

REMEMBERING MY FATHER

Description

default watermark

(***Remembering my father on his birthday the September 19th, I brought to fore a few of his memories which I have fondly preserved for the last twenty-eight years. Had he been alive today he would have been grandly 85 years playing with his three great grandkids: Aaradhya, Kaushal, and Abhiram***).

A LONG STORY

I love books; they have been, more faithful than a few friends of mine.

My romance with books and how I grew fascinated savoring them since I was ten was a long story. The story goes dotted with grim episodes as I introduce my father into the script. As I go ahead, a nostalgic image would flash in my mind. Of an imposing guardian, my father: passed away twenty-eight years ago. One image of him is keenly poring over the books; I could never erase from my senses. I could never forget those serious, intent eyes fixed on the volumes conveniently spread in his lap.

I used to find him, early mornings and late evenings, leafing through heavy bounded scientific volumes. He was a Doctorate in Physics. After completing his Post-Doctoral research at North Carolina University, in the US, in the years 1964-68; family pressings brought him back to India.

I have no recollection of my early childhood playing with my father. When Iâ??m four, he flew out to the US for his research work. Even after he returned four years later, I donâ??t remember participating in any fanfare along with my mother or my uncles his glorious arrival from the US. During 60â??s a trip to the US and back itself was a monumental feat. Iâ??m too young I didnâ??t even know what to expect out of his homecoming. Though I dig deep, I havenâ??t any recollection of instances that affirmed a bonding between my father and me. Truly, I donâ??t remember registering his presence in the family. I always held; itâ??s me, my mother and a brother younger to me.

MY FATHER AND ME

My father was a scientist; in early70â??s to get employed in any decent position was remote. His possibility of hiring figured not that hopeful. And he found himself struggling hard to adapt in an unappealing, old-fashioned society. How depressed it would have been for him to endure such hard times and worry about how to earn a living with his research credentials.

For me, just growing up, in the meantime, the silent denial of caring contact, between my father and me, had done its damage. For the next twenty years, I assumed that he never made any attempts to bridge the gap. I was mistaken. As years went by, as I now reckon, maybe, Iâ??m too immature to understand, his poignancy. Or the financial schemes he had planned for our family for the years to come.

I got a chance to come closer to his helpful parental nearness when I entered 9th standard. It revealed to me for the first time the genius in him, as a teacher. When I sat with him got coached and helped to prepare for my exams. How easy he had made me understand the Mathematical and Physical sciences. Those were the days of no tables or chairs to sit and work comfortably. Most of his instructions and what I meekly followed him would happen on a mat spread on the floor.

default watermark

â??Why I got most pestered and persistently confined to complete the assignments and other academic tasks.â?• I saw myself helpless and in tears. And most of the time he rounded me up whenever he had free time to make me sit with my school books. I was his only target. It caused a lot of heartburn that he never bothered my younger sibling who is as tardy as me in regular studies. Luckily he always stayed out of my fatherâ??s short-tempered, disciplinary track. I found myself a convenient recipient of his spankings, harsh rebukes, physical insult, and uncontrollable bad temper, perhaps, due to his early financial troubles.

1970 â?? 1975 â?? ONE BAD PHASE

Looking back, during the five years from1970 to1975 my father seemed to shove one crisis after another. In whichever way, he attempted to assure himself a decent earning it never worked in his favor. The town we lived in was too small then, to accommodate a â??foreign-returnedâ?? professor with a good enough salary.

His experimental mind brought out many proposals to earn a living. But hardly anything fetched financial dividends. Cycling, he distributed distilled water bottles, meant for motor vehicles, sold at local petrol bunks.

Interestingly, for some projects, he lent an innovative touch like a workable design of â??solar heating systemâ?? he assembled in the year 1972.

The device was a two-meter basket-like structure made of bamboo. Inside the space of the basket at equal intervals, itâ??s lined with hundreds of two-inch square mirrors. The tiny mirrors fastened with binding wire. At the center of the basket, a long thin stick securely arranged. The whole outfit looked like a big inverted umbrella. The design of the basket carrying the small mirror positioned in an angle that the Sunlight reflected by the tiny mirrors got converged at the tip the stick where a flat wooden board stably fixed. A small bowl can sit on it. He later demonstrated, for curious onlookers, how to boil water, cook food using the â??solar heatâ?? as a source of energy. He planned to make theâ??solar heaterâ?? commercial brand and market it.

Publishing a Telugu monthly science magazine or trading some of the gadgets he got from the US didnâ??t end his financial owes. But his genial attitude of hard work and optimism continued to drive him to do something. He seemed so desperately ready to take up anything in his academic realm that could see a bulge in his purse.

