CHAPTER IV.

PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH TOWARDS DEATH

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1. What is Philosophy?

The word philosophy is derived from the Greek word 'philein' (to love) and sophia (wisdom) and it means the love of knowledge or wisdom. There are various definitions of philosophy quite contradictory to each other and therefore philosophy has sometimes been ridiculed, as an attempt, to find out a black cat in a dark house, where it is not. Apart from this ridicule, we may say that philosophy is an attempt to know life with all its multifarious facets. Philosophy aims mainly at knowledge of things. In the attempt to gain knowledge about different things we are bound to meet either with success or failure. The results are in a way immaterial but the beginning of philosophy can be traced to wonder, doubt, fear and curiosity. Unamuno has observed "Man philosophises either in order to resign himself to life or to seek some finality or to distract himself and to forget the griefs or for pastime or amusement." Dr. Radha Krishnan also has observed "Everyone of us has a right or wrong philosophy. Wherever standards of value or canons of criticism are applied, there is philosophy. The word philosophy is a wide term and includes logic, ethics, aesthetics, social philosophy, and so on. Even those who treat philosophy as superfluous or irrelevant

162. Unamuno 'The Tragic Sense of Life' p.29.
do so as the result of philosophising." 163 Philosophy as a discipline has a tendency to go at the roots of things, assumptions and foundations. Philosophy in the words of Prof. C. E. M. Joad is the most general of all forms of human enquiry. 164

Formerly philosophy used to be a branch of religion. Naturally, most of the philosophy used to be based on religion with little reference to the questions of purely philosophical importance which we attach to them now. This is due to the scientific spirit and the new discipline of analysis i.e. logical positivism which has cast off all the unnecessary covers of traditional philosophy. It is interesting to note that logical positivists maintain that philosophy or metaphysics as a science is an impossibility. It is either tautology or meaningless utterance of words. Now philosophy alone is interested in everything that exists simply because it exists without restrictions of any kind. 165 As a result when the free spirit of enquiry scepticism, agnosticism, rational method and the new method of linguistic analysis arose maintaining that there could be a new spirit in the philosophies which we see today. One must mark this great change in the

163. Radhakrishnan, S. 'Crisis of Faith' p. 17
165. Ibid. p. 22.
traditional and the present philosophy. Certainly
this does not mean that traditional philosophy
had something wrong except the coverings of religious
philosophy. There is no doubt that there is a very
important aspect that philosophy has as a subjective
aspect. Philosophy is difficult and Prof. C.E.M.
Joad has given the reasons for this difficulty. It
is difficult because of (1) obscurity of its subject
matter, (2) unnecessary obscurity of its philosophers,
(3) subjectivity in philosophising and (4) lastly the
subjectivity of the reader at every level. 166

Philosophy does attempt to challenge and
verify the validity and assumptions, postulates or
foundations of all branches of knowledge. Therefore
it has sometimes been said that philosophy is a
science of all science. Certainly it does not mean
that philosophy is an encyclopaedia of knowledge. Philo-
sophy is primarily an attempt to know things as they
are. Along with the claims of philosophy we have
also to consider in brief the attacks on philosophy
particularly by logical positivists who say that
philosophy (metaphysics) as a science is impossible.
We shall examine this claim of logical positivism
later on. From the dawn of human thought we have
noticed the philosophising nature of man, in other
words having a right knowledge of the phenomena with

166. Joad, C.E.M. 'Teach yourself' books
philosophy p. 35.
which we are confronted. Ever since our childhood
we are confronted with the innumerable relationships
and situations but we hardly pierce into them and
behave ourselves on the basis of challenge and res-
ponses. J. Krishnamurti has very emphatically insis-
ted on one's having right relationships with the
individuals, the world around us, and the ideas in
our mind. This is the core of philosophy. In our
relationship we find human beings with their patterns
of thought and behaviour, the situations wherein
values are involved, the world around us with its
immeasurable vastness and the search for reality, God,
etc. We will not be satisfied living a secluded life
cut away from the situations in the world. After all,
we can avoid a particular region or particular persons;
nevertheless we have to remain in this world. While
living we are likely to be confronted with a question
as to the nature of this world, we are also sure to be
confronted with the thought process, thoughts - actions -
and it is not unnatural if we ask what the nature
around us is, who has created this universe, what is
the place of human beings in this universe and lastly
due to insufficiency, insecurity, impermanency we want
to know what everlastingness is. We want to know the
reality behind the phenomena and the answers to these
various problems, make philosophy clear that it is not
a patternised set of dogmas, beliefs or theories. It is
the live activity to understand human beings with their
problems. Instead of going into the jargons of definitions of philosophy let us try to understand how philosophy originated and in what way philosophy can have a place in human life. Philosophy is a knowledge of the individual, the world around him and the reality behind it and also the inter-relations between them. This is no doubt a very comprehensive definition which encompasses almost every walk of life. Philosophy has two approaches. Firstly knowledge for the sake of knowledge and secondly knowledge subservient to practical need. We are bewildered to see the vastness of this universe and naturally the question arises what was the origin of all this? Whether what we see is an appearance or reality or anything different? The best expression of an agnostic mind can be seen in the Nasadeeya Sukta of Rigveda. It is the best expression of the humble, sceptical and agnostic mind that is bewildered. It is no doubt very natural for a mind to know the phenomena (not in the sense of appearances) around us but it is equally important to know ourselves the entity which we call mind and the result of the thought process, the mechanism of thought process and the various thoughts in us equally goad us to the knowledge of ourselves born out of bewilderment due to the complex phenomenon of mind. Whether we have seen that it is difficult to know the world around us and to know ourselves rightly by understanding our thoughts.

167. Rigveda Nasadeeya Sukta.
feelings and emotions? Lastly the most difficult thing is to know the reality behind the appearances, which may be called God, power or whatever else is the choice of name. Philosophy as an attempt to know the individual, the world around and the reality if there be any is an extremely arduous task. The difficulties increase due to limitations of reason. However the difficulties may crop up, whatever the differences may be in conclusions and sometimes also in methods, it is legitimate to attempt to know i.e. to philosophise. As we have seen already we are to satisfy the natural instincts like wonder and curiosity.

It is good to have knowledge of things for our satisfaction. Nevertheless knowledge for the sake of knowledge is important in also another way. William James defines philosophy as collective name for questions which have not been answered to the satisfaction of all that have been asked them. More particularly philosophy views life as a whole and not with a piecemeal approach towards it. Life is a complex phenomenon and one can hardly claim to have known it. At the outset the questions arise who am I, why I was born at all, what is the meaning of my life, what is death, why is it inevitable, what should I do to understand them, etc. These questions and how I should lead my life are the questions which perplex, bewilder and even terrify the individual. To understand these questions is to understand our life. Particularly when
we know the duration of our life to be uncertain by
the unknown interception of death, the need to under-
stand life becomes more urgent and intense also.
Without understanding what death is, there is no
possibility of having a knowledge of life. Our
attempts to know need to be more pointed and intense
and probably this is the reason why Plato has defined
philosophy as a meditation on death.

