothers.

Mha pooja is a major part of Tihar for the Newar Community in Nepal. From this very day every new year-Nepal Era - begins, which occurred in Gregorian calendar. In this ritual, the female head of family conducts worshipping of every member of the family. All the family members sit in a row according to seniority in age. The special invitees- relatives, neighbours, and guests are also heartily included in this procedure. She prays the Almighty for their personal good health, long life and happiness. She marks their foreheads with red

teeka. She showers 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 touches their knees and shoulders to indicate that she is offering prayer to the god for their good future. She offers *jajanka*, a sacred round thread and garland of marigold. She does her own worship as well on a *mandap*, a circle, along with the members.

She hands over the lighted-thread and fruit to all the candidates. Thereafter, she presents the *sagun*-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 Mha pooja. Kamala, our head of female members, 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 had emotional attachment with Rose that 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.

We faced the same situation as the Indian saying reads- "*Ghar ghar me Deewali hai, mere ghar me andhera.*" There is light in every house but my house is plunged into darkness. We missed Rose very much. We evaluated his contributions rendered to his fellow friends and society.

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

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 a little while to make her happy.

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 years. Kamala had not visited her brother for a long. She wished and greeted her brother on phone. She apologised for being absent at the very day. Sarose does not possess 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.

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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 heart aches. 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.

All of our family members saw Rose in the dream. I, too, had seen him with me. He was seen at our home town, Butwal, 255 km away from the capital city. 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 had dreamt him worrying about his NGO's progress. When the project deadline was about to exceed Rose came 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 recognised the project. His sole soul was with the project.

We believe that Rose would continue to come on in our dreams long after he had passed away. We see him, yearn for him, talk with him, love him, fear him, hate him, or hold him. Eventually, you will have some of these dreams. Perhaps you have already !

One early morning at about 4 am, 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. A day later, the bank responded affirmatively. There I assumed 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. Socrates was one of the believers of the dreaming. He learnt music and arts because of the dream instructions. Middle Eastern Dreamers like Gabdorrhachamn predicted his dreams by a person with a clean spirit, chaste morals the World of Truth .

Tibetans also believe that dreams are extremely personal - and transpersonal, too. They categorised dream into ordinary, karmic and from previous life activities, thoughts, experiences, and contacts. They predict clear light dreams as spiritual visions, blessings, and energy openings.

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.

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.

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

Dreaming a snake at night is good. However, day dreaming is mere play of mind, seeing snake in dream is to be ignored.

Accidents involving with vehicles represent insecurities about ones motivation and ambition.

There is a form of afterlife. 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 -

*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. Meaning is created through symbolic interaction between individuals. 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 of when I 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 myself, 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 aide in the process. For those in the counselling 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. I realised 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 realised, but what I thought, I have here is a core of writings that gives 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 understood 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. I did know 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. 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.

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Pilgrimage for Sraddha

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. Our schools remained closed for one-month winter vacation. This time is considered 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 then was 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, Munnar in Kerala and paying visits to some en routed religious places.

My sister in-law, Radha, who had been to South India before also emphasised us to visit and ensured to give us her company.

I booked three-tier second-class seats in the Indian Railway. We caught the train from Gorakhpur Junction. 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 renowned place Tirupati Balajee Temple at Tirumali, the richest temple in the world. I was very much impressed with the nature friendly highway construction between Tirupati and Tirumali. The road has been constructed maintaining all the safety measures of hillside road construction principles. It has conserved flora and fauna. "*Om Benkateshowraya nama*" mantra has 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 option. 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. 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 us, people might have found mental relief and peace.

I saw Sarose off at 5:30 pm. 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.

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Tirtha Sraddha

We reached Rameshowram via Bangalore and Madhurai.

Rameshowram is the eleventh incarnation of Lord Shiva. According to Shiva Puran (Second Part, 2005 Chapter 42nd,p. 1669), Lord Ram himself set up Rameshowram Shiva Linga.

It is the publicly recognised place for doing sraddha. Its importance has also been stated in the Shiva Mahapuram -

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

At 10 am, we went to the Ocean shore. We took bath. A handful of water entered into my mouth. It tasted very salty. It happened so because we were 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 neighbours 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 three hundred rupees for it." I accepted his demand.

