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➤ **From the MD's Desk:**

Dear Friends,

I am on vacation and this is going to be ultra short!

I would only like to reiterate that all of you participate in the September AGM at least through proxies.

Please note the procedure for giving proxies. Signed hard copies must reach us 48 hours before the AGM.

Regards,

Dr. K. Lakshman



- **SNL Archives:** All back issues of Suidha News Letter are available at: <http://suidha.co.in/news-letters.html>
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➤ Event Highlights:

✚ 19-06-2016: Intellectual Freedom In Ancient India - "The Hymn of Creation"

Mr. Ashok Dey of cottage # 44 had sent "The Hymn of Creation" to many of us. Some requested a discussion on the hymn. The Ladies Club organized a discussion session chaired by Prof. Rukmani on Sunday, 19th June 2016 at the Banquet Hall from 11A.M to 12 Noon. The program was well attended and the Q&A session was very interesting and educative.

During the discourse the Professor summarised that:

This is the famous Rgvedic hymn (X.129) mistakenly called The Creation Hymn by Orientalists like Max Muller and others. The ideas contained in this 'sūkta' (hymn) are pregnant with philosophical implications. The ideas expressed here have a bearing on the development of later philosophical schools such as Vedānta and Buddhism. Our ancient sages were open minded and thought deeply about the mystery and the origins of the universe we live in. The two great ancient nations where philosophy flourished were Greece and India. There is also a lot of literature on the interaction and commonality that we see between the philosophical traditions of these two countries. Anyway one area where all philosophers both modern and ancient converge is in the speculation about the origins of the universe. So does science for that matter. Since 'Creation' the hymn deals with that very subject (and as early as in Rgvedic times), it is worth discussing the intellectual freedom which our ancients enjoyed to be able to vigorously pursue bold speculative thinking in such varied fields as cosmology, philosophy and spirituality which impacted the very foundations of our culture and survived to this day.



✚ 22-06-2016: Gala Potluck Lunch programme

The members of the Suvridha Ladies Club had arranged a gala Potluck Lunch programme (for ladies only! 🤖). The occasion was celebrated with gaiety and enthusiasm by bringing their culinary skills to the fore and competing with each other. The result of the competition is as expected - a memorable delicious lunch! Here are a few snaps of the event.



✚ 25-06-2016: Monthly Movie Program

A very interesting movie was screened on Saturday, the 25th June at 6.15 PM in our Club House. The movie was "Intern". It is an English Movie of 2 hours duration with English Subtitles. A large number of residents witnessed the show.

Thanks to Mr. C.B. Prabhakar of cottage #119 who arranged the above monthly movie programme.



➤ **Suvidha On The Move :**

○ **Cleaning High-rise glass panes:**

The cleaning of glass panes on first and second floor of Suvidha Club House has posed difficulties to our staff when it comes to keeping them clean. Thanks to Mrs. Indu Champati, resident of cottage # 115A, who through her contacts, organized the high-rise glass cleaning services by an expert team. From now on our Club House would look even better. We thank Dr. PM Chandrasekhara for sponsoring the process.

○ **Landscaping:**

- **Saplings:** Thanks to Smt. Saraswathi Bhatia (resident of 32-D) who donated 65 saplings of the exotic trees at this opportune time to plant them. The saplings were supplied by Mr. Ravindra TC, the CEO of Indus Herbs after conducting a detailed survey of the Village Landscape.
- Landscaping project in front of 115 cottages is being completed following earthwork done to divert the rainwater from entering the front portion of the cottages and washing away the top soil.

○ **Security Measures:**

Not too long ago, a sturdy steel grill was fabricated by our Maintenance Section and fixed in to the south-west side compound wall where the nala from the Vajramuneswara Temple enters Suvidha. This is done to prevent debris entering into Suvidha village from outside.

During the recent flooding, the grill was totally damaged by strong water currents and debris of heavy logs of wood banging into the grill. Recently there were some incidences of intrusion of sand transporters. Hence on 5th July, the whole area was cleared by removing the collected debris and the steel grill / barrier was re-welded back into its original position.