Plato's definition of philosophy as medita-
tion on death gives rise to many interesting inter-
related problems. The contemplation of death with the
result and knowledge of life is certainly going to
lead us to the knowledge of reality. It is our expe-
rience that we know only appearances. We are deluded
sometimes by ourselves, sometimes by the phenomena.
Therefore the knowledge of reality becomes the func-
tion of philosophy. Schopenhauer says that philosophi-
cal attitude is created by the sight of death. William
James has also observed that a man is not truly educa-
ted unless he has considered the problem of suicide.
The phenomenon of death is created with an ethical
significance in both existentialism and the Hindu philo-
sophical systems.168 Albert Camus has observed that
the only philosophical question is that of suicide.169

168. Srinivasan, G. 'Hindu Philosophical Concepts
& the Existential Concepts.'

Thus, philosophy in the real sense is deeply concerned with death as the culminating point of life, in time. We see people sacrificing their lives for certain values and ideas. We see the fundamental distinction between right and wrong. We want to see the certainty and validity of our knowledge. Philosophy tries to understand and answer these questions. In short any subject if pursued to its logical ends reveals within itself the seeds of philosophy. Therefore we have philosophy of various subjects such as science, history, education, mathematics, religion and so on and so forth. This is the theoretical aspect of philosophy. Philosophy viewed from the practical aspect is meditation on death. Meditation is right thinking, right perspective or right understanding. Unless there is understanding of the basic fact we cannot know the incidental things in our life. There will be as many theories as there are individuals, theories about various subjects and naturally there will be perspective of life different of each individual for himself by himself. We need not insist that there should be one pattern, one vision of life and death. After all, this understanding of life must in the ultimate sense, be, purely subjective. Even accepting the logical consequences of solipsism we have to see that understanding one’s life is purely a subjective phenomenon and there is no harm in it. The pattern-nised understanding of a complex phenomenon of life is utterly delusive.
Leaving aside these definitions we find the definition of philosophy as given by Plato to be the most appropriate one. Philosophy is really a meditation on death. There is nothing mystical about it. It is true that death is unknown and reason can hardly grasp the phenomenon which is beyond the purview of reason. But understanding the known with its appearance, it is possible or at least desirable to approximate the arena of the unknown. Dr. G. Srinivasan has observed: "The phenomenon of death finds a special emphasis both in existentialism and Hindu philosophy. Like the existentialists the Hindu philosophers affirm the inevitability of death and the transitoriness of human existence. They also note with concern that man usually ignores this basic truth, his empirical existence and allows himself to be deceived by seeming permanence of his existence in the world. This self delusion is the basis of his inauthentic existence. The acceptance of death as the inevitable prospect of man's present life awakens him from his inauthentic existence and directs him to authentic existence.\textsuperscript{170} Authentic existence is essentially a free life while inauthentic existence is a life in bondage. If we feel that we are in bondage we strive to be free, and this freedom cannot be realised unless we know what life and death are. We lead our life constantly

\textsuperscript{170} Srinivasan, G. 'Existential Concepts & Hindu Philosophical Concepts' p.12.
under the shadow of death. All our actions are bound to be coloured by the fact of death but our self delusion including collective delusion may make us forget this hard fact. Thus, assuming that our definition is a very comprehensive one in its scope we will have to say that philosophy in the real sense turns out to be a meditation on death and in its sway takes the whole life span. A reference naturally occurs that in order to understand our past, present and the future i.e. time will also be immensely helpful in understanding philosophy as a meditation on death. We will analyse the concept on time in the seventh sub-section of this chapter.

2. **Philosophical method and the phenomenon of death.**

We have defined philosophy as a meditation on death. The subject matter is difficult, unknown and at the same time our rational method which is also sometimes called philosophical method falls short to grasp the subject matter. In the language of logical positivism it may amount to nonsense. As against the faith as a method used by religion we are going to use reason as the means to grapple with its subject matter. Rational method is used in science also. But here we are not going to exclude intuition and mysticism. We have to give them their due places. Plato and Higgett thought dialectic to be the method of philosophy. For Bergson it was intuition, for
Wittgenstein the uncovering of nonsense, for Mortiz Schlick clarification, and for Husserl phenomenological description. Dr. Radhakrishnan observes: "A philosopher's loyalty to reason does not commit him to the proposition that the nature of ultimate reality can be apprehended only as an object of reason. Many philosophers, both in the east and the west have reached the conclusion that reality is supernatural, that it is not in its ultimate nature accessible to spiritual understanding - that religious insights are also genuine revelations of ultimate reality. This will indicate the intricacies of philosophical methods propounded by various philosophers. Philosophers may use any method to arrive at the truth for realisation of reality but not with the help of dogmas, faith and authority exclusively. There is a notable difference in the methods of religion and philosophy. In the matter of death, verification or experimentation is difficult except the dissection of the dead body, the further questions naturally arise why there is death, how death affects our life, whether consciousness of death can dissolve the delusions which have created in our minds either by ourselves or by their collective things of the social structure. While using rational method we have got to doubt in order to clarify the matter but this initial or provisional sceptical attitude is not going to be destructive but helpful in understanding the phenomenon of life and death. The subject of death is in our
mind and the phenomenon of death is a basic fact. We can experiment with our ideas, emotions, passions, thoughts, feelings and this experimentation is no doubt going to reveal to us so many hitherto unknown mysteries of life. The bearing of the consciousness of death on our thoughts, feelings and emotions should be quite noteworthy. When we understand the basic reality of the phenomenon of death we have to apply this basic truth to our desires. Understanding of the fact is bound to eradicate faith in us. We are sure to know that the desires either for the material things or for spiritual achievements are the root causes which make us helpless and goad us to take recourse to escapes which are obviously a hindrance to the realisation of reality. Therefore the philosophical method with penetrating reason as its method is bound to help us in understanding our subject matter. When reason falls short we may have to take help from our intuition keeping a watch that our intuitions do not delude us. The rational method is a method par excellence and one has to adopt it to avoid self-deception. We must be apt in discarding readymade solutions of others and must ever be ready to accept unpalatable but hard realities.

It is really a leap in the dark that we aspire to know death when the subject matter is unknown, but we are helpless as the subject matter is most urgent of our human problems. There is a
possibility of getting a knowledge if we proceed cautiously, cleanse our heart and mind and be in a receptively-give mood and then we may know death philosophically also.


