

# Excursion to Life



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Everything in the universe is in place, ordained by Providence. The repository of knowledge gets richer and richer by seers, philosophers and thinkers down the time. Everything that could be said has already been said, hardly leaving room for originality. The domain of ideas is no man's land. It is an effort to weave out a garland by beads of flowers culled from different gardens, transfigured on the touchstone of personal experience, running in and through as the thread.

Of course, peep into messages from e-mails, Whatsapp, magazines etc., also lent substance to the content of the book. I wish to express my gratitude to all whose observations have been incorporated.

I feel immensely fortunate for the ungrudging support and unconditional 'go-ahead' of my wife and children in course of the exercise.

I know not how to share the onerous gratitude to Prof. Aditya Kumar Mohanty, my mentor, for his sense of identification and protective guidance all through.

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I shall deem the exercise to be worth it if it creates some positive trigger in the readers.

I humbly offer it at the feet of divine Mother without whose grace the book could not see the light of the day.

**Dr. Soumendra Sarangi**



## FOREWORD

'Life' indeed, can be likened to a journey, undertaken willy-nilly by every mortal. Apparently, the journey begins when one is ushered in and concludes when one leaves the mortal coil. The truth is that the 'life' bracketed between birth and death is a part-life (*khanda jeevan*), part of the series of lives that have already been lived through, and perhaps many more, awaited to be lived in future. Some of us are driven by compulsions and challenges at hand, some remain obsessed with the dross and tinsels such that they fail to look beyond the immediate, some remain captive by the apparent glitters and lures of life and there are a few who undertake the journey with a sense of purpose, with their 'consciousness' and 'conscience' awakened. They go beyond the 'apparent' and seek to find that which is really real. They pause once in a while to reflect, introspect and take lessons from the follies and foibles, successes and failures and mellow with passage of time such that things that otherwise appear to be commonplace turn out to be profoundly significant. They are those who are ahead of others and discover the universal in the particular, celestial in the terrestrial and the eternal in the ephemeral.

Unlike other living counterparts, man is not only conscious but self-conscious. Everyone is unique in respect of one's predispositions and priorities, inherent strength and limitations which is why the journey of every person is unique. The author belongs to the class of individuals who stand, out of the crowd, think out of box, can decipher the nuances of mind and heart, discover extraordinary in the ordinary and get at the timeless message from the journey of life. They play the role of the peers in drawing our attention to deeper connects and patterns which otherwise remain otherwise unnoticed and ignored.

'Human Life' is verily, an excursion through unknown terrains, with ups and down, often smooth often rugged routes

to traverse, through fair weather and foul, moments of elation and disappointment. The author is found to be perceptive and creative as he weaves out varied content under different titles with timeless messages at the end.

‘Umbral’ containing the text along with selective incorporations, would urge one to stay determined, never to quit, to look within, cultivate the art of self-help, sacrifice and forgiveness, cease to be judgmental and repose unflinching faith in the ‘divine’, our unfailing companion, supreme benefactor, dispenser of what is good, irrespective of what we pray for or solicit. Aptly said, ‘*The Force that guides the Stars, guides you too.*’

‘Penumbra’ recounts personal memoirs, indicating how the happenings and enactments in a ‘space-time-person’ axis, can have a message for others, irrespective of time and clime. In other words, human experience is structured and has underlying connect with every other. *Society, friendship and love divinely bestowed upon Man.* The author shows how ‘love’ is the cementing tie which makes the collective living, cohesive. The parental love for the offsprings, unalloyed love of a mother, fragility of human relationships tempered by selfishness, empathy of a waiter, ability to reconcile with transitions, unfold the seamy side of life and the dynamics of journey, called ‘Life’.

I am sanguine that the readers shall find the book to be engaging, enlightening and ennobling.

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UMBRA





# Wake Up

Every morning a deer wakes up,  
It has to run faster than the fastest lion  
Or meet the end.

Every morning a lion wakes up,  
It has to outrun the faster deer  
Or has to starve.

It hardly matters,  
Whether you are a lion or a deer,  
When the sun comes up,

***Better be on the run...***

# Prayer

I prayed for strength,  
HE gave difficulties to be stronger.

I prayed for wisdom,  
HE gave problems to solve.

I prayed for prosperity,  
HE gave brawn and brain to strive.

I prayed for courage,  
HE gave hurdles to overcome.

I prayed for favour,  
HE gave opportunities to succeed.

I received nothing I sought,  
I received everything I ought.

***HIS wish prevails...***

# Today

Today, let me erase the two words,  
'yesterday' and 'tomorrow'.

Yesterday was a learning,  
Tomorrow shall be the consequence.

Today, I shall live with right intent,  
For this day is never to return.

Today, I shall live intensely,  
For none can assure the next sunrise.

Today, I shall live to face every challenge,  
For my only option is to succeed.

Today, I shall live with optimism,  
For I have to face the world with smile.

Today, I shall live each moment passionately,  
For I wish it be a unique day.

*Today well lived, makes  
Yesterday, a dream of joy.  
Tomorrow, a vision of hope...*

# Learn

Learn, one must.

Everyone is not an ideal,  
Forget not, for every villain there is a hero,  
For every enemy, there is a friend.

Learn to lose, enjoy the winning too,  
How to smile when you are sad  
Forget not, tears know no pretension.

Know the wonder of books,  
So also, mystery of birds in the sky,  
Beauty and bounty of the greenery.

Remember, it is more honourable to fail than to cheat,  
Have faith in your ideas, even if others call it wrong,  
Be gentle with gentle, tough with tough.

Smile at sarcasms, beware of sycophancy,  
Steer yourself away from envy,  
Experience the ecstasy of being what you are,

Hard earned rupee values more than ill got hundreds,  
Stake your mettle with the highest bidders,

Put not a price tag on your heart and soul.

Learn to have unfailing faith in the divine,  
Thence, unshaken trust in yourself,  
Hence, your unbroken journey on the path.

*Of course, It takes time....*

# Anyway

People often are  
Unreasonable, and self-centred,  
*Forgive anyway.*

If you are kind,  
People may read ulterior motive,  
*Be kind anyway.*

Success or failure,  
March ahead with gusto,  
*It is your destiny anyway.*

When successful,  
You may have false friends and true enemies,  
*Succeed anyway.*

If you are frank and honest,  
People may take you for ride,  
*Be honest any way.*

What you create over the years,  
Someone may destroy with ease,  
*Create any way.*



If you are happy and contented,  
Some may be jealous,  
*Be happy anyway.*

The good you do today,  
People may forget tomorrow,  
*Do good anyway.*

Good times or bad,  
Nothing would endure,  
*Be positive anyway.*

Unpleasant yesterday,  
Choose and recall only the pleasant,  
*Believe the future to be fulfilling anyway.*

Give the world the best you can,  
It may not be enough,  
*Give the best anyway.*

Judge not others nor thyself,  
Follow HIS ways,  
*HE shall be with you anyway.*

End of the day,  
It is YOU and HE,  
**A N Y W A Y..**

# Live Your Life

You may have enough trials to make you stronger,  
Enough sorrow to make you more humane,  
Enough hope to make you happier.