➤ **Suvidha Family News:**

- Brigadier Pardhasaradhi, residing in Cottage No. 84 celebrated his 88th Birthday on 6th July 2016, along with his family members. On this occasion he had arranged a special Pooja at the Sri Venkateswara Temple in J.P.Nagar and shared the prasadam with the residents. We thank him for the prasadam & blessings of the Lord and wish Brigadier Pardhasaradhi a healthy and happy time in Suvidha.



- On 21st June 2016, Mrs. Mythili and Mr. Anand Sampath, residents of Cottage 181A hosted a sumptuous lunch to all the residents and the staff of Suvidha as they have recently moved in to Suvidha village. The goodwill gesture was well received with warmth and affection. We welcome and wish the elderly couple a happy and healthy stay in Suvidha village.

- o **Suvidha Talent Corner:** Under this banner, we introduce to our readers, the contributions of our Suvidha family members who have developed substantial special skill-sets as hobbies. Hope you will all enjoy such presentations. We welcome all such talented members to participate in this endeavor.
- o **Paintings:** Dr. Narayanan R, is a popular gynecologist and a resident of Cottage No. 107 at SUVIDHA. Dear readers, you have enjoyed some of his paintings over the past two years. They were captioned under the heading, "Flora of Suvidha". To bring in a change, he now intends to capture the beauty of Suvidha by sketching a few familiar scenes. Hope you will enjoy !



SUVIDHA HEALTH CENTER



Suvidha Health Center and pergola with benches in foreground

- **Birds of SUVIDHA:** This is a series of beautiful and at times stunning pictures of birds that are either resident of or visitors to our Village. Mr. Ashok Dey, a permanent resident of SUVIDHA since November 2010, has been able to photograph as many as 101 different species of birds in the Village.

ASIAN KOEL

I am sure that some time or the other all of you have heard the call of the **Asian Koel (*Eudynamys scolopaceus*)**. Its almost anxious sounding call is loud, repetitive, sometimes rising to a crescendo. Almost silent during the winter it is heard more and more often as summer advances.



And that is when, the Koel's , one of the first bird voices, you hear at dawn.

With a wing span of around 43 cm (the size of the House Crow) it is a fairly large bird with a long and broad tail. But then, being extremely shy it prefers to perch reasonably well concealed on the branches of large leafy trees.

That is why this species is heard far more often than it is seen. The only times I have been lucky enough to catch fleeting glimpses of both the male and the female are when they were sunning themselves from tree tops in early mornings.

As you will see from the accompanying pictures, the male and the female of the species have totally distinct colouring. The male is glistening black with a dull yellowish-green bill and strikingly crimson eyes. The female -- in my opinion far more handsome than the male -- is brown, profusely spotted and barred with white and buff with the same brilliant red eyes.



The species feeds largely on fruits and berries and also caterpillars and insects.

The Asian Koel is brood-parasitic, i.e., it lays its eggs in the nests of a variety of other species of birds. In India it parasitizes the jungle crow and the house crow; in Bangladesh it is the long-tailed shrike and in Thailand and the Malay peninsula it was recently found to parasitize the Mynah as the latter became more common

than the crow in those parts. The Asian Koel's eggs are smaller but similar to the crow's. Slim Ali had reported that as many as 13 eggs had been found in a single crow's nest!



Interestingly, the word "Koel" (because of the sound of the bird's call) is onomatopoeic in origin. The Sanskrit root is *Kokila* and the names in various Indian languages are quite similar. Being held in high regard for its "song", there are many references to this species in folklore, poetry and mythology. In the *Vedas* the species is referred to as '*Anya Vapa*' which is translated as "that which was raised by others" or "sown for others to reap". This has been interpreted as the earliest knowledge of brood-parasitism.

➤ Readers' Corner :

Upaniṣadic Pañcakośa Concept Compared with Western Humanistic Psychology

Courtesy: Dr. T. S. Rukmani, PhD, DLitt., Resident of Suvidha Village, Cottage # 73-74
(Presently, the author is a Distinguished Professor Emeritus, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada.)