(a) Materialism: It is a system which holds that the reality of the world is matter and nothing else. Matter is in fact seen to be inert. Therefore the problem arises to explain the life associated with matter. Materialists resolved the problem and answered that matter creates life. Out of pure matter life was created and probably it is evolving. Inspite of the clearcut distinction between life and energy made since ancient times the materialists were firm on the point that matter alone exists. Each and every form of energy is the combination and dissociation of matters, or atoms of matter. In Greek philosophy we find philosophers holding the view that atoms of matter exist. In Indian philosophy we found the Charvakas to be the materialists. Consequently the materialists held body to be an association of matter and regarded that some time or the other there is bound to be dissociation which we call death. When matter will associate and create energy or life remained a problem for the materialists and it remains still a problem. Philosophically therefore materialism will explain the phenomenon of death as the dissociation of the energy
which was found in collected atoms named body. As a result along with dissociation of body life ceases to be. The materialists do not and cannot believe in supernatural or unknown phenomenon though they can believe in values while they are living. Values being according to our definition a preferred thought or a preferred pattern of behaviour can be accepted or rejected even by rankest materialists. Now due to conversion of matter into energy and energy into matter, materialism really speaking does not remain. According to science every atom is filled with immeasurable energy when that atom of matter is split into its elements.

If death is regarded merely as dissociation of material atoms such a materialist will have a very different and peculiar outlook about religion, values, God, immortality, soul, etc. One can understand the outlook about the unknown or unseen powers but if only death is understood as it is, dispassionately in a disinterested manner the materialist will have to change his outlook. Certainly this does not mean that a materialist should accept all what has been said in the religion or philosophy but it is only suggested that the materialist outlook towards death does not satisfy the inner core of emotional life of a man. A consistent materialist is really far better than a spiritualist or idealist who is confused in his mind about the various ideas like God, self,
immortality and values.

(b) Scepticism, Agnosticism and Nihilism.

(i) Scepticism: Scepticism is a philosophical system which holds that everything must be doubted, before accepting in principle. Such a sceptic always remains in a mood of doubt and he may not ultimately find any answer to his problem. A sceptic is a man who doubts all that is assumed e.g. he will doubt the existence of self, God, liberation and immortality, destiny, law of karma, causality, etc. So not only the principles of religion are challenged but those of science also have been challenged. It is a great corrective both to science and religion for discarding the unwanted, unrealistic, unproved portion of both science and religion. Scepticism is really speaking a method of philosophy which has been applied to religion, philosophy and science since very long. Scepticism has very little concern with death. At the most a sceptic will doubt whether life has been really extinct, or that there must be something after the present life.

(ii) Agnosticism: Agnosticism is also really a philosophical method which became a system afterwards and it holds that though things may be there, but due to our limitations of organs we have no knowledge of them. An agnostic will not doubt any theory. He will simply say that a particular theory may be true or may not be true. Certainly he will have
evidence with him on both sides. So far as our problem is concerned an agnostic will believe life and death after taking into consideration both possibilities. The concepts like God, liberation, self, etc. may be true or may not be true but an agnostic affirms the existence of such things even though they are unknown or said to be unknown. An agnostic is unable to give a final word on any problem. It mainly shows us the shortfalls or limitations of reason and further keeps us in a disturbed mood. But in a way agnosticism has also its uses because we go ahead with our theories in a better way probably because we assume the dimly felt concepts or facts or values.

(iii) Nihilism: Nihilism is a philosophical theory which holds that everything is ultimately going to be nothing. Even though nihilism assumes the phenomena in this world it goes further than agnosticism and scepticism and finally declares that all those things are going to be nothing. The nothing means that which is not going to remain a thing in the same form and when life is struggling to continue it is going to meet ultimately with nothingness. Nothingness is a very powerful philosophical system because it shows us emphatically the problem in its solved position. So far as our purpose is concerned nothingness does accept the phenomena of life and death and says that life, however it may be, is going to extinct and merge into nothingness. Nihilism weighs the worth of everything in the world. Nihilism
weighs very accurately the concepts like God, self, and values. So far as liberation and immortality are concerned, nihilism will call them utter nothingness. It may be a very pessimistic and disturbing system of philosophy but nothingness cannot help and nihilism remains.

Some mystics say that out of this nothingness we have to go further. This going further means theoretically thinking or meditating on the nothingness. While alive if we correctly think over the phenomenon of anything finally we may go beyond nihilism and find something hitherto unknown, and perhaps there may be bliss in going beyond nihilism. The claims of the mystics that they can find God and self and immortality along with the understanding of values only if they pass through the dark night of the soul which is nihilism or nothingness. In other words nothingness becomes a standard test which examines each and every so-called sound theory. Particularly nihilism has to do a great deal with the problem of death. Sometimes it has been said that death is a nothingness and nothing further remains. Nothingness very emphatically affirms this. It is really very great attempt of a philosophical system like nihilism to understand life and death constantly from its own point of view that everything ends in nothing.

(e) Idealism: Idealism is a very ambiguous word
and has been used to signify a variety of views. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan an idealist viewpoint is that the universe mainly has value. Ideal values are the dynamic forces, the driving power of the universe. In a sense Hegel has said that all philosophy is idealistic. In India also we find that the absolute is reality, consciousness and freedom.

There are various theories of reality which hold something or the other to be real to the exclusion of the other as unreal. According to idealism, ideas, forms, mind and values are the reality. It is argued against idealism that struggle and suffering, disease and death, agonies and miseries are such pregnant facts that if there is any ruling power in the universe, it may be fate, or chance or careless gods but in no case a beneficent providence. It is true that man is the centre of all things and stands mid-way in size between an atom and a star. The inequality, cruelty, the ugliness which we find in the world cannot be attributed to the reality or God and therefore it has been difficult for idealism to refute the charges. Nevertheless idealism has tried to solve these perennial problems. In India idealism has worked along with dualism, qualified monism, pure monism, idealism, etc. So it is difficult to give the Indian views at a glance.

So far as our phenomenon of death is concerned

idealism suggests that the end of the body at the burial is not all. There is the eternal self and it starts its journey in the unknown for receiving future experiences. This is due to the metaphysical foundations of the self and rebirth or immortality. In order to understand what death is, the idealism prescribes the yoga, sadhana as prescribed by the Yoga Sutras. Freedom or Moksha being the supreme law of spiritual life all other purusharthas i.e. values are idealistic concepts of liberation. Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism believe in the law of karma which is the key bone of the cycle of birth and death.