Happiest of people may not have necessarily  
The best of everything, they just make  
most of everything that comes along the way.

Dream what you wish, go where you want to go,  
Be what you want to be, as your life is precious,  
Rare chance to do all the things you seek to do.

Brightest future is born out of the past,  
You can hardly go ahead in life unless  
You bury the dead past, with follies and failures.

When you were born,  
you were crying and  
Everyone around was smiling.

Live your life so intensely and joyfully,  
At the end, you are the one who is smiling  
Everyone around is crying.

*Live your life to the fullest...*

# God's Creation

God created donkey and announced,  
You shall work un-tiringly, carrying burdens.  
you shall have no intelligence and live for fifty years.  
The donkey appealed,  
Oh, Lord! fifty years is too long a time, grant twenty.  
God agreed.

God created the dog and declared,  
You shall guard the house, settle for the leftovers.  
You shall live for thirty years.  
The dog solicited,  
Oh, Almighty! thirty years is too long a span, grant fifteen.  
God agreed.

God created the monkey and said,  
You shall swing from branch-to-branch amusing others.  
You shall live for twenty years.  
The monkey begged,  
Oh, Majesty! twenty years is too prolonged, grant ten.  
God agreed.

Finally, God created human beings and revealed,  
You shall be the only rational being of my creation,  
You shall command all other beings,

you shall live for twenty years,  
Man interjected,  
Oh, Gracious Lord! for me it is too short a span,  
Grant me the leftover years of donkey, dog, and monkey.  
As you wish, God affirmed.

Some years like a donkey, working, carrying the burdens of household.

Some years like a dog, taking care of others, settling for leftovers.

Some years like a monkey, shuttling among children, amusing grand children.

Lo! Lives only some years as man.

***That is what human life!!!***

# Seven Wonders

A group of students were asked to list what they thought to be 'Seven Wonders of the World'.

After some disagreements they arrived at a consensus

1. Egypt's Great Pyramids
2. Taj Mahal
3. Grand Canyon
4. Panama Canal
5. Empire State Building
6. St. Peter's Basilica
7. China's Great Wall

The teacher observed that one student yet to finish. She asked the girl if she had difficulty with her list.

The girl nodded and hesitatingly read out

1. To See
2. To Feel
3. To Touch
4. To Taste
5. To Hear
6. To Laugh
7. To love

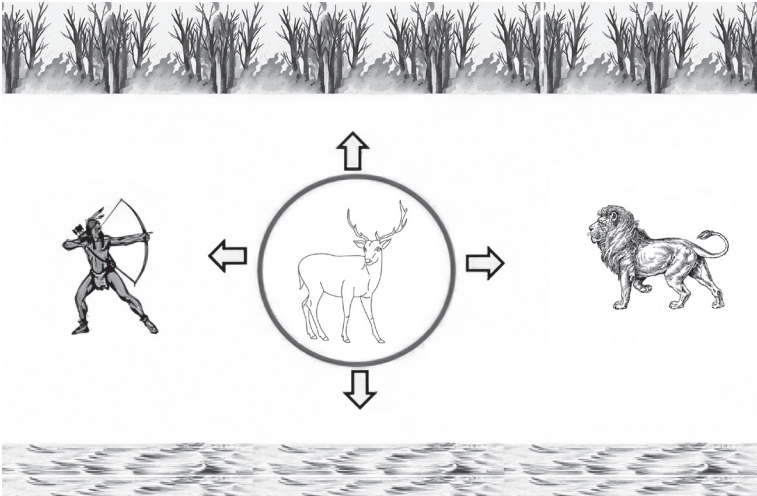
The most precious things of life lie within, cannot be created.

***The things we ignore as simple, may be truly wondrous!!!***

# Poise

Inside a deep forest, a deer in labour pain is about to deliver a baby.

It finds a grass field nearby the river and slowly goes thinking it to be safe.



At that moment, dark clouds gather and lightning triggers forest fire.

Turning left she sees a hunter who is aiming the arrow at her.

As she moves towards right she finds the hungry lion approaching.

On north the blazing forest fire.

On south the turbulent river.

What could possibly happen then?

Is there any hope that the deer shall survive ?

Shall it give birth to a fawn ?

Shall the fawn survive ?

Shall everything be caught in the blaze?

In nick of the moment, lightning strikes and blinds the eyes of the hunter, he releases the arrow missing the target and zipping past the deer.

The arrow hits and injures the lion badly.

It starts raining heavily, putting out the forest fire.

She is poised to bring forth a new life.

She gives birth to a lovely fawn.

Anything can happen in a moment.

Be one religious, atheist, superstitious, agnostic or whatsoever. One cannot but take such moments as divine intervention.

***Be in poise, repose unshaken faith in the divine,***

***HE will take care...***

# Tryst with God

The little boy took lunchbox from mother,  
was not in a mood to go to school but be left to himself.

Walked a long distance, reached a deserted park.  
Feeling tired and hungry, opened the box to have the cake.  
suddenly noticed an old woman with gloomy face  
sitting nearby.  
He offered her a piece of cake.  
She took it gratefully and smiled.

Her smile was so arresting that the boy longed to see it again.  
After a while he offered her another piece of cake.  
She took it with a fulfilling look.  
The boy was filled with joy beyond measure!  
They sat all the afternoon taking small bites and smiling,  
hardly exchanging a word.

At sundown the boy got up to leave,  
took few steps, suddenly ran back and gave her a hug.  
She kissed him with her innocent smile.

Mother opened the door and surprised by the beaming face  
of her son, asked  
‘What happened today that made you look so happy?’



'I had lunch with God', retorted the son  
Before mother could respond, he added  
'She got the most beautiful smile I have had ever seen!'

Meanwhile, the old woman overflowing with joy, returned home.

Her son was overtaken by her graceful face, asked  
'Mom, what happened today that made you so happy?'  
'God shared cakes with me,' She replied,  
Before his son responded, she added,  
'You know, he's much younger than I thought.'

Too often we fail to gauge the power of touch,  
bewitching smile, kind words,  
lending ears, honest compliments or the small acts of caring,  
that have the potential  
to turn life into celebration.

*No one knows how God looks like.*

*People come in our life for a reason, for a season or for lifetime...*

# Footprints

One night a man had a dream,  
He was walking along the beach with the Lord.  
Across the sky flashed the scenes of his life.  
For each scene he saw two sets of footprints on the sand.  
One belonging to him and the other, of the Lord.  
When the last scene flashed before him he looked back at  
the footprints.  
Found that many times along the journey there was only  
one set of footprints.  
Noted that it happened at the most difficult and saddest  
times of his life.  
This really disturbed him, he asked  
'Lord! once you promised that you would walk with me  
all the way.'  
But I notice that during the most trying ordeals  
there was only one set of footprints.  
I don't understand why did you leave me alone  
when I needed you the most.  
Lord smiled and patted lovingly, saying  
'My dear child, my love is unconditional,  
I never let you to be left alone.'  
When you see only one set of footprints,  
it means that I carried you on my shoulders.