We had carried the necessary pooja materials from home. The purohit 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 over to the purohit. He gave one hundred rupees to his assistant. Kamala was seen very cheerful after the ritual.

She said, " My wishes fulfilled. We did the sraddha in this sacred place. The next destination is Kanya Kumari".

India pilgrimage was a form of "transference" Here transference is taken as a change of location or place, environment, people, food-stuffs 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 of spiritual and physical reality in her behaviour. 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 Rameshowram 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 feminist view that "the essential features of feminist epistemology include placing women at the centre of inquiry, reducing or eliminating the boundary between the knower and the known. 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 from generation to generation through learning. It was just the inheritance of the ways of acting, thinking, and feeling of a culture. 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. 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. Kamala had shown deep respect for the *Pitris*, the dead world since we got married. She was of opinion that we should honour the souls of our ancestors who gave us precious life. In the past 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 have been practising the *pitri karya*, act of paying devotion to the souls. Kamala is 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* , worshipping of the departed souls, 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 realised the importance of feminist theoreticians who believed that "Feminist theory recognises and emphasises the fact that women's experiences are important, and the validity of women' perceptions must be known and valued." 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 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 Cochi 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. At that time, we were 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!

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

We arrived in Kanya Kumary at 4:45 am. A middle-aged guide in dhoti-kurta led us to a hotel. Locked our luggage in the room. Moved to the Ocean shore. We wanted to enjoy the sunrise view. 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 stay long. The water was very cold in the morning. The tides showered me, too.

In Kanya Kumari, we got a Madrasi tongued pandit. 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 all the names 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 Pandit seemed well experienced in the rituals. Whatever he chanted perfectly matched with the pandits 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 pandit asked, "You are from Nepal. You must have visited Muktinath, haven't you?" You might have performed sraddha in Kagbeni. You live at the height of pilgrimages. Those are topmost muktikshetra, places of transcendental."

"Yes, certainly. Our elder son endeavoured for it. We had paid a visit to Muktinath in April in recent year. We did sraddha in Kagbeni, en routed 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, we did it in Rameshowram, too. Our younger son facilitated our India pilgrimage. We have been India since January," 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. we have faith on God but not a blind faith. We practice 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*, client has come. I will be busy now. Bye. Have a nice journey."

"Baba, thank you very much."

The pandit 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 pandit reminded me about the importance of Muktinath. Immediate, an entrepreneur's words stroked me, "Nepal is full of innumerable bio-diversity. We could not recognise the rare heritage. We never light an oil lamp to search the wonderful stuffs and the things in our treasures". 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 are renowned for religious and pilgrimage fields. The seashore is the most fruitful place for performing yagya and worshipping.

The Shiva Puran has stated the importance of pilgrimage -

"Mantra-chanting and reciting hymns are the pooja performed by wording. Pilgrimage and fasting etc are physical yagya. This means we had been doing wordy worships by saying.

We accomplished the physical yagya, too.

Kamala uttered, "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."

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.

We felt relaxed. We had done our core duty. The colourful ships and the boats were floating in the Ocean. We wanted to sail to the centre of the Ocean near Vivekananda statue.

The blue and splashing tides of the Ocean attracted our heart and mind. It was very precious moment for us. But it was mid-day. Tides started raising high. Booking tickets closed till 2 pm. We could not wait for it as we had to move for Trivandrum. Instead we bought dozens of live pearls from the fishermen. I proposed to have snap shots at the banks of Kanya Kumari. Kampala and me stood beside the boats and Radha went on clicking. Then after I gave her the turn. At that time we were connected to the Ocean which was our dream to have there. The dream had changed into reality. We kept watching the Ocean until a splash of strong tides hit the shore. The scorching sun, blue deep water of the Ocean and ethno diversity of laborious people pleased us very much. Thirst compelled us to have coconut juice. We asked the vendor for larger coconut. The drink is not so handy in Nepal. We went on drinking, but could not finish. We were very

much satisfied when we drank only a half quantity. Even could not eat the raw coconut flesh.