Sometimes the highest form of idealism regards this world of ours as a mere transitory world having no permanent reality whatsoever. This view does not take death into consideration because according to it death is simply nought. Death is simply the casting off of our garments and we need not lament for the inevitable facts like death. If a person is a believer in self, God or liberation then alone such person may believe in liberation. But a secular man not believing in the metaphysical assumptions would not be satisfied with the explanation of death given by the idealist. When we see the hard fact of death, when we experience intuitively that we are also going to die one day however one may philosophise, we will not be satisfied with the words "there is no death", whatever may be the explanation. The mind is not to satisfy with the
theoretical discussion about death but there must be truth about death which alone can really satisfy him. We may not perhaps know the riddles of the universe in respect of origination of matter or the origination of life and the inter-relation between the two but we must know why we have taken birth in this universe and why we have to die. Gautama the Buddha did not allow metaphysical questions of such sort his main point being that we have got so many urgent problems before us which must be solved before entering into mere academic discussion. Shankaracharya's idealism believes in reality of three types (1) at the plane of everyday transactions - Vyawaharik (2) that appears in dream - Pratibhasik and (3) permanent - Parmarthik. According to Shankaracharya the Parmarthik plane alone has the highest reality and it is the Brahman which is the reality while the Pratibhasik and Vyawaharik reality have a much low significance. Idealists believe in God both personal and impersonal. Idealism cannot deny the nature of human conditions such as absurd, lonely, contingent but instead of accepting the nature of human conditions idealists glorify and start sublimating things without understanding their significance. As a result idealism fails to take care of the phenomena.

An excellent example of glorifying everything can be seen in the Ishawasya Upanishad wherein it has been advocated that whatever there is, is covered by
God. Therefore everybody should enjoy with a sense of detachment. Really speaking whatever is visible in nobody's property. Inspite of this sermon, we find people running after money, wealth, power and bodily enjoyment. Man with limited capacities has been asked to visualise the immeasurable, the inexhaustible God or the reality. We have seen men tumbling down at every step and most of the people knowing not what to do, take some sort of dogmatic pill and taking such recourse in some sort of escape lead their lives as if they are just on the verge of attaining (मोक्ष) i.e. immortality. Some people who are extremely dull and stupid declare that they will have to take so many births to make attain liberation. This will particularly be found in religious fanaticism, but even some philosophic thinkers adopt such view. Thousands of years have elapsed but we have not been able to uncover the nature of the mind itself. When our mind itself is a mystery why to talk of so many things connected with mind? Why not be a bold nihilist rather than a credulous idealist in order to get the knowledge of the phenomenon of death? What has been advocated is, that, blunders of idealism must be understood right at the beginning. Idealism errs in explaining away the issue of death. It does not give any value to death but to the values of liberation, next world etc. Sometimes when the body is found useful in upper journey of liberation the idealists do adore the body but that too half-heartedly.
Their main concern is the realisation of the idea of perfection. Idealists believe in the law of karmavipaka (i.e. getting exact fruit of our deeds) with full support. Again, this law of karma is riddle. Idealism to me seems to be a bundle of riddles. Merely by sublimating the misery, misery does not end. One need not delude oneself saying that whatever challenges one receives in life are God given and even though God is benevolent, those nasty challenges of life are to be regarded as challenges from the benevolent God. It is true we have viewed idealism more from the religious point of view as it refers to the concept of death but the philosophical idealism is unfortunately not very favourable to the study of the phenomenon of death. We must understand the distinction between fact and a value. The idealistic view of values, mistakes, apprehension of the human miseries and the correct concept of values must be taken into consideration by idealism right from the beginning. Man cannot be asked to shut his eyes in order to get something. Let him not get anything, but our senses must be used, intellect and intuition sharpened and then let us see what remains with us. This amounts to having a sort of death consciousness which comes after viewing things of human conditions in this world. Let us take care of this world first and then enquire into something the values which are supposed to be sublime, universal, eternal and real.

(d) Pragmatism. Pragmatism is a theory which
holds that whatever is workable, useful, is true. It does not like idealism glorify unnecessarily thing of the earth nor does it neglect anything of this world. It is really speaking not a very sound philosophy, in the sense in which we have defined it. So far as the problem of death is concerned hardly any eminent pragmatic philosopher has dealt with it in detail. Therefore we need not take into consideration pragmatism. Pragmatism is a method of experimental enquiry extended into all realms of human experiences. Pragmatism used the modern scientific method as the basis of philosophy. William James was the well-known propounder of this system and he has once said that no man is philosophic unless he has played with the idea of suicide. This is really a very thought-provoking statement which we have dealt with in our other parts. Life's values are empirical and are found and are tasted in the process of living. Here in fact the pragmatists should have thought about death but unfortunately they have not done so. Dwyer and many of his supporters reject all supernaturalism and ground both ethical and religious values solely in the natural relations of man. The values of life are capable of verifications by the methods through which other facts are established. Pragmatism is exceedingly distrustful of generalisation about ultimates, it takes its stand of empirical science and the world of experience. This stand is likely to be useful for understanding the nature of human conditions. Pragmatism
has in a way an inadequate view of the mind. Man is undoubtedly a biological related aid to survival, as the pragmatists claim. One thing which is notable is that according to it truth is man-made and it has no independent existence as claimed by the realists and others. So the only message of pragmatists is to experience the mind as a man with the social challenges and workable values. They should in fact further go to the extent of saying that death being an event we should and must enquire into the phenomenon of death.

(s) Logical Empiricism. As a philosophy behaviourism dismisses all questions concerning an inner life, mind, conscious states and consciousness as meaningless. Further it is advocated that statements about man are meaningful only when they are or may be translated into statements into Man's behaviour. Behaviourism and logical empiricism has a very close connection. The principle of verification is the criterion of truth. The logical Empiricism has grown now into a philosophy of linguistic or philosophical analysis and symbolic logic. This study maintains that meaning and the principles and rules of language as the central problem of philosophy. According to this analysis a statement is meaningful only if it is either analytic or empirically verifiable. Metaphysical, theological and ethical propositions are excluded from the realm of the Meaningful since they are emotive, untestable and give no knowledge.
This system along with its allied system of logical positivism will not take into consideration our basic phenomenon of death dismissing it to be expression of emotive state. It is too much engulfed itself into analysis, verification and Meaningfulness. Death is not such a thing which could be analysed, verified and made meaningful. But it is a hard fact which one will have to verify today or tomorrow.

Though it is good corrective for the meaning of Logic, language and morals it is no good to understand the phenomenon of death. For this system "To apprehend values, to enjoy beauty is irrelevant to truth is to wander into a world of unrealities of shadows of illusions." 172

Abraham Kaplan significantly says "I cannot help but feel that there is something seriously wrong with a philosophy, in the mid-twentieth century that takes no notice of war, revolution, nationalism, nuclear energy, the exploration of space, or anything else distinctive of the life of our time save the magnificent sweep of the intellect in the achievements of pure science and mathematics." 173

Thus this system unfortunately does not say anything about death and that philosophy which does not speak philosophy is no good philosophy worth the name.