*Analyse not, trust and walk...*

## Me & God

*Me* : *Why is life so complicated often?*

God : Stop analysing, live it. Analysis makes it complicated.

*Me* : *When there is so much uncertainty, how can one afford not to worry?*

God : Uncertainty is inevitable but not to worry is your choice.

*Me* : *If suffering is matter of choice why do good people suffer?*

God : Diamond cannot be polished without friction.  
Gold cannot be purified without fire.  
Good people go through trials, trying times that make life better, not bitter.

*Me* : *You mean to say every experience is a blessing in disguise?*

God : Of course, Experience is the best teacher.

*Me* : *Why should one go through such tests and trials?*

God : Inner strength comes in course of struggle and endurance.

*Me* : *When one is overpowered with problems one loses the sense of goal?*

God : When one looks outward one does not know where one is heading to.  
Look within.

Looking outward, you may dream but looking within, you awaken the inner self.  
Eyes provide sight. Inner self provides insight.

*Me : In tough times, how does one stay motivated?*

God : Always look at how far you have come rather than how far you have to go.  
Always count your blessing, not what is missing.

*Me : Does not failure hurt, even though one moves in the right direction?*

God : Success is measured by others but Satisfaction only by you.

*Me : What surprises you about people?*

God : When they suffer, they ask, 'why me?'  
When they prosper, they never ask 'Why me?'

*Me : How can I get the best out of life?*

God : Remember your past without regret.  
Handle your present with confidence.  
Prepare for the future without fear.

*Me : Sometimes I feel my prayers are not answered?*

God : Because I have not answered the way you wanted me to answer.  
Life is a mystery to be solved, not a problem to be resolved.

***Pin faith in HIM...***

# Quit?

A man decided to quit...

He quit his job, relationship, spirituality and eventually made up his mind to quit life.

He went into the woods to have the last words with God.

Man : Lord! Can you give me a good reason not to quit?

God : Look around, do you see the ferns and bamboos?

Man : Yes.

God : I planted the fern and bamboo seeds; I took good care of both.

I gave them light, water and the needed nutrients.

The fern quickly grew spreading brilliant greens around.

But nothing came from the bamboo seed.

In the second, third, fourth year the Fern grew plentiful and luxuriant.

Yet nothing palpable came from the bamboo seeds.

But I did not quit.

In fifth year, a tiny sprout emerged from below the earth. Compared to the fern it was seemingly small and insignificant.

Just six months later the bamboo rose to over hundred feet high.

It had spent the five years growing the roots underneath.

The roots made it strong and gave it the much-needed strength to survive.

Do you understand, my child, that all these years you have been struggling, growing your roots.

Don't compare yourself with others.

The bamboo had a purpose different from the fern.

Yet, both make the forest so inviting!

Your time is yet to come, you will rise high.

Man : How high shall I rise?

God : How high shall the bamboo rise?

Man : As high as it can.

God : Yes. strive to rise as high as you can.

***Successful and rewarding life call for unabated perseverance.***

# Build Wisely

An elderly mason decided to leave job to have leisurely life with family.

He expressed his desire to the employer

‘Though I would miss the handsome money, I wish to retire.’

The builder was sorry to see his best and dedicated worker leave.

Requested, if he could build just one more house as a personal favour.

The mason agreed.

But over the time his heart was not at the work.

He resorted to shoddy workmanship using inferior materials.

When the house got completed the employer came to inspect.

Then he handed over the key of new house to the mason saying,

‘This is your house, my gift for your dedicated services down the time.’

The mason was shocked!

Had he known that he was building his own house he would have done it all, so differently.

***Life is always understood retrospectively but it has to be lived prospectively. Therefore, Build wisely...***

# Perception

Imagine yourself at an airport lounge.

You buy a box of cookies, put them in your traveling bag and search for an available seat,

So, you can enjoy a movie in your mobile and relish the cookies.

Finally, you find a seat next to a white gentleman.

You reach down to bag and pull out the box.

As you do so, you notice that the gentleman stares at you intensely.

You opened the box; his eyes follow your hand as you pick up the cookie to your mouth.

Just then he reaches over and takes one cookie from the box and eats it.

You are more than a little surprised at this.

Indeed, you are at a loss for words.

Not only does he take one cookie but alternates with you.

Now, what's your immediate impression on this guy?

Crazy? Greedy?

Can you imagine the words you might use to describe this man back at home?

Meanwhile, you both continue taking the cookies until



there is just one left.

To your utter surprise, the man reaches over and takes it.

But then he does something unexpected.

He breaks it into halves and gives half to you.

After he is finished with his half he gets up and leaves without a word.

You are left sitting there dumbfounded.

Your hunger still not fully satiated.

You plan to go back to the kiosk and buy another box.

When you glance down into your bag,

Alas! your original box of cookies is still unopened.

Now what do you think of the person?

Generous? Tolerant?

You have just experienced a profound paradigm shift.

***Often, we get deluded by our own predispositions.***

***Be non-judgmental and look beyond the apparent...***

# Insight

The bench in the park was deserted when I sat down beneath an old Gulmohar tree.

Disillusioned with life for good reasons to frown, as if the whole world was intent on dragging me down.

If that were not enough to ruin my day, a young boy approached me out of breath, tired from play.

He stood right before me with his head hung and said with great excitement,

‘Look what I found for you!’

In his hand was a flower, with petals withered.

I wanted to take the flower so that he goes off to play.

But instead of retreating he sat next to me and placed the flower before his nose. Uttered,

‘It smells so good, and it is beautiful too.

That’s why I picked it for you!’

The flower before me was dry and dead, far from being beautiful and inviting.

I must take it, otherwise he will not let me retreat into myself.

I reached out for the flower and spoke

‘This is just what I needed.’

But instead of placing the flower in my hand, he held it  
midair for no reason or intent.

Then I noticed that the boy could not see.

He was blind.

My voice quivered, as I thanked him for picking the very  
best for me

‘You are welcome’.

He smiled and ran off to play, unaware of the impact he had  
on me.

I sat there wondering how he managed to see a self-pitying  
person on the bench?

At last, I could see that the problem was not with the world.

The problem was with ‘I and mine’.

I myself had been blind down the years.

Then I held that flower unto my nose and breathed its  
fragrance and smiled.

I watched the young boy running with another dead flower  
in his hand, about to change the life of someone else.

***When blessed with a heart and insight,***

***We perceive what remains otherwise unperceived...***

# Sacrifice

After the Mahabharata war, King Yudhishtira performed the Ashvamedha Yajna in which he gave away his riches to the deserving.