**Oh, East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great judgement seat.**

(Kipling - The Ballad of East and West)

If Kipling were alive today he would realize that he has been hasty in his judgement. The idea that in the ultimate analysis, in the realm of understanding, there is no difference between East and West, or between one human race and another, has become increasingly clear and the best minds all over the world, be they philosophers, psychoanalysts, physicists, writers and others have come to the conclusion that 'the rhythm of the universe and the mind and spirit of man is one ecological system'. Rupert Sheldrake states this clearly when he says that "The universe as a whole could have a cause and a purpose only if it were itself created by a conscious agent which transcended it. Unlike the universe this transcendent consciousness would not be developing towards a goal, it would be its own goal. It would not be striving towards a final form, it would be complete in itself. If this transcendent conscious being, were the source of the universe and everything within it, all created things would in some sense participate in its nature. The more or less 'wholeness' of organisms at all levels of complexity could then be seen as a reflection of the transcendental unity on which they depended and from which they ultimately derived"¹. Going one step further the Upaniṣads declare that the ultimate



Brahman is the nature of Consciousness and the whole phenomenon is but a reflection of this ultimate reality. Once the human mind can transcend its limitations of thought this truth will be experienced here and now in this state itselfⁱⁱ. Similarly David Bohm states his conviction “that matter, life and consciousness all are projections of a common ground”ⁱⁱⁱ. The same idea is expressed by Ilya Prigogine when he says “...this intelligence extends all the way down the quantum level of matter^{iv}. The transcendent and immanent aspects of this consciousness is described in the Upaniṣads as “The Self that is subtler than the subtlest and greater than the greatest, is lodged in the heart of (every) creature. A desireless person sees that glory of the Self through the serenity of the sense-organs, and thereby becomes free from sorrow”^v.

It is thus understood that the universe is the macrocosm which is represented as the microcosm. The entire phenomenon can be viewed as having a central, still core “formless beyond form”, but which manifests itself outwardly in a multiplicity of ways. While the centre was still, the periphery was dynamic comprising action, directed towards the fulfilment of desire, acquiring prosperity, doing one’s duty and in the process giving rise to the world of activity as we see and experience it. This is the world of *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* – an arena where the individual strives to realize its oneness with the inner core, the *bindu*. In the ancient Indian worldview, on the individual plane, a human being was exhorted to pursue his/her peripheral activities without losing sight of the overall regulating force encompassed under the word ‘*dharma*’. While fulfilling one’s individual desires and ambitions, called the *puruṣārthas* (*dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, *mokṣa*) within the framework of *dharma*, every human being was also discharging his obligations to society by conforming to the rules laid down for the four stages of life or the *āśramas* (*brahmacarya*, *gṛhastha*, *vānaprastha*, *sannyāsa*) as they were called. If one were to attempt to relate the ‘*puruṣārthas*’ with the ‘*āśramas*’ one could say that in the first two *āśramas* (*brahmacarya* and *gṛhastha*) and to a certain extent in the third (*vānaprastha*), *artha* (pursuit of material prosperity) and *kāma* (fulfilment of one’s desires) were pursued, understandably with a difference in emphasis on what the meaning of *artha* and *kāma* could be in these stages. But their subordination to *dharma* at all times was never lost sight of. In the last stage of *sannyāsa* on the other hand, there was a transcendence of all the three- *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*- and this is the stage when the underlying unity becomes an experiential reality. The assumption is that the individual has not swerved from the path of *dharma* and has followed strictly the ethical and moral principles in the earlier stages so that liberation or *mokṣa* is the culmination and is experienced in a state of deep reflection. Every culture believes that in moments of reflection and deep insight this oneness between the ‘micro’ and ‘macro’ levels is revealed and it is described variously as *nirvāṇa*, *mokṣa*, *stasis*, *Tao* etc., in different traditions.

An understanding of this unity can only be at the experiential level. Thought by its very nature can only think in dualistic framework. The Ultimate unity, on the other hand, “transcends both the conceptual and the sensual sphere. The perceiving thought has to transcend itself if it is to attain true reality”^{vi}. Patañjali in the Yogasūtras prescribes an eight-fold path to reach this inner core and it is significant to note that only when the *yogī* transcends even the last stage of knowledge that he is able to attain to the state of *kaivalya* or liberation^{vii}.

If thought only divided it is risky to make positive statements about the ultimate and so we come across statements in the Upaniṣads where it is made clear that “man can only know the negation, never the position of ultimate Reality”^{viii}. Meister Eckhart expresses the same truth in similar words when he says “Meanwhile man cannot know what God is, even though he be ever so well aware of what God is not”^{ix}. And the ‘namelessness of the Tao’ in Taoism is also along the same lines. Thus in a number of cultures the realization has dawned that the ultimate Unity can only be a matter of experience and not one of thought^x.