173. Kaplan, Abraham. 'The New World of Philosophy' p.30
Before we consider the great individual thinkers, saints and their approach towards death a few things must be borne in mind. After all most of the individual thinkers were either religious or their thinking had a very avowed affinity towards religion. There were very few thinkers who propounded their system without the help of any religious principles and therefore such individual thinkers to my mind are very important. Again, unfortunately enough it has been said about the philosophers by Paul Edwards the editor of the latest Encyclopaedia of philosophy which was published in 1969 that everyone or the other philosopher has said something or the other about the phenomenon of death but unfortunately very few have dealt with the subject in detail. It is to be noted that he has taken a survey of the philosophers of the world and it is his statement so recent as in 1969. We are not going to consider any casual reference of any great individual thinker but we want here a somewhat clear picture of the views of the great individual thinkers about the phenomenon of death. I am sure we are bound to fail here due to the remarks of Paul Edwards. It is true that philosophers are not interested in the

174. Edwards Paul 'Encyclopaedia of Philosophy 1969'
biographies of the philosophers but at the same time if we get the preachings of the philosophers transplanted into practice we will know them and their systems better. First of all, let us take the great individual thinkers in the western thought. For the stoics death is an occasion for glorifying in an administration of man's invincible will, suicide itself being an act of noble triumph over diversity for the traditional Christian philosopher including Augustine and Pascal, the theme of death as value only so far as it draws our attention to God and remains so of our dependence upon His grace and renews our determination to win His favour through obedient service. Spinoza and Hegel tame the fear of death by having us contemplate our union with nature of the absolute spirit, Plato and Aristotle, by having us contemplate the eternal ideas or the permanence of species; humanists and marxists, by focussing our attention upon the ties which bind the individual to his race or to his class. These attitudes will show the different approaches taken by various philosophers. The Epicureans took a different view of life which they really wanted to culminate in the peaceful mind with peaceful methods. Some of the philosophers have expressly said: "Why bother death? When death is going to come to us it will lay its icy hands on us. So there will be no fear."

175. Olson, Robert G. 'An Introduction to Existentialism' p.194.
and once the man is dead he will no more suffer after death. Therefore there is nothing to lament about the phenomenon of death." Socrates was ordered to drink a cup of hemlock a deadly poison on the charge of corrupting youth and dislocating the equilibrium of society. The charge was obviously not true but Socrates did not care for that. Socrates offered to the will of the State and inspite of the last minute efforts of his disciples who asked him to run away from the prison, he did not avoid death and preferred a noble death by drinking the cup of hemlock. It is really a debatable issue when a tyron kills great individual thinkers so mercilessly like that one should accept death like that. Further Plato died his death naturally but with equally lamentable method. He was sold as a slave to somebody who happened to be a friend of Socrates and also of Plato and thus Plato regained his freedom but ultimately he died peacefully at the marriage party of his friend by retiring in a nearby room. One of the greatest philosophers like Plato had to prefer slavery for the independence of his thought. Plato had believed in immortality of the soul, the next life and the next birth. Aristotle did not believe in the concept of rebirth. He said that nobody is a realised soul. All his attempt was to find out a middle golden mean and after the death of Alexander the democracy which sprung out was refused by Aristotle and consequently he also had to die himself by drinking a cup of poison. In short when Greek epicureans were...
found to be after pleasure or peace, our staunch advocates of science the stoics were engrossed in mysterious thinking and of detached temperament, the synics were doubtists or sceptics but among them we find Socrates, Plato and Aristotle to be notable. Further the history gives us a long long conflict between the authority of the Christianity and the common people. It is really a nasty part of history which has revealed to us through pages of history wherein Papal authority had a tremendous enmity with the common people. There is no doubt about the fact that even among these warring and conflicting opinions a singular personality flashes like a lightning and puts before us noble thoughts. Unfortunately such instances are very few. In the present era we find the existential thinkers to be marvellously aware of the problem and its intensity. Since they are acutely concerned with freedom of man they have got to think about the phenomenon of death. Most of them have accepted death to be a final point beyond which there is nothing excepting a few religious existentialists who hold that there is something like the unknown, God, immortality beyond the grave but in general the approach of the existentialists is extremely thought-provoking and eye opening. Most of them introduce the problem of meaning of life which gives colour to all the rest of their lives and to our surprise, most of the existentialists after analysing the conditions of human life come to almost the same conclusion which is "Man ought deliberately to cultivate an intense and
persistent surface consciousness of death. Affirmation of life is impossible unless we hold steadfastly to the consciousness of death. Life has verve and meaning only for the person who lives in the shadow of death and resolutely faces the fact that each one of us is condemned to die." Individual thinkers like William James, Jespers, Heidegger, Albert Camus, J.P. Sartre, E. Schopenhauer have extremely thoughtfully explained their approach towards death.

Let us now consider the Indian philosophy on this point. A few general remarks are necessary in this respect. The Indian philosophers assume the metaphysical assumption of the self and God along with immortality. Though Indian philosophy has considered the phenomenon of death in a better way one has to say that at the same time they have utterly and scornfully looked at the body and the universe around us. There was really speaking no reason when body was looked upon to be a means to attain immortality the saints and philosophers of India looked upon the body with little value. Indian philosophy does teach that one should hasten righteous acts thinking that death may come tomorrow, today or now. We have taken a survey of mysticism in Maharashtra in the preceding pages and I do not wish to repeat it again here except my remarks on them. So far as mystics in Maharashtra are concerned there were religious saints and their philosophy was coloured by religion but it is immaterial whether there.

176. Olson, Robert G. 'An Introduction to Existentialism' p.136.
is a religious tinge to a philosopher's philosophy unless there is a reference to death and death has been given a prominent place in the thought of the philosopher. I do find at many places that the thinkers like Dnyaneshwar, Namdeo, Eknath, Ramdas and Tukaram have very emphatically thought over the problem of death and its need for enquiry into, by common people. Dnyaneshwar says that death is really a bed of scorpions and one cannot possibly get sleep on the bed of scorpions. Ramdas always asks us to think about death and he has remarkably said that even though one is going to die one laments for the death of the other while he does not think about his own death. Tukaram says that people are dying and my heart is full with compassion and I must do something by which people will be uplifted. Eknath has always told us to do the worldly acts as well as put one eye on the spiritual development wherein one has to remember death. In India the great saints like Kabir, Mirabai, Narsi Mehta, Ramanuja, Madhwa have said something or the other on death but their thoughts are all religious and hardly form any particular view about it. Shankaracharya was one of the greatest philosophers of India who in his stotras (स्तोत्र) very emphatically mentioned that man should hasten to do something for receiving death and no other knowledge, information is going to come to help the individual. We are busy in something or the other in childhood, young age and old age but we have no desire to think about death. Such a powerful philosopher has therefore done his job by diverting
our attention to a very important aspect i.e. the phenomenon of death. Either in the religious fervour or in the romantic idealism some philosophers like Tagore have said that there is no death at all. Individual and the absolute are going to be one with each other but I am not going to deal with this quotation as a literary one. Philosophically this quotation deserves examination. It is futile for the romantic idealist to say that there is no death. Death is a fact, a hard reality which must be accepted at every level. To say that there is no death is to admit that one has fallen short of looking at the human conditions. Another interesting mention may be made of a philosopher Shri Raman Maharshi who renounced the world at the age of seventeen at the fear of death. Ultimately after practicing penance for a number of years he affirmed to attain the perfection which he taught to his fellow beings for years together. He did not refer to any book, ism or religion and therefore people flocked to him from all the corners of the world. Raman Maharshi insisted on the self knowledge including the knowledge of death. The great Indian saint Arubindo has also in his literature (Savitri) referred to the phenomenon of death. J. Krishnamurti is one of India's profoundest philosophers who has pondered deeply on this subject i.e. phenomenon of death. In fact there is no other Indian living philosopher who has so meticulously tried to uncover the wrong
conceptions about the phenomenon of death. At times he becomes mystical when he says that life and death are one and that life is dying from moment to moment and till that point we are living.