Just then a half-golden mongoose sneaked in and began rolling all over the ground.

It then looked at its fur and seemed disappointed.

‘Ah! This Yajna is not sacred one.’

Yudhishtira and his brothers were puzzled.

How dare the mongoose proclaims that the sacrifice is worth nothing?

Curious, they asked for a rationale.

The mongoose sighed and said during a famine,

I witnessed a grand sacrifice.

I had gone without food for days.

Everywhere there was hunger, starvation, and death.

With no strength to look for food, one night I crept into the hut of a peasant who lived with his wife and child.

They too were hungry for days.

That day the husband brought home a little wheat flour.

The wife cooked it.

As they were about to eat,  
A beggar cried for food,  
The man gave him his portion.  
There was a second knock and this time a hungry child  
crying.  
The wife gave the child her share.  
After few moments, a famished dog crawled in.  
The child gave up her bit.  
Now family faced hunger and near death.

The beggar, child and dog came back to bless the family.  
The three guests transformed into Brahma, Vishnu and  
Maheswar, blessed the generous family and took them away  
in a beautiful chariot.

I ate the food they had left behind and fell asleep there.  
In the morning when I went home my family told me that I  
had turned half golden.  
I found that the side I had slept on, had turned golden.  
Since then I am looking for another such sacrifice so that  
my other half also turns golden.  
Now you see, this yajna cannot be as great.

*Selfless offering is true charity...*

## Selfless Service

A Rajput maid Panna Dai had to look after the baby prince along with her newborn son.

Invading soldiers attacked the fort and killed the royal family.

Searching for the newborn prince they rushed to Panna Dai. Asked her to hand over the baby prince to them in return for her freedom.

Panna Dai wrapped her own baby in the prince's clothes and handed over to the soldiers.

Finding her calm they were sure that they had the right baby in their hands and killed it in front of her.

***One has to have no motive other than living for others...***

# Art of Giving

Nothing in Nature lives for itself.

Rivers do not drink their water, trees do not eat their fruit, flowers do not inhale their fragrance.

Giving others should be the part of living.

## **When should one give?**

Yudhishtira asked a beggar, seeking alms, to come the next day.

Arjun rejoices thinking that his brother has conquered death!

One cannot be certain whether one would live to see, the next sunrise.

*Time to give is now.*

## **How much to give?**

Rana Pratap was reeling after defeat from the Mughals.

He had lost his army, lost his wealth.

At this darkest hour, his erstwhile minister placed his entire fortune at the disposal of Rana Pratap.

With this, Rana Pratap raised an army and lived to fight for another day.

*Give as much as one can.*

## **What to give?**

It is not only money that can be given away.

It could be a smile or even a flower.

It is not what one gives but the ‘intention’ behind, which really matters.

*You can give anything, with all your heart and soul.*

### **Whom to give?**

Many times, we avoid giving by finding fault with the person who is seeking.

However, being judgmental and denying a person on the presumption that he may not be the most deserving, is not the right way.

*Give without being judgmental.*

### **How to give?**

Let not your left hand know what the right hand gave.

Charity without ado is the real way.

Let not the recipient feel belittled nor the giver feel pride.

We come without anything and shall go with nothing.

What is given, was with us for the time being.

*Give with grace, with the feeling of gratitude.*

### **What should one feel after giving?**

When Dronacharya asked Ekalavya for his right thumb as Guru Dakshina, he unhesitatingly cut off the thumb and gave it.

*Real giving is fulfilling.*

### **How much should we leave for our heir?**

*Leave for your kids enough to do anything, but not enough to do nothing.*



# Happiness

All through life, I have sought to earn happiness by working hard, assuring myself that one fine morning I would be able to rest, relax, enjoy and be at ease.

To seek happiness is to forego happiness.  
Give up the belief that you shall earn or deserve happiness, rather decide to be happy.

Your decision is the real key to happiness.  
None can make you unhappy without your consent.  
Between stimulus and response, there is a space or pause button.  
In that space lies your freedom and power to choose and respond.  
Responses that are driven by principles and values, rather than by emotions, make room for your growth and happiness.

## **Paths to Happiness**

**HEALTH:** Take care of your health and wellbeing, so that you can make others happy.

**WEALTH:** Money is the means for meeting the necessities of life, not the end.

To be rich is not to earn more, spend more or save more, rather it is a state when you need no more.

Nothing gives as much satisfaction as earning one's own rewards, rather than inheriting, getting by windfalls or by gifts.

What is gifted or inherited follows the old rule of 'come easy, go easy'.

Chase it not at the cost of health, family, and joy.

**FAMILY:** With family we discover our deepest emotions.

Family is a 'we mentality', the transition from independence to interdependence, marked by values, trust and mutuality and enactment of love.

A fulfilling family doesn't just happen, it calls for value, vision, and sacrifice.

**LOVE & MARRIAGE:** It is the celebration of art of giving rather than taking, marked by the union of unselfish hearts. It is alchemy of living together with shared value, openness, compromises and respect for each other.

**CHILDREN:** There is no experience more fulfilling than nurturing one's children.

Educate not your children to be rich, teach them to be happy. Such that they understand value of things not their price.

**LET GO:** Nothing stays forever.

when a relationship ends, one ought to cherish the fond memories.

Move on, ignoring negativities.

Life is too short to remain obsessed with trifles.

Looking back, strains the present, live the present, reap happiness.

CONTACT: Proximity with someone you care for,  
is not enough, hug and pat each other,  
Specially Children need our intimate hug.

CONFESSION: Secrecy has its place, so also confession.  
It is wise to share and seek advice from empathetic hearts  
than getting weighed down by worries and trauma.

QUIETUDE: Argument may not lead to resolution.  
If one stays quiet, argument loses its sting.  
Peace overtakes.

JUST DO IT: Waste no time in thinking,  
'Should I' or 'Should not I' ?  
When in indecision, follow the inner dictate.  
It is important to know *SWOT* – strength and weakness,  
opportunity, and threat.  
Take lesson from failure.  
Cry not over the spilt milk.

HAVE A HEART: Excellence lies in striving not in achieving. Openness to learn from others and stoic acceptance of failure is path to happiness.

RECOGNITION: Why strive for recognition?  
People praise so long as you have status or power.  
Act with sincerity without any ulterior motive.  
Be humble, Live simple.

INTERFERENCE: Often, we become critical of others as they don't tread our ways.  
We forget that each one is divinely endowed to charter one's path.  
Don't interfere in other's way, nor allow others to meddle on your way.

JEALOUSY: Jealousy takes one nowhere, rather takes away the peace of mind.  
Jealousy at success or achievement of others does hardly help.  
Every one lives one's own destiny.

DRAW BOUNDARIES: Have as much as you need, going beyond, turns into liabilities.  
Promise others as much as you can deliver, going beyond, you shall belie their expectations.