That a state of liberation can be the unfolding of a person’s potential and can be achieved in one’s life time itself has been the proclamation of Upaniṣadic thought^{xi}. This has found an echo in the West in what is known as ‘humanistic psychology’. While there are certain basic needs in an individual, the growth of an individual is towards the experience of that inner core which has already been described above. Thus growth is “that one great force of growth that pushes forward all the time and leads us, unless we resist, into self-actualisation”^{xii}. Maslow talks of this as a “single ultimate value for mankind, a far goal toward which all men strive”^{xiii}. This is not just a speculation but there is corroboration of this concept in the “clinical and philosophical conclusions of Rogers, of Fromm, of Goldstein, of Angyal, of Murray, of C. Butler, of Horney, Jung, Nuttin and many others” according to Maslow^{xiv}. The methods of meditation and reflection advocated in the Upaniṣads find support in the self-actualisation concept^{xv}. Thus Frances Vaughan says that awareness of this dimension “is not attained by searching outside of oneself in the external world but rather by turning inward for the cultivation of self-awareness, such as in the practice of meditation or contemplation”^{xvi}.

Whether self-actualisation comes of its own accord or has to be acquired at the end of a long journey involving a transformation of oneself through right living is a matter not as yet quite clear in humanistic psychology. While Maslow and others believe that once the basic needs of a human being are gratified and there is an assurance of healthy growth man demonstrates in his own nature a pressure toward inner fuller and fuller Being, more and more perfect actualisation of humanness, there are others like Fromm who believe in transformation of oneself through self-effort. According to Maslow “man is ultimately not molded or shaped into humanness or taught to be human. The role of the environment is ultimately

to permit him or help him to actualise his own potentialities not its potentialities"^{xvii}. One also gets the idea that according to Maslow only in a few people is self-actualisation a relatively achieved 'state of affairs'. But for most it is an yearning towards which one grows and who have to be guided psychologically to realise their goal. One thus gets a feeling that most people are sick and it is only a psychologist who can deal with them and bring them around to realise themselves.

But in the past few years the outlook has changed and Fromm and others have stressed 'on the right way of living' thus emphasizing the importance of self effort in making this process become a reality. In the past few years humanistic education is being advocated 'to develop a climate of caring, respect and trust'^{xviii}. Moreover one also notices a growing concern about 'the relationship between personal consciousness and political structures' and they also try to grapple 'with the realities of institutional power and inequality'^{xix}.

In these new developments the humanistic psychologists are moving towards the Eastern modes of thought on one plane but also moving away from it in another sense. While the welfare of society was also of paramount concern to the ancient Indian sage he somehow realized that if the individual had to grow fully and attain liberation (*jīvanmukti*) he had to have time to grow inwardly away from the hustle and bustle of 'society'. Having discharged the obligations to society in the first two stages of *brahmacharya* and *gṛhastha āśramas* he was allowed the rest of his life to follow a path of growing inwards. Without the quietude and tranquillity which accompanies a life of contemplation and reflection it was not possible to reach the ultimate stage of self-realization according to the Upaniṣadic seer. Even the Bodhisattva doctrine of Mahāyāna Buddhism had to acknowledge that the total *nirvāṇa* comes only to the Buddha and not at the lower stage of the Bodhisattva. However one also gets the feeling that persons like Mahatma Gandhi or Baba Amte or many a social worker, a writer, a painter, a dancer and such others seem to have achieved a state of self-realization akin to what the Upaniṣads describe. Whether there is a difference in the experience of one who is a *jīvanmukta* in the Upaniṣadic sense and in the experiences of the above mentioned great individuals is a difficult question to answer. Perhaps the answer lies in the transcendence of the 'ego'. As long as the humanistic educators use 'self-understanding to change systems which prevent others from developing their full humanness' it will be on par with the *karma-yoga* that is first advocated in the *Īśāvāsyaopaniṣad*^{xx} and later perfected in the *Bhagavadgītā*^{xxi}. Thus one could say that the Indian way of thinking has found expression in a similar way of understanding in Western humanistic psychology. It is in the transcendence of the ego that there is self-actualisation.

