

Death in the Nidrâ Yoga tradition : an unusual point of view

Nidrâ Yoga is an oral tradition belonging to the very wide corpus of Indian yoga centuries old transmission. It has been transmitted from *Gurus* (instructors) to *Sishyas* (students) mainly through personal and direct experience. It mainly deals with very deep states of *Sithilikarana* (relaxation) linked with very high degrees of *Dharana* (concentration).

Among the several states of very deep relaxation, one is called the *Maha sithilikarana*, i.e. the Great Relaxation, or in other words "death".

Before going into this topic, we must accept some unusual points of view linked to that nidrâ culture regarding life itself. It is said that life is a everlasting dynamic process having no beginning and no end and then no particular goal to attain. It is a unique, but yet very complex movement always creative and constantly spreading over and over again...

Into this large and eternal movement, things are happening, evolving and disappearing one after the others. And what we call birth, evolution and death have to be seen as the natural expressions of this very life, nothing less, but also nothing more!

Another difference has to be well understood between an event and a process. For example, the nidrâ tradition points out a radical difference between death as an event occurring only once (from the point of view of those who are still alive) and the deathing process which is a natural dynamic force of life itself which is always going on.

What we call death is an event occurring just once to others, what we call deathing process is what is happening to us all the time, this movement of constantly loosing what we feel ours.

We may ask if death as an event is a radical end or if it is a big change into some other unknown state. No one has ever clearly answered to that question, even if many religions of the world have given their idea about it. What seems to be sure is that religions have used these ideas to impose many beliefs and behaviors to their believers all over the planet, without giving any accepted answer except for those who believed their assumption without deeply questioning.

The only questions that seem real enough to start from are: What does it mean to end ? Is there a process that is leading something or anything to an end ? Is there really an end happening to anything ?

Trying to look deeply to things as they are require a lot of openness as well as a real desire to question, but also a clear mind ready to welcome totally unknown possibilities as new answers.

Now, if we look at our daily routines , it seems quite obvious that any thing that comes to an end in our lives does not sprout out of nothingness, but more surely comes from at least one previous cause, and more frequently from several different causes. What shows up is that there are several factors we are not aware of that are already working to bring about an end to some thing or another. In this respect, we could also say that death as an event has many prior causes before happening all of a sudden.

On the other hand, we all have noticed that whatever the ending situation is, there is always something new going on right after and it is very difficult to see what is the link in between those two.

Nidrâ Yoga is a practical way to explore into the link in between situations happening in our life, but also to check if there is anything like an end that really exists.

On the apparent practical level, of course material objects have an end when they cease to exist. A broken vase is no more a vase, a breathing less body is no more some body...

But can our life be defined as only a body ? What are we really ?

Nidrâ Yoga has an answer to that deep question of the reality of our life. It says that what we are is the movement of life itself, that there is no determinate entity within us that can claim to be some thing or someone in particular. That everyone of us is deeply nothing else than an expression of life itself, which is a everlasting movement. In other words, this idea of something ending is a myth, there is nothing that ever comes deeply to an end, but that everything at each and every split moment passes through a changing process.

When this becomes clear and felt, there is no more room for any kind of fear regarding death itself. Because the real question regarding the reality of death is not the fact in itself. The real question is can we face it without fear? Can we as human beings give a place to that beautiful mystery of death without trying to give it any sense or meaning in our life? Can we live our daily routine with the feeling of death just as it was a very close and intimate friend? And then no more trying to expel this very true reality out of our life. Because another reality of death is that we know it will happen for sure, but we don't know when. It is in fact the only thing we are bound to live, with no exception, we will all die. Except death we cannot be sure of anything to happen this way or that way in our life. Only death to happen is 100% guarantee !

What nidrâ teaches is a way to face death as a reality we cannot escape and the same time to realize that changes are the law of life and that we have to cope with it instead of refrain or reject its reality. On a practical aspect, nidrâ yoga has developed several means to inquire deeply into the mystery of the unknown, that is death and the deathing process. This requires learning to relax very deeply, more deeper than the only physical part of ourselves, but also to deeply relax the mind processes so to evacuate fears. It seems many fears are only coming from our memories deeply rooted in beliefs or misunderstandings we had to come across in the past. The idea of death is only one of them among so many others. But it can conditioned all our life and spoil it either consciously or unconsciously.

To get rid of the fear of death does not mean death itself does not exist. It only means that this reality of death might be different from our beliefs or personal points of view which are all made up by memory.

Going very deep into relaxation brings to a state of complete surrendering, a state where we can consciously watch the very movement of life in its deeper nature. Into this movement, watching carefully the starting point, then the evolution and then the ending of any event happening brings about another reality even deeper. Life is a dynamic force without any understandable meaning by

our limited capacity of thought. Accepting this as a fact without any logic or non logic is precisely the ending of death.

This ending of death is not a magical trick for naïve personalities. It is the only reality that brings about a state of feeling which is silent, vast and joyful. Living such a state is the most wonderful present we would have though death could offer !

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