**FORGIVE:** To err is human, to forgive is divine.  
Forgive yourself and forgive others as we all deserve Peace.

**AGE:** There are three ages, chronological, biological, and psychological.

First is determined by date of birth on which we do not have control.

Second is by the health which can be taken care of by oneself. Positive attitude and optimistic thinking can reverse the third age.

Aging is apparently, the real growth and maturity.

**DEATH:** Live better every day as time is ebbing out.  
When you learn to embrace death, you learn to embrace life.

**GRATITUDE:** Whatever one has, one owes to others, parents, teachers, kith, kin, friends, enemies, society, nature and above all God.

Let our love be consecrated with attitude of gratitude.

**INTROSPECTION:** Morning, spend time to still the mind and plan for the day.

Before retiring to bed, recount happenings of the day, the milestones covered.

Sleep Praying Lord.

# Jar and Coffee

Before the class began, Professor placed a large empty jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls and asked the students, if the jar was full.

They agreed.

He then picked up a box of pebbles and put them into the jar.

He shook the jar lightly.

The pebbles rolled into the open spaces between the golf balls.

He asked if the jar was full.

They affirmed.

He then picked up a box of sand and filled the jar.

He asked once more if the jar was full.

Yes, they responded.

Professor prepared a cup of coffee and poured into the jar.

The students laughed.

As the laughter subsided,

Professor said, 'I want you to recognize each item.'

The jar represents your life.

The golf balls are the important things like family, children, health, friends.

The pebbles are the things that matter like your job, house, and car.

The sand is everything else—the small stuffs.

If everything else was lost and only golf balls remained, your life would still be full.

If you put the sand into the jar first, he continued, there is no room for the pebbles or golf balls.

The same goes for life.

If you spend all your time and energy on the trifles, there is hardly room for the things that are more important.

Attend to the things that are critical to your happiness.

For example, take spouse out for dinner, play with children, take time to get medical checkups etc..

Set your priorities.

The rest is just sand.

One student raised her hand and inquired what the coffee represented.

The professor smiled. I'm glad you asked.

It just goes to show, no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for sharing time at coffee table.

***When things in your life seem almost too much to handle, when twenty-four hours in a day is not enough, remember the jar and the cup of coffee...***

# Sharing Moments

A man came home late, after a tiresome day, to find his little son waiting for him at the door.

Son : Papa, may I ask you a question?

Father : Yeah sure.

Son : How much do you make in an hour?

Father : That's none of your business.

Why do you ask so?

Son : Just one curiosity.

Father : If you know must, it is five hundred.

Son : Oh! Papa, may I have two hundred?

The father was greatly upset.

Father : If you ask for the money to buy a toy or some trivialities, then get lost and go to bed.

The boy quietly retreated to his room.

The man was indeed annoyed at such silly question.

Sometime after dinner, he calmed down and started to think.

May be there is something he really needed, as otherwise he hardly asks for money.

He went near the door.



Father : Are you asleep, my son?

Son : No Papa.

Father : Sorry my son, I was too harsh.

Anyway, you do not deserve such tantrum.

Indeed, I was damn fatigued after day's hard work.

Here is the money you asked for.

The little boy sprang up, smiling.

Son : Thank you, Papa! He yelled.

He took out some crumpled notes from the drawer.

Noticing this, father got infuriated.

The boy counted the money, looked at his father.

Father : (Grumbled) Why do you want more money?

Son : Because I didn't have enough but now I do.

Papa, I have five hundred now.

Could I buy an hour of your time?

Please come home early tomorrow.

I would like to have dinner with you.

Father came to his senses and gave a warm hug.

***Success in profession, neglecting family and friends is of little worth...***

# With You

A boy was born to a couple long after the marriage.  
They were a loving couple and the boy was the gem of their eyes.

One morning the husband saw a medicine bottle open.  
He was late for office, asked wife to cap the bottle and keep it in the cupboard.  
His wife, preoccupied in the kitchen, completely forgot the matter.

The little boy got fascinated by the colour of bottle and drank it all.  
It happened to be a toxic medicine meant for adults in small dosages.  
When the child collapsed the mother rushed him to the hospital where he succumbed.  
The mother was stunned and terrified, how to face husband!

The distraught father came to the hospital and saw the dead child.  
He looked at wife and uttered just five words,  
'I am with you Darling.'

The child is dead, can never be brought back to life.

No point in finding fault with the mother.  
Besides, had he taken little time to keep the bottle away,  
this would not have happened.  
No one is to be blamed.  
She also lost her only child.  
What she needed at that moment was sympathy.

*Dissecting the past, we miss out something,  
precious in LIFE...*

# One More Day

(Father to daughter, let down by cancer.)

To my child,  
I shall smile and laugh on seeing you,  
when I feel like crying.

I shall let you splash in the tub,  
shall not dissuade a bit.

I shall let you choose what you want to put on,  
say, 'how perfectly it fits!'

I shall forego my pressing schedules,  
accompany you to the park.

I shall ignore the compulsions at home,  
let you teach me, how to put puzzles together.

I shall switch off the cell and turn off the laptop,  
to blow bubbles together.

I shall not grumble when you scream for ice cream,  
shall buy one for you.

I shall take you to a mall,  
get your choicest toys.  
I shall hold you tight in my arms,  
share the memories of by gone years.

I shall let you stay awake till late in the night,  
counting stars for you.

I shall pay my gratitude to God,  
For giving you as the greatest gift.  
While patting and holding you tight to say goodnight,  
I shall be praying God for nothing,

*except one more day.....for my dearest.*

# Keep Her Happy

(Parent to son-in law)

Our daughter is now integral part of your family.

You are her priority.

It's time for us to take the backseat.

We would surely urge you one thing,

*'Please keep her happy'.*

We are more than sure that you will keep her very happy.

She would perhaps be happier than what she used to be with us.

But like all parents we feel possessed by the thought of her happiness which makes us say this over and again,

*'Please keep her happy'.*

Never was she a burden or liability on us.

She was indeed the source of our breath and smile.

She was the happiness of our home and shall now light up your home.

We are giving away our princess to you.

Please make sure, she stays as a queen.

We have raised her with sweat and blood and now she is wonderfully perfect.

For all the care, love and warmth my daughter shall bring in your lives, we seek not anything else

*'Please keep her happy'.*

She is very delicate.  
Per chance, she feels low, be with her.  
She just needs a bit of your loving attention.  
If she feels sick, show your protective care.  
This medicine works best for her.  
If ever she fails in her bounden responsibility, feel free to  
admonish.  
Empathize as she is still in the making.  
*'Please keep her happy'.*

It matters not if we don't get to see her for months.  
We don't mind if we are not able to talk to her  
every now and then.  
We would be more than happy if she ceases to have fond  
remembrances of us.  
Our only concern, her happiness which is now in your  
hands.  
*'Please keep her happy'.*

*Dear son-in-law, these words may not mean much to you  
now, when you become a father you will understand these  
outpourings.*

## **For You, Children**

You can be good to people.