This transcendence is taught in many ways in the Upaniṣads. The Taittirīya Upaniṣad (Taitt. Up), considered to be one of the older Upaniṣads, teaches this lesson through a symbolism of five coverings (*kośas*) which when progressively removed will lead one to Brahman or the ultimate realization^{xxii}. The very word '*kośa*' or covering conveys the idea of something imposed from out side which can be easily removed by self effort. The enumeration starts with the most gross and slowly ascends to the highest, creating an imagery of leading the aspirant slowly from the gross to the subtle and to the subtlest. Thus addressing one who is at the initial stage of understanding, the *ācārya* (*guru*) says "From that Brahman which is the self was produced space. From space emerged air. From air was born fire. From fire was created water. From water sprang up earth. From earth were born the herbs. From the herbs was produced food. From food was born man. That man, such as he is, is a product of food..." (*annamaya*)^{xxiii}. The Upaniṣad later describing the nature of the self as consisting of food describes its higher nature as *prāṇa* (*prāṇamaya*; life, vitality), then as *manaḥ* (*manomaya*; mind), then as *vijñāna* (*vijñānamaya*; knowledge, understanding). Finally, the description ends with the subtlest, where the self is equated with bliss or *ānanda* (*ānandamaya*)^{xxiv}.

This method of leading an individual slowly from the gross to the subtle level is common in Upaniṣadic teaching. Starting with mundane everyday objects and concepts a hierarchy is built up which reaches a climax and is intended to illuminate the understanding of the disciple as to the ultimate reality. As all the instruction was only oral at this period, the impact on the disciple sitting next to the *guru* can easily be inferred. The seer in the Taitt.Up has cleverly used the concept of the five *kośas* (*pañcakośa*) to bring out the unity at both the 'micro' and 'macro' levels. The interplay between the 'micro' and 'macro' planes is an effective tool found employed in most of the important Upaniṣads. In the Chāndogyaopaniṣad (Chānd.Up), for instance, Uddālaka Āruṇi leads his son Śvetaketu in the same manner, using many examples, to realize the oneness between the individual self and the supreme self^{xxv}. By thus juxtaposing the 'micro' and 'macro' levels the Upaniṣads emphasize the unity behind the manifest complexity. In the Upaniṣads the 'micro' is denoted as the '*vyāpti*' aspect and the 'macro' as the '*samaṣṭi*' aspect of the same truth. The Māṇḍūkyaopaniṣad (Māṇḍ.ūp) uses the *vyāpti-samaṣṭi* imagery to connect the symbol Om with the four stages of waking, dreaming, deep sleep and the fourth stage which is beyond the other three and both are then further connected with the four stages of consciousness. One thus comes across a rich tapestry of images used by the Upaniṣads to convey the message of unity.

If one goes back to Maslow's growth factor and compares it with the 'five *kośas*' one realizes that the hierarchy of *kośas* also points to the 'basic needs' and through transcendence of them goes on to the growth of the higher needs. Thus while *annamaya* refers to the physiological aspects, *prāṇamaya* and *monomaya* by having reference to the life principle (breath) and mental life can, in a sense, imply the needs of security, safety and love which Maslow talks about. It is only when

these cease to be of concern can the individual progress to the 'macro' level of understanding. "Self-knowledge which can be loosely equated to *vijñānamaya* will then lead to 'self-improvement' and 'self-actualisation' or realization of the 'self as bliss' or '*ānandamaya*'.

An attempt has been made to find similar thought processes in the Upaniṣads and researches in humanistic psychology. The Pañcakośa concept is just one imagery taken up to study this similarity. It is clear that there cannot be a one-to-one correspondence between thought processes belonging to different cultures and it would be foolish to look for them in that sense. But while the vocabulary, ways of expression and the conceptual framework may differ, one can clearly discern behind the verbiage, similar ideas and basic convergences. This article is just an attempt to draw attention to this similarity, for in the ultimate analysis the 'world is one' not different from Truth; if that is so then there has to be a convergence of the many approaches to realize that Truth whether it be in the East or in the West, in the North or in the South. And thus we come back to Kipling who is quoted at the beginning of this article.