On way to our hotel, we worshipped goddess Kanya Kumari. Kamala got a special darsan of Devi Mata.

I noticed Kamala relaxed. Her wishes of pilgrimage resulted in reality. She was consoled. I found that "pilgrimage" as a -Yoga - 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, "Keep engaged to complete M.Phil."

My M.Phil. Thesis was pending. I was in dilemma. The traumatic situations did not favour 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. However, in the eastern world, ideally, women have been placed in equal position but practically they are- not given the same status. So, 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 Prakrity and Purush as complementary force. The reason is that the creation ceases in absence of a woman and the man. The Islamic philosophy matches with that of Hinduism. Islam realises that there is a single humanity, a single essence, and there are twin halves of which one is man and one is woman.

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. So is Kamala, my better-half. I acquired higher education under her love and care. She had empowered me. Therefore, I am lucky that Kamala has been incredibly supportive. Her inspiration was "my new dawn" for M.Phil – completion.

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Muktinath Pilgrimage

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

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.

In the Shreemad Bhagawat Mahapuran, it is mentioned that *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.*

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. (Part II, Chapter: 45 p.344)

Two years before, Rose's demised, I had recited the Srimad Bhaavat-Mahapuran. The verse touched me, and then I highlighted it on

the page with the green colour. 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-Mahapuran. He had not left any stones unturned. Our hearts filled with pride and grief, at the same time.

Generally, in our country 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. It is called "Land of Gods." However, we were not able to manage to go to this blissful region even at our 50s. We were waiting for God's mercy.

From the ancient time this region is known as *Mufti Kshetra*, 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. Moreover, Muktinath is an important and a sacred pilgrimage site for the devotees of Lord Vishnu 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 Hindus! 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 at Jomsom Airport. The time was 11:45am. 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. Sometime 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 skilful in handling the horse that we bore no fear. We practiced horse riding.

Whenever Hindus are en routed 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 pm. 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 elsewhere 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 pandits who take care of the temple, and invited one of them to perform *sraddha* before the sun set. The pandit 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 pandit 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 Jhyabbling'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 runs from the glacier. There is a pond beside the water-spouts. 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 Vishnu 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 is one more shrine worth to see. It is 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. I experienced the reality, the reality that the Yogis seek.

The visit of Muktinath made me realise 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 reads , "*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, neighbours 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. Life is the plan of time, not mine or yours. Put the dying and the death into the context of the whole life lived. It thrilled me. The Geeta says that we have come in the world, we must part from here anytime. Until we survive let, us be *karmayogi*. 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.

Positioning

Where is Rose now?

I have known that Rose had been assimilated into *Panchamahabhutas*. According to Hindu beliefs *bhutatma*, human beings, dissolved within God head 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. 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 reflect the context. 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 and end of evolution. I could not convince myself that whether Rose had gone to light path or dark path as Hindu described. However, I realised 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 realised 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 came to know 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. 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 attended 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 became aware 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.

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Learnings and Findings of My Experience

During the writing of the grief journal, I would like to mention the following learnings and findings as my experience.

The people we love or hate-will eventually die, and so we shall be. Death is natural and certain. There is no possible way to escape it. No one ever has, not even Ram; Krishna; Buddha; Jesus or Mohammad. Accept and manage death properly.

1. The Hindu death rituals are vague and expensive. Collective and creative efforts should be made to simplify, modify and reachable to average people. 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.
2. The Geeta preaches us that the soul is immortal, only the physical body dies. We should remember, commemorate and honour the soul of the loved one on Sa Paru, Bala Chaturdasi,

Shradhas, one's own 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*," consider departed souls as the God. The departed souls wish or desire nothing. Pray Almighty for his / her eternal peace. I believe in soul.