Don't expect people to be good to you.

Bear not grudge for those who are not good to you.

None shall take you unconditionally, except us.

When people are good to you,

Perpetuate the relationship but be perceptive of motives.

Honor your words and time.

Don't expect others to be so.

No one is indispensable.

Nothing that you possess endures forever.

True love is not transient.

Often softer feeling fades with time.

If the so called loved one leaves you, have forbearance.

Time will heal your aches and melancholy.

Be not unduly gladdened at bounty of love,

Nor also get saddened at falling out of love.



Successful people may not always have good education.  
That does not mean,  
you can be successful by ignoring studies.

If you want to be self-reliant, you have to work hard.  
No short cuts. Windfall gains are more imaginary than real.

We wish, not that you to support us,  
We shall feel done when you grow self-reliant.

Let's treasure the memories of being together.  
We know not if we shall ever meet again in the next life  
with the same connect.

# Twilight Years

Aging is an inescapable process, that takes upon everyone. Elderly ones are prone to age-related infirmities, failing health and fading memories.

They are more traumatized due to emotional strain, sense of alienation and loneliness on account of negligence of children.

Children! Remember when you were young.

You had your times of happiness, joy, fun and laughter, ensured by parents.

They crossed all mountains and valleys hardly caring for themselves to make you able and rise high in life.

Whatever you are today, it's because of their unconditional love and sacrifices.

Surely, parents deserve the same reciprocation.

Scriptures too endorse this.

‘Look upon mother and father as you look upon God’.

Children! when you are asked,

What is the best way to raise your children and be ideal parent?

The most obvious reply would be

‘Nurture them to the best of our abilities.’

Go ahead, give your parent the love and protection, which once you got.

It would be a fitting pay back

### *Request from parents*

The day you find that we have grown old, have unfailing patience, try to understand us.

If we get dirty while eating or have difficulty in dressing up. Be patient! Remember the time that we spent teaching you these things, when you were small.

If we do the same thing time and again, do not get annoyed! Listen to us. When you were small, you kept pestering with the same story, evening after evening, until you fell asleep.

If we hesitate to take the shower, do not reprimand. Remember how many excuses we had to invent for take you to bath!

If we are ignorant of new technologies, do not laugh at us, give time to understand. We had to teach you so many things, to eat well, to dress well, to behave well, and above all how to face the challenges of the life ahead.

If we fail to follow a conversation for loss of memory, give us time to recollect and comprehend. Remember how patiently we made you understand your studies and find ways to get it by heart.

When the weak legs, do not move as fast as before, help us in the way we held your hands when you were a toddler.

If at a certain point of time, we tend to say, we do not want

to prolong our years, try to understand that we are not really living but simply dragging on.

One day you will realize that despite our limitations we always gave you the best.

Do not feel disappointed at our old age. Rather stay with us and empathize. Help us to quit life with love and endurance.

The only thing we expect, smile with unremitting love.

## Attitude

Father : I want you to marry a girl of my choice

Son : I will choose my bride!

Father : But the girl is Bill Gates's daughter.

Son : In that case...Ok

*Next : Father approaches Bill Gates.*

Father : I have a groom for your daughter.

Bill Gates : But my daughter is too young to marry!

Father : This young man is a vice-president of the World Bank.

Bill Gates : Ah, in that case...Ok

*Next : Father goes to see the president of the World Bank.*

Father : I have a talented young man who could be vice-president.

President : But I already have more vice presidents than required.

Father : This young man is Bill Gates's son-in-law.

President : Ah, in that case...Ok

***No room for disappointment, you can get things done only with positive attitude.***

# Think Out of Box

Interviewer

You are driving your car in a wild, stormy night, it's raining heavily.

You pass by a bus stop, see three people are waiting.

An old lady, gasping for breath.

An old friend who once saved your life.

An alluring beauty you have been dreaming of.

Whom would you choose to offer a ride, knowing well that you could accommodate only one?

Candidate

I would hand over the key to my old friend and let him take the old lady to the hospital.

I would stay behind and wait for the bus with the partner of my dream.

Interviewer

What will you do if I run away with your sister?

Candidate

I could not get a better match for my sister than you sir.

Interviewer (to girl candidate)

One morning you woke up to know that you have conceived.

Candidate

I will be very excited and take an off to celebrate it with my partner.

Interviewer

Normally an unmarried girl would be shocked to learn this.

Candidate

Why should not I think in the right way?

Interviewer

Ordered a cup of coffee and kept before the candidate.  
Asked what is before U?

Candidate:

Instantly replied 'T'

Interviewer

Knowing for certain that coffee was ordered what made you say tea.

Candidate

The question was 'What is before U (spoken alphabet) so my reply T (alphabet)

Interviewer

How many steps you climbed up to reach here?

Candidate:

Sir, as many steps as I would have to climb down.

Interviewer

This is your last and final question.

Tell me which is the centre of this table.

Candidate

Confidently placed his fingers at some point and said boldly this is the centre.

Interviewer

How did you get to know, this to be the central point.

Candidate

Sir, you are not likely question any more, as you already said the previous one to be the last question.

***Sometimes, think laterally...***



# Self Help

A Clerk, Supervisor and Manager were walking for lunch.  
On the way they find an antique oil lamp and rub it curiously.  
Genie comes out.  
The Genie says, 'I shall take you around the world once.'

Me first! Me first! says the clerk.  
'I want to be in Europe, driving and enjoying without caring  
for the world.'  
Done. Said Genie.

Me next! Me next! says the supervisor.  
'I want to be in Hawaii, relaxing on the beach with my lover,  
with plenty of food and beverage.'  
Ok! Said Genie.

Now your turn, the Genie to the manager.  
Manager says, 'I want those two to be back in the office after  
lunch.'

*Let your boss have the first say...*



An eagle was sitting on a tree resting, doing nothing.  
A small rabbit saw the eagle and asked him, 'Can I afford to  
sit like you and do nothing?'

The eagle answered: 'Sure, why not.'  
The rabbit sat on the ground and rested.  
All of a sudden, a fox appeared, jumped on the rabbit and ate it.

***In order to sit and do nothing, one must sit very high up...***



A turkey was chatting with a bull.

I would love to be seated at the top of that tree,  
but I don't have the energy, sighed the turkey.

Well, why don't you nibble on my droppings? replied the  
bull. They are packed with nutrients.

The turkey pecked at a lump of dung and found it actually  
gave him needed strength to reach the lowest branch of the  
tree.

The next day, after eating some more dung he reached the  
second branch.

Finally, after a fourth day the turkey proudly reached at the  
top of the tree.

He was promptly spotted by a hunter, who shot him out of  
the tree.

***Bullshit might get you to the top but it may not be enduring.***



A little bird was flying south with the onset of the Winter.  
It was so cold that the bird froze and fell to the ground.  
While he was lying there, a cow came by and dropped some  
dung on him.