- ⁱ Cited in Prubuddha Bharata, Sept. 1990
ⁱⁱ Taittiriya Up. II.1.1; Chānd.Up. VI.8.8
ⁱⁱⁱ Cited in Prubuddha Bharata Sept. 1990
^{iv} Ibid.
^v Kath.Up. I.2.20
^{vi} Erich Fromm, *The Art of Living*, p.66
^{vii} Yogasūtra I. 48-51
^{viii} Bṛhadāranyakopaniṣad II.3.6
^{ix} Erich Fromm *ibid.*, p.67
^x Kath. Up. I.2.9 and 23
^{xi} *Jivanmukti*, Brahmasūtra IV.1.15
^{xii} Ken Wilber 1989 in *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, Vol. 29, No.2
^{xiii} A.H.Maslow, *Physical and Mental Well-Being in the Range of Ethics, Introductory Readings*, p.172
^{xiv} *Ibid.*, p.173
^{xv} *ātmāvāre draṣṭavyah, śrotavyah, mantavyah, nididhyāsītavyah*
^{xvi} Frances Vaughan 1985, "Transpersonal Identity" *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, Vol. 25, No 3
^{xvii} A.H.Maslow *ibid.* p.177
^{xviii} Lee Bell Nancy Schnedewind 1989 "Promise of Humanistic Education"
Journal of Humanistic Psychology, Vol.25, No.3
^{xix} *Ibid.*
^{xx} Īśa.Up 1
^{xxi} Bha.Gītā. II.47
^{xxii} The five kośas are *annamayakośa, prānamayakośa, manomayakośa, vijñānamayakośa* and *ānandamayakośa*
^{xxiii} Taitti.Up. II.1.1ff
^{xxiv} *Ibid.* II.5.1
^{xxv} Chānd. Up. VI.8.5-VI.13.3

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Road Map to tread the Last Years of Life

Compiled by Dr. P M Chandrasekhara, Cottage # 75

In the story authored by Tolstoy, Ivan Ilyich is forty five years old, a midlevel Saint Petersburg magistrate whose life revolves mostly around petty concerns of social status. One day he falls off a stepladder and develops a pain in his side. Instead of abating, the pain gets worse, he becomes unable to work. Formerly an 'intelligent, polished, lively and agreeable man,' he grows depressed and enfeebled. Friends and colleagues avoid him. His wife calls in a series of ever more expensive doctors. None of them agree on a diagnosis, and the remedies they give him accomplish nothing. For Ilyich, it is all torture, and simmers and rages at his situation.



"What tormented Ivan Ilyich most," Tolstoy writes, " was the deception, the lie, which for some reason they all accepted, that he was not dying but was simply ill, and he need keep quite and undergo treatment and then something very good would result." Ivan Ilyich has flashes of hope that maybe things will turn around, but as he grows weaker and more emaciated, he knows what is happening. He lives in mounting anguish and fear of death. But death is not the subject that his doctors, friends or family can countenance. That is what his most profound pain is.

"No one pitied him as he wished to be pitied," writes Tolstoy. "At certain moments after prolonged suffering he wished most of all (though he would have been ashamed to confess it) for some one to pity him as a sick child is pitied. He longed to be petted and comforted. He knew he was an important functionary, that he had a beard turning grey, and that therefore what he longed for was impossible, but still he longed for it."

To-day, as a bystander, one can see that there was a failure on the part of those around Ivan Ilyich to offer comfort or to acknowledge what is happening to him was a failure of character and culture. The late-nineteenth-century Russia of Tolstoy's story seemed harsh and almost primitive to us. Just as we believed that modern medicine could probably have cured Ivan Ilyich of whatever disease he had. No, even to-day we are no better, since we never touched on the reality of the disease and about the person who is suffering and the modes of opportunists that have developed over the years to lessen the suffering and the isolation.

An illuminating writer, Atul Gawande in his poignant novel "*Being Mortal*", gives us an amazingly researched information about the various developments that have taken place over the years with respect to growing old and the end-of-life treatment options that are available now. Here under, some of the excerpts from the novel is presented for the benefit of the readers who are in the same boat.