Those who are interested in ancient as well as modern Indian philosophers should look upon Krishna-murti and the Upanishads as the sign posts towards self knowledge and knowledge about the phenomenon of death. It may be that at times we may find it difficult that their thoughts on death are rather ununderstandable but with little patience one can have that receptive mind by which alone one can understand the philosophy of death. The Upanishadic thinkers like Yadnyaawalka and Nachiketa have given us a tremendous encouragement to think about the phenomenon of death and to come out of it. The study of Upanishads even in the present day period will be extremely useful for our purpose.

We maintain that it is very easy to enter into the knowledge of the phenomenon of death only by thinking in our mind how one becomes or how one's mentality changes when we just pass to the cemetery for the burial or the burning of a dead body. It remains there for a short while but nevertheless those are the moments which must be caught up by ourselves in our mind. There are innumerable instances which present before us and remind us of our old age disease and finally the track of death. If they are not sufficient for us to arouse.
us from the dogmatic slumber and to get into touch with the human conditions then we are the worst individuals and as a result nobody is going to save us in the terrible human conditions. Once this death consciousness is attained not by efforts everything becomes altogether a different thing. Our attitude changes and we get a vision in which there is no room for the baser instincts or narrow and selfish thoughts. Once the vision enlarges it teaches us so many things, for itself. A word of caution is necessary from our side and that is that instead of benumbing our mind by blindly following some religious dogma, ritual or some personality one must not waste his life span which is a very short one. One must be at his guard every moment that one is not giving room to the self deception or to the mass deception. Unfortunately the mind in India is very credulous. So the infection of sectarianism must be avoided. If only self deception is avoided there will be consciousness of death coming to us from so many angles and becoming receptive we can catch this or that moment and this is a philosopher's stone. It automatically transforms you from within, within no time.

5. Existentialism and the Phenomenon of Death.

Existentialism though not a system in the traditional sense is yet a structural analysis of human conditions and ethical interests. It may be regarded as a revolt against the traditional philosophy which undermines individuality and wants place
in the universe. It is also a revolt against modernism in science and technology which breeds impersonalism. Existentialism stresses subjective elements in man and gives due importance to the individuality of human being. This philosophy maintains that existence precedes essence which in other words means that existentialism stresses the concrete subjectivity of the individual. Indeed, existentialism though not a very systematic philosophical system has in it divergent accounts of the human predicament by the existentialist thinkers. We find in them a common current of unanimity about the main problems. Existentialists insist on facing realistically the problems of life such as anxiety, dread, despair, guilt, loneliness, human finitude, death, freedom and meaning of life. The individual is rather disregarded in both idealism and naturalism and there is no real freedom and no room left for mystery. Indealism moreover tends to falsify our sense of death but existentialism maintains that death is the real inescapable destiny for us men. In this way existentialism is a revolt against the falsification of the real human existence. The existentialist position is rather that nothing but the human conditions is ultimately worth knowing and probably existentialism is foremost in the realm of axiology or theory of value. Existentialism claims that the most important problem of life being the phenomenon of death was hitherto neglected and existentialism has rightly
recognised the true nature of death, as the central problem round which all our human problems revolve. Among these philosophers Plato was a philosopher who used to say that philosophy is a meditation on death. 177

In knowing the conditions of human life we come across the feeling of absurdity, vacuum, nothingness, boredom, dread. We also come across anguish as a feeling attached to or created due to these above mentioned feelings. Really speaking anguish is an extremely intense experience with a wholly emotional tone. On the one hand there is a sense of dread, terror and revulsion; on the other there is a sense of awe, exhilaration and sublimity. The anguish of being is the feeling we have whenever the thought comes that nothingness was and still is just as possible as being. The anguish of being is properly the anguish one experiences at the thought that nothing and nobody might ever have come into existence or that everything or everybody might go out of existence in an instant. This feeling of anguish makes us realise that our life is contingent and meaningless, both along with man and the world. To say that the being of man is radically contingent and ultimately meaningless is to say that man knows not why he exists and cannot rise to the knowledge of his destiny. 178.

177. Olson, Robert 'An Introduction to Existentialism' p.194.
178. Ibid.
This indicates that the mood of anguish discloses the structural aspect of human existence such as its 'thrown-ness', finitude, transiency and contingency.

In short existentialism comes very near the open real problems of the individuals and what matters is their solution of the problems which we face in our day to day life. Existentialism has come nearer the individual and will not remain a jargon of words meant for discussion among the academic philosophers. One then realises that the academic philosophers lose sight of the basic concrete facts of human life and besiege themselves with abstractions which are very remote from concrete life. What we need is a philosophy of life; all the concrete problems of life which will help individuals to face the problems squarely within a short span of our life. Perhaps existentialism though not a very concise philosophical system has profoundly thought over the phenomenon of death, it being one of the most important central problems of our life. Though the rules of existentialism can be found in the remote past we find the development of it mainly in the last century. The catastrophe which we have witnessed during the world wars leads us to think profoundly on the problems of life and death. Existentialism teaches us to aim at understanding the basic conditions of our day to day life.
We can find a similarity between existentialism and the Hindu philosophical systems. Certainly both regard the inevitability of death must be accepted and the fear of death must not result into morbidity and perversion. Secondly, both insist on the search for human freedom. Thirdly both declare that authentic life or the life of pleasure-seeking is bondage gradually created by boredom, melancholy, despair of the mind. Fourthly, both affirm that a human being usually forgets death to be the basic truth of one's empirical existence and allows himself to be deluded by apparent permanence of his existence in the world. Fifthly both have recognised that the consciousness of death has an ethical significance and it is a transforming or in a way redeeming feature directing towards freedom or liberation. Lastly, both insist on the knowledge of the self and its relationship with things around us. Thus in the end both systems try to understand the meaning and significance of values which are created by individuals even though there is some difference of opinion about the nature of values in these two systems. These similarities have been critically pointed out by Dr. G. Srinivasan in his remarkable book "Hindu Philosophical Concepts and the Existential Concepts." According to existentialism the phenomenon of death is the inevitable end of human