As the frozen bird lay in the pile of dung, he began to feel  
the warmth. The dung was actually thawing him out. He lay  
there all warm and happy, and soon began to sing in joy.

A passing cat heard the bird singing.  
Following the sound, the cat found the bird under the pile  
of dung and ate it.

***Not everyone who shits on you is your enemy.  
Nor everyone who gets you out of shit is your friend.  
If you are happy and comfortable in a pile of shit,  
keep your mouth shut!***







# PENUMBRA





# Transition

Transition

From innocent childhood and carefree adolescence...  
to regulated professional life.

From paltry pocket money to hefty wallet...  
with lesser degree of happiness.

From local jeans to branded suits...  
with fewer occasions to put on.

From plate of upma to MacDonald pizza...  
with less hunger to satiate.

From bicycle to limousine car...  
with less places to visit.

From roadside tea sip to Starbuck coffee...  
with lesser excitements to relish.

From crowded train journey to cozy flights...  
with less vacations to enjoy.

Many more.....

***May such transitions be called LIFE!!!***

# Restaurant

She could not make out why I do smoke in between sips of tea or coffee.

Initially smokes of tobacco were repugnant, in due course she got used to it.

I always found excuses in accompanying her to the restaurant.

Hailing from a middleclass rural background I was never a part of any elite circle.

Till then I had different notion about restaurant, it is bizarre rendezvous where elite throng to spend their money or lean time.

In course of time the restaurant became our frequent meeting place.

Each time she would turn up with problems at hand. It may be either how to be proficient in English and get through TOEFL, GRE or get an appealing transcript which would enable her to enter the American domain.

It was her strong intent that I should give her company in that fray.

Thus, she made me shake hands with the outer world of my imagination. But I could hardly keep pace.



Alas! My existence owed its worth to her captivating brown eyes and arresting smiles.

Waiters got familiar.

They didn't mind our long chats, small bills and smaller or no tips.

Proprietor grew familiar through exchange of formal smiles or greeting 'hello'.

Time passed by swiftly.

Countdown of her college days set in.

She realized that I was never going to be part of her occidental sojourn.

One day she did not turn up, I sat for an hour or so and left.

Next day, again I waited for long and third day too.

That day, waiter asked me '*Baby nahin ayyee*'?

I gave a simulated smile saying '*Sayad tabeeyat theek nahin*'.

Following week, I was in wait pretty long, taking cups of tea and countless puffs, repeatedly glancing at the entrance.

Finally, gave up hope and asked for the bill.

Waiter said "*Hamare saheb ne bola, aapko bill nahin dena*".

My heart turned heavy, vision gloomy, made me feel that 'the world loves the winner but someone here cared for a loser too'.

Over a decade passed, I returned to the same city.  
I went to the same restaurant for a quick coffee in between  
my busy schedule and sat on the same table at the corner.

The familiar waiter, mellowed with age, turned to me with  
a big smile.

While serving he enquired '*Saheb, Baby nahin ayee*'?

I replied '*nahin*'; she is far away working in U.S.A.

He placed his palm on my shoulder and pressed it gently.

At that point of time I felt, 'How lonely I am and I was too'!

Then only I realized how much my youth lay in the dim  
lights of this restaurant and particularly at this table.

Today, the same restaurant is still full of life but the rest are  
lost in oblivion, She too...

# Dost

*ADAM, EVE and LOVE.*

Those who are in love narrate it as an epic.

But they never realize the other side of this legend.

What disastrous consequences we are facing today i.e., population explosion, nuclear war, terrorism, pandemic....

Frailty, thy name is woman.

I know not why do I have soft corner for the beauties, even though they turn out to be constant troubleshooters.

Coming to my love.

Her alluring beauty is said to have sent most of her acquaintances to hysteric heights.

Her smile is like oasis that awakens caravan's thirst.

Her eyes are like twinkling stars of the spring evening.

Her voice is like flute siphoning moon out of darkness.

Her lucid words give the freshness of dawn.

But she was solely responsible for cold war amongst my friends.

One evening I asked her to go around, she simply avoided with alibi of severe headache.

Alas! The same night I noticed her at a big restaurant with a fellow, who borrowed some money from me for a dire emergency.

I solaced myself with saying  
'true love is putting someone else before yourself'.

Spotting me alone at a corner, that sweet blondie gave me a bewitching smile, which was in no way less enchanting than of DaVinci's portrait.

Suddenly and coincidentally stereo of the hotel blared out Raj Kapoor's famous song '*dost dost na raha, pyar pyar na raha*'.

Needless to say, her new partner, my old friend ever cared to return the money.

# Nostalgia

Whenever it rains I don't think of colourful umbrellas of children wading through rainwater.

Nor do I figure sequence of rain, in tune with the song like '*rim jhim gire sawan*', rather hearken Jagjit Singh's song: '*woh kagaz ki kasti, woh barish ka paani*'.

The soothing cool drizzles make my imagination flash back. Mind becomes heavier with memories of by gone days which were never to visit me again.

The memories of carefree college life.  
How different those days were!

I still remember,

How the *mess-wala* and canteen corridor bed me audie with incessant clatter of plates and teacups.

That long bench in front of cash counter of canteen, where we had sips of heady tea and numberless puffs to pass time and wait for the sun to set.

With setting of the sun, boredom of day ends, making it time to start journey for ladies hostel or *khatee*.

Whether it was cricket field, badminton court, T.T. room or carom corner, there were always my well-wishers to cheer for a fine start and win.

Those were the days of glory when my team or I were in fray.

How our fans watch avidly and go over to moon with each final win.

Each win or loss made us drown in the gloomy lights of the hostel or hotel.

Now being in the battlefield of life, I see my sunny tony which cracked number of boundaries to make each moment of match lively or my T.T. bat whose top spin made opponent enigmatic are laying lifeless.

How nice it was to start the morning with songs of '*Rangoli*' when sun had already sneaked into bed.

Evening was greeted with '*Chhayageet*' at 10 p.m., with gradual entry of friends to make gossip sweet and sour.

The door of my room cautioned them with caption 'Everybody allowed except you' and 'Enter at your own risk'. But it had hardly any bearing on their conscience.

Night retires in the room when my audio recorder plays '*diwaron-dar-se uttar ke parchhayian bolte, koi nahin bolta to tanhaiyan bolte*'.

This is the only reminiscence that still persists.

Unforgettable is that cupboard which was well arranged with number of books, its door displaying glamorous blondies and sports prodigies.

That letter rack above the table was filled with touching messages from every corner of the world.

Early days of college life saw my bicycle journeying to different talkies for night shows.

But in late years it was my rickety cycle that lay in listless wait with a coat of dust below the staircase.

Corridor of room was silent witness to '*Rangolies of Holi*', 'innumerable crackers of *Diwali*' and 'blasts in midnight of 31st December to greet the New Year'.