Modern scientific capability has profoundly altered the course of human life. People live longer and better than at any other time in history. But scientific advances have turned the process of aging and dying into medical experiences, matters to be managed by health care professionals. And we in the medical world proved alarmingly unprepared for it. This reality has been largely hidden, as the final phases of life becomes less familiar to people. As recently as 1943-5, most deaths occurred in the home. By the 1980's, just 17% did. Across the industrialized world, the experience of advanced aging and death has shifted to hospitals and nursing homes. The late surgeon Sherwin Nuland, in his classic book *How We Die, lamented*. "The necessity of nature's final victory was expected and accepted in generations before our own. Doctors were far more willing to recognise the signs of defeat and far less arrogant about denying them."

This is a book about the modern experience of mortality – about what it's like to be creatures who age and die, how medicine has changed the experience. You don't have to spend much time with elderly or those with terminal illness to see how often medicine fails the people it is supposed to help. The waning days of our lives are given over to treatment that oddle our brains and sap our bodies for a silver's chance of benefit. They are spent in institutions – nursing homes and intensive care units – where regimented, anonymous routines cut us off from all the things that matters to us in life.

For most of human history, for those few people who actually survived to old age were cared for in multigenerational systems, often with three generations living under one roof. Even when the nuclear family replaced the extended family, the elderly were not left to cope with the infirmities of age on their own. Children typically left home as soon as they were old enough to start families of their own. But one child usually remained, often the youngest daughter, if the parents survived into senescence. This was the lot of the poet Emily Dickson, in Amherst, Massachusetts, in the mid-nineteenth century. Her brother left home, but she and her younger sister stayed with their parents until they died. As it happened, Emily's father lived to the age of seventy one, by which time she was in her forties, and her mother lived even longer. She and her sister ended up spending their entire lives in the parental home. In the contemporary societies, by contrast, old age and infirmity have gone from being a shared, multigenerational responsibility to a more or less private state – something experienced largely alone or with the aid of doctors and institutions. How did this happen? : One answer is that old age itself has changed. In the past, surviving old age was uncommon, and those who did survive served a special purpose as guardian of tradition, knowledge, and history to maintain their status and authority as heads of the household until death. In many societies, elders not only commanded respect and obedience but also let sacred rites and wielded political power. The dignity of old age something every one aspires. Global economic development has changed opportunities for young dramatically. The prosperity of whole countries depends on their willingness to escape the shackles of family expectation and follow their own path – to seek out jobs wherever they might be, do whatever they want, marry whom they desire, they were gone. The fascinating thing is that, over time, it doesn't seem that the elderly have been especially sorry to see the children go. Nor they were not unhappy to be left on their own with enough money and the property allowing them to maintain economic control of their lives in old age and freeing them from the need to work until death or total disability. So what they did was move on, just like their children. Given the opportunity, both parents and children saw separation as a form of freedom. Whenever the elderly, have had the financial means, they have chosen what social scientists have called "intimacy at a distance". Whereas in early twentieth – century America 60% of those over age sixty five resided with a child, by the 1960s the population dropped to 25%. By 1975 it was below 15%. The pattern is a worldwide one. Just 10% of Europeans over age eighty live with their children, and almost half live completely alone, without a spouse. In Asia, the radical concept of 'Retirement' started to take shape. Life expectancy, which was under fifty in 1900, climbed to more than sixty by the 1930s, as nutrition, sanitation, and medical care took hold. World is quickly becoming older. World's population is aging. The number of people aged 60 and above has doubled since 1980. There were 810 million aged during the year 2012 ie. 11.5% of the global population. It will increase to 22% of the global population by 2015. People aged 80 will quadruple to 395 million. India is in a phase of fast demographic transition. India is an aging Nation with 98 million elderly ie. 7.7% over 65 years. The rate of growth is at 3.8% when compared to the overall growth rate of 1.8%. This demographic transition is attributed to decreased mortality and improved longevity. From 47 years, Indians can live up to 67 years. By 2045 a new born can live up to 83 years. And the elders will form 30% of the population in 60 countries. It is estimated that in India, there are 2.7 million seniors currently

who need the specialized care and 8% of them are bedridden. At present India has 11 to 20 thousand centenarians. It is all set to rocket to 1.5 to 6.2 lakhs by 2015.

TO BE CONTINUED....

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