

Nature of Death & How to overcome Fear

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DEATH IS NORMALLY CONSTRUED AS a permanent and irreversible biological state. However, science has not been able to fully define death, let alone understand it. Doctors use term such as 'clinical dead' 'brain dead' and 'standstill', yet it is clear from the scientific evidence that death is still very much a mystery in scientific circles. The fear of death traumatizes the greater part of humanity and causes many unwanted problems. It reduces the quality of life of individuals. And this is because society, generally speaking, has been negligent in its education of people this aspect of our lives.

Most of us at some point finally get around to writing a will so that our assets and property will be distributed the way we want, when we die. But what about the essence of who we are? How do we leave those we love, with a sense of our values, our wisdom, our ideas, our reflections of life and, finally our blessings to them?

The fear of death, which is the fear of permanent loss, of permanent separation, fear of the unknown, often caused by indoctrinated untruths, is a reality in people's lives. There is abundant anecdotal, historical metaphysical, philosophical, psychiatric and scientific evidence, which is increasing daily, of the continuation of consciousness after physical death.

Surveys of those who have suffered episodes which have been labeled 'Near Death Experience' and 'Out of Body Experiences' are being published regularly and they clearly demonstrate the loss of fear of physical death in people who experienced and acquired an understanding of the metaphysical and spiritual significance of dropping the outer shell, that is, of dying physically, and of undergoing a natural process which, I believe. We all have undergone many times, due to process of reincarnation.

Egostical pseudo-courage in the face of death is useless. Death can only be faced with the proper knowledge, which gives faith, confidence and joy. With such knowledge, fear is transmuted into the awareness and into acceptance of natural process. Just as all ancient sacred texts talk about the survival of consciousness beyond physical death, all religions base their concept of the soul upon that entity which outlives the body. All true spiritual Masters recognise that consciousness is distinct from the physical and survives the death of the body. Guru Arjun says: "ਪਵਨੈ ਮਹਿ ਪਵਨੁ ਸਮਾਇਆ ॥ ਜੋਤੀ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਰਲਿ ਜਾਇਆ ॥ ਮਾਟੀ ਮਾਟੀ ਹੋਈ ਏਕ ॥ ਰੋਵਨਹਾਰੇ ਕੀ ਕਵਨ ਟੇਕ॥ (SGGS 885). That is: when a person dies the air mingles with the air, the soul merges with the Prime soul, (fire mingles with fire) the human body mingles with the dust. The persons crying and waiting at death are weeping on whose death? No one has died, as elements like air, fire and earth have mingled with the basic elements.

In reality, the soul's dwelling in the material body deludes it so much that it thinks 'I can live on material food, stand on earth and enjoy material surroundings. Without these I am nowhere and nothing. 'So whatever the conscious sees it recognizes with itself. The Soul then wants everything to be nice and pleasant for its comfort

and vanity... and through its life is in pursuit of these things. Then when death comes, the entire edifice crumbles.

This disappointment is the only death there is, ... for the body is nothing but a covering put over the soul.... and when it is gone, we are not dead. It is just like we are alive, when our coat is worn out or someone tears our shirt. The soul still remains in tact ... it only requires new garment now. This in essence, is reality of death. Why do we fear death? We do not like to talk about death. The reason commonly given is that it is a negative talk, let us deal with life now and we will deal with death later. We live and we die. We as pragmatic persons like to deal with life and not worry about what happens after death. Why bother about finding out?

There is a deep seated fear in all of us about dying. Death is so real. It happens all around us all the time and yet we like to close our eyes to it. The fear is so deep rooted that we do not want to talk about it. Death is the only certainty in life. Some will like to include death and taxes, and crisis as the certainties of life. Every one has, in his or her life, some sort of crisis, minor or major, a car accident, loss of job, death of a near and dear one, etc. the crisis is a part of life. Death does not happen in one moment, it is happening every day. We are all slowly heading towards death and it does make sense to talk about Death Management as we like to about crisis management.

Death “management” is the ultimate challenge we will ever face; it is the ultimate challenge a man can undertake. One who does not know swimming will not enter deep water with the thought ‘what if’ I drown. Similarly, one is afraid to do anything not known with the fear - “what if”. The fear of “what if” is actually deep down fear of death. The point that all fear has its origin in the fear of death is significant. Once you know that what you are doing, familiarity with the situation gives you a comfort zone. It allays your fear. To overcome fear of death let us talk about “death management”. This will help us understand death and will, at the same time, take the fear out of it. We are afraid of the unknown and once it becomes known, it becomes a friend. We always talk about conquering death. Death is not an enemy. There is no reason to fight it. But we can definitely know it better.

The only way to know death better is to know it through our day-to-day life. We are talking about adventure and we also talked about crisis. Crisis is a term we give to untoward things that happen to us in natural course of life. Basically it is just the situation that we interpret as adverse to us. Adventure is a crisis that we bring upon ourselves. We plan it, go to great pains and bring it upon ourselves. The mountaineering team going to Mt. Everest has to go through rigorous training for months. Even then it is not certain that it will make to the peak. All “because Mt. Everest is there” and it provides a challenge. So what is common in crisis and adventure? It is the awareness. The awareness is heightened in all sorts of crisis. Suddenly you become aware of yourself. Most of the times your energy is going outside of you. You are thinking about something or other. You and I do not have time to be with ourselves. Adventure or crisis suddenly raises the level of awareness. And in this heightened awareness one has different feelings.

Another important point to note is that the most thrilling adventures are the ones that bring one closest to death. Whether it is the feeling of drowning, in the water or the chill of peak of Mt. Everest, death is only round the corner. One comes back with

the feeling thrilled and overjoyed 'you just had a close encounter with Death'. If one can bring the same awareness in one's day to day life, one can experience life in its fullest. And then it will be easier to face death and to talk about death.

Death is a difficult topic to talk about. Life wants you to go to death in full awareness. This allows one to know death in its full glory. The fact is that if one lives life with full awareness, if he/she becomes unconsciousness before dying because of the fear we talked about and not experience the ultimate adventure at all.

Awareness is the key. One has to aware throughout one's life to be able to be aware in the last moment. But, there are other techniques to know about death during life. And these techniques have something to do with using awareness as light to travel into our unconscious levels. We all know the power of hypnosis. You may have heard about people who were fully conscious during a general anesthesia (having some sort of surgery). There are also techniques available to be aware during sleep. The deepest level of sleep takes you to the same level as death. One touches death every night when one falls asleep, one simply does not know in his/her conscious about it. To me, energy cannot be destroyed, and hence it is more like a transplant. This forms the basis of life after life where the life energy is "transplanted" to another physical body in another life cycle.