3. 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 a community school - Siddheshwor Secondary School, Shantinagar, Kathmandu - 34, where Kamala worked for 15 years as a Headteacher. It will have social value and last for a long time.
4. The Hindu tradition of observing shradhas is the precious rituals. It is our prosperous symbol of culture; honour it. In the same way, Sa Paru is an ethno-cultural heritage of Newar Community. Culture is one's own identity. If needed, simplify and modify it. The new generation should keep it alive in exception to the modernity.
5. 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.
6. Act of extending condolences to the grievors 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. Expressing griefs through evocative

autoethnographic research consoled Rose's mother and me. It reduced our pains largely. I found that writing is a therapy. 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.

7. 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. What would you do if you encounter the same circumstances as I had?

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.

8. 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 socialising process concretises after the loved one is lost. Grief brings transformation in life. I felt it 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.

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Hindu Birth and Death: The Basis of My Story

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 departed 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 realised 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.

I also reflected why Hindus believe that they will be reborn into a future that is based primarily on their past thoughts and actions. 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 priest performs the last rituals and guides the right path, according to their tradition.

The knowledge above helped me to imbue (inspire) that death, dying and rebirth are mysterious phenomenon. Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism and Buddhism follow the concept of rebirth or reincarnation. 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 the 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. 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. In the same way the Sikhs believe that the soul is passed from one body to another until liberation. 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." 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. Liberal Christians believe in Heaven and Hell, an underground cavern (

chamber) 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. However, reincarnation is not an essential tenet (principle) 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. 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. For the Maoris of New Zealand death is 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 is closely interwoven with the physical world. The spirit is believed to have a chance to be re-born 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 am lack of "divine eyes." Here I found that I am a material human with very little limited ability. I believed that if there is life, then there is death. For the heaven, my postulate is as of 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. 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. These 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 hypnotised condition of the rituals. 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. 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 of the departed soul. I acted in emotion. I could not be rational. 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, honour and affection*: Loosing one's own loved one caused to pay a great respect, honour and affection. My community culture respects and honours 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 heavenly peace-place.
5. *Theory of immortal of soul*: I realised the 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 ritual Pandits.
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 individu-

als 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. Life not only creates the soil, it is the soil itself

7. *Theory of therapy*: I have heartily understood 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.

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A LOST LOVE

Grand Summary

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, Rose. Therefore, I grieved, as everyone does.

The grounded knowledge in the premises of Death and Dying Rituals Zone made me realise that birth and death are natural phenomenon. The Practice of the Garud 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 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 griever could heal my pains.

In one 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 embodiedness 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.

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 story. 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 the 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.

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. Garud Puran, The Geeta, the Shiva Mahapuram, 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 Pan-chamahabhutas (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.

Training and education transformed me. Before joining M.Phil, I was strict to my students. I was a traditional guru. I pressurised 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 world views.

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 initiate this process.

4. General medical practitioners; psychologists; psychiatrists; counsellors 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.

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ENDING IS FOR BEGINNING
BECAUSE JOURNEY OF LEARNING
NEVER ENDS.

A LOST LOVE

ABOUT THE BOOK

Crying creates pain to the dead. It is the understanding of Garuda Puran. Heavy heart gets light after crying. Western psychologists argue this way. Our learning lies in between them. Relatives, kin and friends add ghee to the fire. While crying - they ask, being learned person why did you cry on the name of dead person. At laughing – they reversely ask how insensitive you are, you don't cry at loved ones loss. While extending condolences - they say this is the case with us as well, the same is our path, it is sooner or later. While consoling - they say, my loved ones also passed away in the same way as that of yours. The rites and rituals on the name of the dead person buy the time in itself to console heart and mind of the bereaved family. Philosophy teaches cyclic theory. It says, death is to birth and birth is to death. It also says the fact of the life is the death. In this very way, everyone internalise the fact that physical, mental and eternal body live side by side with life. It also says that eternal body exists even after the physical death of a person.

The preachers preach that eternal body lives even after the decay of mental body. They teach that life cycle completes only after the assimilation of eternal soul into the spiritual soul. For them it is the assimilation of *prakriti and purush* - nature and male. The Vedic and Buddhist way of understanding comply here. Their common voice is that unless there is mental body, life and death continue. The present book came up with the sudden loss of writer's son and it ends teaching philosophy. In the same philosophy, his life boat is rowing - being one in many. Being many in one.

Dr. Bidya Nath Koirala