MY FATHER IN HEAVEN

Description

My father suffered a massive heart attack and died at an early age of fifty-six. The incident was too sudden and shocking to all our family members. I was then twenty-six, married and had to look after two younger brothers. They are yet to marry. The news, comparably, was too harsh for my mother. She underwent a major operation two days back. Doctors arenâ??t sure if she could move out of the intensive care. She lay immovable on her hospital bed. My concern at the moment was how to convey the unforeseen news to her.

It has become difficult for me to imagine given her extraordinary plight. Fastened to hospital bed how she would manage to console herself. Stretched out half-sedated on her hospital bed. I wondered how she would grieve and witness and supervise the final rites of her life partner.

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My father wasnâ??t one of those fun, easy going nature who would smile at you and say, â??how are you, is everything okâ?•. I saw him always as intellectually isolated. He was different, strict. His face was always taut with intensity and discipline wrote all over. It looked like when he marched around at home or in the school. He had created around him an unapproachable fence of harsh rules of orderliness and irritation.

My father was a self-made academician both in his deeds and traits. He was a doctorate in Physics from the famous Banaras Hindu University way back in 1955. He had a brief stint in teaching in Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur. Immediately followed by a four-year-long sojourn in the USA at the University of North Carolina. His post-doctoral pursuit in the US cut short abruptly due to the untimely death of his elder brother. He returned to his native place Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh in 1964.

He was a tough built, medium height persona. With a deep wheatish color; a slightly oval head crowned with rich black and sparse grey hair. He looked as though all the high intellectual elements rightly assembled on his face. That gave him a radiance reflecting a respectable scholarly glow. His eyes were bright and sharp and deeply set hollowed with years of devoted study. Untired, they seemed alert to absorb anything from his vast personal library where I found him early in the morning and late nights.

A firmly set mouth always ready and dashed off to teach any topic contained in Mathematics, Physical sciences to a young boy or a grown-up struggling post-graduate. He carried with him a formidable presence and commanding voice and magnetic aura when he checked into his classroom.

Vijayawada was a lazy town, in early 70â??s, where my father had his primary and higher secondary education. It was yet to come out of its embryonic shell of cultural, social, educational standards. I was hardly ten years then.

I admired everything about him. His dressing etiquette: neatly ironed white shirt, perfectly tucked into black trousers, buckled by a leather belt, well-knotted tie set with a brooch hooked to the shirt. The picture was complete when the amused neighbors and passers-by spotted my dad. All saw him un-self-consciously riding his â??Atlasâ?? bicycle. With his chin up, to his workplace. He joined as a lecturer in

a small college nearby. He received the salary of two hundred fifty rupees. I saw him as a humble enough character to accept it, though, a doctorate in Physics.

I got awed by the elegant features of his attitude; the way he walked with black shoes shining and his white shirt glittering. Admired the way he walked with a proud swagger. Those were times when I was ten years. An age not knowing how to hold the half trousers loosely fitted tight around my thin waist. Looking at him fresh in the morning in his precise outfit. I stood in wonder and idolized the pre-eminence and esteem that framed my dad all along.

We lived as an extended family. My father along with his brotherâ??s families all bunched together in our ancestral home. It had five main rooms. They roughly measured to accommodate, at present dimensions, a double size bed with a little over two feet maneuvering space left. Ours was a family of four to adjust. My two uncles had tough time occupying the other two rooms. They had to manage and balance within the same inconvenient space raising five and eight kids each. Further, the house included a small cubicle type space set aside. In which space our grandparents settled and dined.

The whole entourage had to contend with a shared kitchen each aunt occupying one corner. The picture was complete with independent kerosene stoves. The operation of cooking and feeding all conducted in squatting postures. The whole setup looked dirty, smoke-encrusted, ill-equipped but adjustably functional.

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Iâ??m always fascinated by those soft dainty suspended memories of my father and my childhood. But, I distinctly remember one feature of my fatherâ??s. His dressing elegance and his distinctive style. That had fixed an iconic image of him in my memory. He strode boldly wearing his â??foreign-returnedâ?? qualification, endorsed by his dignity. His spick-and span dressing was his signature label.

Even though, my father left me in cold and alone and young twenty-eight years ago. He prematurely departed barely at fifty-six. I hold in my memory of his character and his dressing style as fresh as a bunch of fresh flowers. What Iâ??m today that includes my dressing taste is a revered echo of what my father reflected in the glorious past. An inseparable legacy and tradition that gifted by my father which I canâ??t live without.

Now, Iâ??m fifty-seven, precisely at the same milestone wherein my father succumbed to a heart ailment. As a teacher and administrator with an eye for elegant dress sense, Iâ??m respected, admired, complimented. I enjoyed a high level of self-esteem and cheerful disposition. I remembered my father words, â??when you dress well people respect you more.â?•

Iâ??m blessed to have such a silent role model as my father, but his early demise still finds me in a dark tunnel of the void. Every day, I remember him as my mentor and as I run my misty eyes over his life-size painting where he with â??handsomely dressed orderâ?? is eternally and elegantly framed.

Fondly, recalling his role-model personality, strolling down the long corridors of the school that he had established and which I managed for more than twenty-five years. Every day, every step, every word I bring about will stand to show how grateful Iâ??m to revere such an academic and handsome father.

In good time I started imitating my father as a model. I learned to groom myself well and cultivated positive dress statements as an important and healthy habit. I learned the fact that when we dress up and come out graciously; meaning we respect ourselves greatly. Emotionally, good attire helps us to

live healthily and optimistically. And truly, â??Dressing well is a form of good manners.â?•

I choose to hold the perfect memory of my father, his grooming conduct and cling to it â?? blindly and admiringly. I chose it because at that moment he was the person who had glowed and lived in his inimitable terms. In that snapshot, his remarkable personality was something so golden and so sacred I want to keep it forever. Like an old movie reel, I can play it at will. I still do that every day.

Category

1. Uncategorized

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