179. Srinivasan, Dr. G. 'Hindu Philosophical Concepts & Existential Concepts' p. 25 to 35.
existence. (Even though some theistic existentialists believe in God and life after death). The ordinary man thinks of death in a general way as something affecting all and sundry. He does not visualise it in its concreteness as affecting himself. Or, alternatively he rationalises it but he does not dare to face it. This recognition of the central phenomenon of death makes us aware of our human conditions in this world. We are faced with insecurity, impermanence, vacuity, nothingness, absurdity, loneliness. These are concrete human feelings resulting into dread and anguish. It is therefore necessary to see what dread is. The concept of dread is a complex concept with which other concepts are related. Dread is not merely a momentary feeling but the primordial mood of human beings. Dread is the experience in which man becomes aware of the vacuity and the worthlessness of his being-in-the-world. The experience of dread isolates the individual, intensifies his subjectivity and constitutes an inner crisis, when he is to choose between authenticity and inauthenticity. Dread is the feeling of man that he does not belong to the world in which he is, that he is ill at ease in the world. Ordinarily we find people running away from the thought of death as it produces a disturbed state of mind and as a result they try to avoid that mood by means of various escapes. Thus, fear is our

day to day experience. A careful observation of our life discloses to us its true nature and as a result fear, dread, despair, doubt, nothingness, vacuity and absurdity are created. We cannot forget and avoid the phenomenon of death when we face our life with the phenomenon of death as its basic truth. If death is the destiny of our short life, indeed, nothingness is bound to be created. Death reduces human existence to nothing. Except Gautama the Buddha and Ramachandra in the Yoga-vashistha, nobody has powerfully thought and lived their lives so courageously as the existentialists the reason being they are giving the phenomenon of death the central place among the human problems. Dr.G. Srinivasan has observed how human existence is structurally related to nothingness in three ways. Firstly human existence has no substantial ground in itself but originates itself in nothingness. Secondly human existence is terminated in its death which again is nothingness. Thirdly human existence in its anticipation of death is the being towards death and in this sense harbours its being-in-the-world and intrinsic nothingness.

After we have seen how the feeling of dread, anguish and nothingness disturb our mind the problem arises about solving these riddles which we are


182. Ibid.
confronted with every walk of our life. Barring a few theological existentialists we have seen that prima facie life is meaningless, absurd and empty to all. But though all of the existentialists take freedom to be equally central concept in man's life the atheistic existentialists advise us to encounter with whatever feeling comes into our mind. The existentialists distinguish between authentic life and inauthentic life. Authentic life is essentially a life of freedom while inauthentic life is a life of bondage. This is the distinction which is made almost in every philosophical system. We know from the existentialists that nobody is going to help us ultimately and it is the loneliness of man that has been particularly pointed out by the existential thinkers.

We propose to give a solution to the problems posed by the existential thinkers. In the following eloquent passage Robert Olson has significantly suggested the way out. "Man ought deliberately to cultivate an intense and persistent surface consciousness of death. Affirmation of life is impossible unless we hold steadfastly to the consciousness of death. Life has a verve and meaning only for the person who lives in the shadow of death and resolutely faces the fact that each one of us is condemned to die. Danger, conflict, moral decision, the act of faith, every form of human substance which allows individual action and engages energies is heightened and rendered most acute when it
carries the consciousness of death as a personal possibility. To shut out the consciousness of death is to rob life of its supreme value in a world intensity."

We are in fact left with these particular feelings and our mind as the only weapon to confront with. Here the word 'consciousness of death' will have to be explained. Consciousness or awareness of death certainly does not mean the talk about death merely at a verbal level. This thought of death must go deep down the heart of a man when the problem is no more merely academic but becomes an emotional one. Then we have the urgency to look at the things from that point of view where there is urgency to know or look at the things with the consciousness or awareness of death. In short, consciousness of death or awareness of death means having the thought of death in our mind and heart with an intense tinge of emotions and this probably changes the whole outlook towards death. This does not mean that death as a fact will end for ever. It only means that death which was a bug-bear remains no more so and transforms all our walks of life as if automatically. It comes to us at the minute of observation of human conditions in this world. Though there have been different interpretations about the consciousness of death all point out to taking into cognisance

183. Olson, Robert G. 'An Introduction to Existentialism'
the phenomenon of death right from the beginning and then one need not assert even though one realises that consciousness of death has become a transforming factor and leads us from bondage to reality. It does not allow us to unnecessarily glorify sublimate or rationalise human life. The worth of existentialism lies in making us aware of ourselves and this is the self-realisation different from the mystical or spiritual self-realisation. It teaches us the futility of running away from the hard facts of reality. We feel that existentialism imparts us the most profound courage by asking us to face the phenomenon of death without any crippling fear or any cunning theorisation about the unknown.

Another problem remains to gulf the bridge between the inauthentic and the authentic life. In the previous chapter I have already mentioned that the innermost death consciousness or death awareness is a transforming agent a sort of philosopher's stone which changes the whole outlook and we live an altogether ethico-religious life without being duped by dogmas, beliefs, rituals, etc.

All existentialists have believed in freedom though their concept of freedom is slightly different from that of Hindu philosophical systems. We formulate a metaphysical concept of self and we are assured by our scriptures that we shall have a
permanent liberation (विदेर्द्वृति). Our Shastras (i.e. code of conduct) have also formulated the concept of जीवनशून्यता which means liberation here and now. We are aiming at that liberation which is obtainable here and now. For that purpose what we require is a complete radical transformation of our mind. This transformation of our mind to get the concept of जीवनशून्यता is fully based on the application of the consciousness of death in every walk of our life. We may consider now a few thinkers who have expressed themselves on the important matters of death and freedom.

For Heidegger all existence is infinite with the character of time of historicity. It is threatened with two dreadful convictions, that of death and transitoriness and the dread of death. Heidegger believes that the passage from inauthentic to authentic human existence lies through an intense awareness of the presence of death, conceived as the final possibility of human existence. He believes that the passage to authentic human existence consists in the realisation of one's responsibility for all and that death does not give any meaning to human existence; death is in itself absurd since human existence does not choose it, foresee it or wait for it. But Sartre an atheist does not believe to bridge the gulf as has been suggested by Heidegger. Kierkegaard believes like Heidegger that acceptance of anticipatory appropriation of death transforms human life in the direction of authentic existence. Kierkegaard further believes that very
inevitable nature and imminence that makes the present human life the more ethically important, the anticipatory conception of death reminds the individual of his finiteness and thereby awakens him to the necessity of leading an ethico-religious life. Heidegger further points out that consciousness of death shatters the banality of everyday existence and liberates us from the pettiness of the ordinary man. In the same way Sartre says that death cannot give meaning to our life. It can only remove all the meaning from life and show further how absurd it is. Further Sartre says in his epoch-making 'Being and nothingness': "Death is always a possible nihilation of my possibles which is outside my possibility." Both Sartre and Heidegger refuse to tolerate even an anguished hope of personal survival. According to Gabriel Marcel the fundamental metaphysical question for him is 'What am I'? The ontological reality for him is a mystery and not a problem. Philosophising for Marcel is thus uncovering mysteries realising the deeper implications of our being not a mere construction of a theory or elaboration of concepts. According to him death does not mean for human being sinking into void but rather a step towards returning. Jespers says philosophising means learning to die. His problem seems to be purely existential and we agree with him along with Plato.