THE IDEA OF A SCHOOL

Sitting on a rickety cot, one evening, on the first-floor veranda of our ancestral home, chatting with my cousins, he came up with a life-changing idea. Flashing bright hopes in his eyes, he announced loudly. â??Letâ??s start a schoolâ??!

In a low thatched roof and a stretched out hut he entered with chalk and duster into his first classroom. In the memory of Kennedysâ??, while he worked in the USin the late 60â??s, named the school as â??Kennedy High School.â?? In the year 1975.

As the years passed by, the sheer hard work of my father backed by his lofty qualifications, Kennedy High School evolved as one of the finest schools in our town.

default watermark

He spent fifteen years, an undefeatable effort to build his school as a bright illustration of his teaching mastery. At one time the school saw nearly four thousand bright faces: boys, girls, youngsters sprinting into the vast premises he had laid out for them. â??Kennedy is the fairyland for a childâ??s learning,â?? that was the high public pitch he achieved for himself.

With changed fortunes, I saw my father had become more generous. His methods and manner of approach towards me modified to a tone of acceptability and more of working together. I was twenty-five then and married. Somewhere in between my father wholly tied up with school work, construction, teaching. Thankfully, I matured myself to realize his true administrative and teaching skills, and his academic vision.

Deep down something stirred up, â??All his efforts are for our family. Selflessly, his aim was at not only to build an institution but also to ensure his fatherly focus to sustain a strong and comfortable future for all of usâ?•.

REPENTANCE: HOW IT CHANGED ME

I didnâ??t take much time to pull myself back in repentance the way I grandly misunderstood my father. Back then my vision left me arrogantly blinded by negative interpretations of his words and actions. I spent all my growing years holding deep down a sense of rejection towards him.

Later good sense dawned on me; wearing a new pair of apologetic glasses, I earnestly put myself at his disposal. I intended to assist him, help him as much I can. I took up school duties as a reverential cleansing of myself of the bitterness. That I accumulated over the years misunderstanding him. I too noticed his health proving uncooperative. He suffered severe asthmatic bouts.

But the divinity had sought another way of punishing me. Less than three years I had come clean of my consciousness. Shortly after I devoted heartfully to ease some of the administrative burdens of my father; fate struck me with a fatal blow. I lost my father toa brutal heart attack. He hadnâ??t given me

any time to rescue him or to see him cured and back to work. The death was too sudden, too instant. Iâ??m left alone, young and inconsolable.

Since the last twenty-eight years from the day he collapsed breathing his last. Every day I found myself eternally flooded by his memories. His influence upon me touched every segment of my existence. And it carved out of me a manner of character Iâ??m today. I share a few I feel proud of what Iâ??m. Letâ??s say his lifestyle or self-reliant boldness, or discipline and supremely his love for books, reading, and writing. I wouldnâ??t mind admitting, with a sparkle in my eyes; these were high-morale niceties I chipped out from his charisma.

By and by, I also began to realize, in our short journey he and I had together, he inspired me in many ways. Silently, showing me not in words but doing what was good for the school. I consumed as much as I needed for my lifetime of his inspirational teaching methods for kids, young adults, and teachers; quietly gazing into his classroom. An additional bonus, I saved an attribute of his keen regard to discipline and cleanliness.

Indeed, if I went thirty years back and watched him from a distance, I could glimpse images of his devotion and hard work. The extreme uphill task he might have challenged in the completion of his doctoral research at Benares Hindu University in 60â??s. Then it followed by his four-year sojourn in the US during Kennedyâ??s presidency. And back to India to live through the humiliating reality, for a few years, with no job or financial security.

default watermark

KENNEDY HIGH SCHOOL â?? A WORK OF GENIUS

To establish Kennedy High School, perhaps was his work of genius and the golden period for him and to our family as a whole. For all his honesty, hardships, misfortunes he had lived through for over three decades. But I believed every achievement would come with a price â?? but for my father, the price seemed too dear for the family and institution he built. I vividly remember the events that led to his early demise at the age of 57 in 1990.

Looking at what Iâ??m this day, whatever triumphs I have earned for myself, the name, fame and the lifestyle Iâ??m enjoying. Itâ??s all because my father had allowed me for a few years to let me watch him living his dedicated teaching life. His memories always seemed fresh and endearing. How I wished if he had lived a few more years longer. Wherein, I suspect I would have gained a deeper impact and a higher intellect in my life.

I believed my father had provided our family a sustainable foundation. He, as an ideal example, taught me how I could stand strong enough in whatever storms Iâ??m destined to travel. In my life, he is my mentor, a patriarch, and my teacher and a hero.

Category

1. Uncategorized

Date Created
2018/10/13
Author
eswarnadipalli