From this room, this campus, I have metamorphosed from academic greenhorn to ambitious doctor and an established practitioner.

I cherish those days, my room, my campus, and my college.

# Dreamland

Lighting a cigarette after the dinner,  
I strolled in the nearby hills.  
In the hushed silence, where stars speak and wind whispers,  
I had uncanny sense of primeval joy.  
Probably it is the joy akin to what Adam felt on seeing the  
marvelous creation of nature.  
But for me it is joy tinged with agonies of being alone in the  
midst of inexplicable reign of silence.  
Added to this, memories of my lost love touches the softer  
chord. The world appears very insignificant in face of the  
mysteries of universe.  
It is moment of self-revelation.

When I peep into reminiscences, realised my paucity,  
vulnerability, humanness, and helplessness.  
Everything around me show reflection of her.  
I get bewildered.

My mind sets in tune:  
Oh! dear,  
Lift me from green grass,  
I fail, I faint, I die,  
Let me love in rain of kisses,  
Press me as your own again,



Alas! my heart still beats loud and fast,  
God knows where it will give way at last.  
Moon of the night was full, bright and beautiful,  
wearing a mystic charm.  
I was completely mesmerized.  
Suddenly returned to myself when I marked moon's descent  
to the West.  
I retraced myself to the real world, as my dream was catching  
up higher pursuits.  
Lit one more cigarette and felt that I need some hours of  
sleep, as the next sunrise will begin with same humdrum.

# Loving Star

I have live memories, coming back home, entering lobby to find my little son chatting with my Papa.

It was such a pleasure to see them together.

He talked incessantly, asking one question after another.

Papa would listen to his questions which were otherwise provoking.

Papa's response was always patient, measured and elaborate.

I would smile while changing my dress, overhearing their endless chatter.

After a while my son would stretch himself on sofa keeping his head on Papa's lap and nudge him.

Papa would clear his throat and tell him stories, which I heard several times in my childhood.

He had an amazing ability to weave plots.

I softly enter the lobby so as not to disturb their mood.

Before the story ends my son would be in his magical world.

Now Papa would turn towards me with customary question 'How was the day'?

Then we would chat till we are done with dinner.

One day my son asked him, why so many stars are there?

He thought for a while and said that good people who die

become stars only when those who love them, let them go.  
My son nodded, taking it as correct response.  
Then two of them went out to garden and stared at the  
clear sky dotted with innumerable stars.  
Papa watched the sky quietly, uttered 'It is so lovely'  
'Will you too become a star'? my son asked.  
'Yes', if you have courage to let me go.  
I don't remember my son's answer.

One evening Papa slipped away.  
World seemed to be a void.  
I took him in my arms, sobbing with  
flood of tears streaming down.

My son did not cry.  
He simply held my hands and took me to garden,  
pointed his little finger to the evening star.  
My son's gesture taught me,  
letting one go does not diminish love.

*Love stays forever in our heart....*

# Loving Angel

Often, we hardly had enough to eat.

While taking food, Mother used to force me the major chunk from her portion, saying  
'Eat this son. I am not hungry.'

Mother wanted to give me nutritious food for my growth. She would prepare non-veg dishes and serve all, saying  
'Eat this son. I don't really relish non-veg.'

In order to fund my education, Mother would do tailoring in candlelight.

One night I woke up to find Mother working. I said, 'Mother, go to sleep. It's too late, you can do it tomorrow morning.'  
Mother smiled and replied  
'Sleep, my son. I am not tired.'

When I had to sit for my final examination, Mother would accompany me.

She waited for hours in the scorching heat.

When the bell rang I ran to meet her.

Mother embraced me and gave cold juice from thermos.

When asked her to drink too, she answered  
'Drink, my son. I'm not thirsty.'

After Father's death, our financial condition worsened.  
One uncle volunteered to help us on several occasions.  
Our neighbours often advised her to marry again.  
Mother fondly said,  
'My son is my love, I don't need it from anyone else.'

After I got a job, it was time for my old Mother to retire.  
But she kept continuing her pursuits.  
I kept sending her money but  
she was steadfast, saying  
'Son, I have enough with me.'

I succeeded in my profession with a big hike in salary.  
I decided to bring my mother to enjoy city life.  
Mother didn't want to bother me pleading,  
'My son, I am not used to high living.'

In her dotage, Mother was bedridden.  
I was heartbroken as she was feeble and emaciated.  
Mother smiled and whispered  
'Don't cry my son. I am not in pain, I am fine.'  
*Telling this final lie, she left me alone...*

***Mother, you are an angel!!!***

# Intimate Exchange

Dear Papa,

I am placing this letter in my diary, hoping an early response.  
As you always peep into my diary you will not miss it,  
I am sure.

Papa, I am frequently reminding you of the girl,  
I want to marry.  
But despite my best efforts to convince you through '*Mama*',  
you have been slurring over.  
It makes me feel like a lone traveller in desert of  
'*Sahara*' or '*Kalahari*'.

Papa, it is easier to motivate '*Lord Shiva*' than to  
change your orthodox mindset.  
Are you not a human with flesh and blood!  
Don't you understand what love is!  
Have you not ever been enchanted with beauties!  
Though you are not a poet, don't you have the heart to feel  
the yearnings and emotions!

When you go with '*Mama*' to any party, you always leave her  
amongst ladies and hasten your steps to folks who gossip,  
Russia-Ukraine war, stock exchange scam, global warming,  
nuclear armament...

Papa, is this proper celebration!  
In your place, I would always stand besides my wife and  
show the world, she is the face that burst many hearts in the  
city.

All women around her would turn pale.  
Oh! Papa how could you be so unromantic!

I have also discussed regarding her with 'Didi',  
but she is insistent on your approval.  
If you fail to accept my choice,  
I can't but opt for the inevitable.

Only Yours,  
Hopeless Son.

Dearest Son,  
If you opt for such eventuality, first of all choose  
which is the best way.  
Hanging from the fan in your room will not lead to the  
cherished end because it hangs so low that your feet cannot  
but touch the floor.  
Sleeping on the railway track is simply waste of time as  
Indian trains have uncertain schedules.  
Take mosquito repellent with you.  
Oh! coming to your faculty if you are thinking of sedatives,  
unfortunately I have swallowed all the pills from your  
medicine rack but have not had a wink!  
I don't have much idea about injecting muscle relaxant.  
Again, poisons in our country are not genuine.  
'Bete', love is the only purest poison,  
whose effect is maddening.

Dear Beta, have your meal, don't wait as we have dinner at

your friend's house.

I have already talked with your sweetheart and her family  
few days back.

She was asked to keep it secret.

Don't fret and fume at her.

Anyway, I have kept some money under your music system,  
get some wedding cards.

I am not at all worried about the design because

I know my son has a wonderful choice.

Sorry for writing this in your diary but for a father there is  
no better place to peep into than son's personal diary.

It is so intimate...

Lovingly Yours,

Papa.