184. Sartre, J.P. 'Being and Nothingness' p. 539.
Albert Camus though not a very consistent existential thinker has also mentioned that "suicide is the only genuine philosophical issue." In the same way Spinoza says "A free man thinks of nothing else than death and his wisdom is not a meditation upon death but upon life." If only we could demarcate a line between birth and death we can understand that Plato and Spinoza come very near.

Freedom is not a transcendental ideal for most of the existentialists. It is in fact the basic inherent condition of human existence and is to be lived through responsible decision and action as otherwise it becomes obscured in the inauthentic mood of fallenness. According to existentialists, to be free is to act and in the absence of acticity there can be no freedom. It is not very difficult to reconcile the statement of the existentialists with the concept of \( \text{पापन्त्व} \) in the Indian philosophy. In the Hindu philosophy it is repeatedly said that even after the life of activity is over and liberation, here is achieved, here and now man should try to do deeds for the betterment of the society.

If one feels that we are born with shackles in

186. Spinoza - Ethics.
188. Bhagwat Geeta. 3:20
our hand we must hasten for freedom or Mukti here and now. There is no credit for getting liberation. The liberation after life should not be aimed at by us. If we are eternally uneasy and our uneasiness has no remedy we must take a dive deep in the basic problems without help from any corner. We will definitely understand our life better if only we are made aware of the transiency of human life and therefore the aphorism says:

तुरात रब अघोषु मृत्यु सँभालेरे।

This message has also been given by the existentialist thinkers. Our encounter with fear, dread, anguish, nothingness which surely encounter us with the real picture of the problem of death and this encounter with death will create consciousness or awareness of death. A philosopher is supposed to be a sober man and not one moved by petty little things. It is the duty of the philosopher to take a dispassionate and disinterested view of life to know the basic conditions of it. Philosophers will do it and there is no go for them hereafter in this fast scientific age but to give due credit to the central problems. Suicide is no remedy for understanding either life, death or life hereafter. Camus is perfectly right in calling a philosophical problem of urgent nature because after all we are thrown in this world, we had never demanded life. It was against our wishes that this life was given to us to bear the tortures and agonies, the anguish and the despair of life. We have been given with so many petty
little things to dupe ourselves into them. The passions given, the emotions awarded are prone to throw us into inauthentic life and it is a problem for the mankind how to attain the freedom. It is no use being addict to medicines or to opium, Ganja, hashish, charas, etc.

It is really fun to look at persons who are absolutely not aware of the problem of death and also those persons who say that after all there is nothing to be afraid of both while every activity is being unconsciously guided by the problem of death. Probably at the old age when the limbs do not work when adversities come, when one has no bodily power one laments: and there is no use for such lamentation in the life at the fag end of our journey towards death. The philosophical outlook teaches us to have a strong and courageous encounter with the phenomenon of death. It is really a matter of mystery when a person will be really conscious of death as early as possible. One must turn to philosophy, one must turn to meditation of death and one must ultimately achieve the liberation or the freedom here and now (सत्य).


Theosophy is a world-wide organization of people who seek to know the knowledge of the self, evolution, God, immortality, etc. It is the motto of the theosophy that there is no other greater religion than 'Truth'. Though in the present form theosophy appeared in 1876
the outlook imbibed in theosophy is not a new one, for, the history of human mind shows us that people have been trying to obtain the knowledge of the self right from the beginning i.e. even since human evolution was in an infant stage. We now call ourselves to be very much civilised due to scientific progress and technological advance and mostly do away with the religious principles. As a result there is really a philosophical religious and axiological collapse. In the Upanishads two types of knowledge have been contemplated. One is अपराविद्या the lower type of knowledge which may be imparted by one human being to the other. This is comparatively an easy knowledge. The other is the higher form of knowledge i.e. the पराविद्या which means the highest knowledge of the self which is found in every religion and the aim of which is to liberate individuals from ignorance and bondage. Again, theosophy believes that all the religions are the paths leading to the divine knowledge and religion is regarded by theosophy as an attempt of the human being for the search of God. Theosophy has thought over the phenomenon of death and in their meditation and with the experimentation of self they hope to achieve the knowledge of the unknown i.e. self, God, liberation. Theosophy does not ask us to believe, it asks us to practice and verify the things for ourselves. Certainly there are assumptions which theosophy has accepted and those assumptions are not challenged in the theosophical knowledge as they call.
them crystal clear. Such assumptions are that there is a soul or Atman. Secondly there is God and the masters. Thirdly, there is the unmistakable operation of law of karma. Fourthly there is liberation. Lastly, the whole world is in evolution and this evolution is not blind as Darwin has said but it is teleological or spiritual.

The theosophy believes that the individual is born as the effect of one's past deeds. If for example there are dumb, deaf and crippled people, theosophists will immediately say that this is just the effect of their past deeds. Hindu and Buddhist theory of law of karma is more or less the same. The only difficulty is about the prime mover i.e. who controls this law of karma. The individual is linked in the evolution and he is to find out his place in the universe and has to help the evolution which is leading towards some supreme spiritual end. Secondly there is God and the masters and they help the individuals in their attempts to come up. There are seven planes and the God lives at the higher plane say, sixth or seventh. The theosophy accepts the principle of Yoga in order to realise the end of the individual after his death. For them every human being is a part of God and this thought is similar to the one in Geeta which says:

विश्वार्थियं कृपाजने कारानि स्थितो विगत 189

The theosophy says that every religion has some kind of message for the mankind. God has created religion to

189. Bhagwat Geeta 10-42.
suit the progression of human beings and theosophy has come upon to create peace and fraternity among all. So far as law of karma is concerned there are three sub parts of the law of karma: (1) thought is a character making power; (2) passion and desire are a power. Whereover such desired object is, it attacks man. Passion and desire are the two forms of the same power; (3) by your actions you will please or displease others, so you will get in return. Nobody has escaped from the law of karma. Therefore all the theosophists emphasise on a very thoughtful and goal directed behaviour. Not only towards this world, but one must look and prepare for the other world where we have to go unmistakably. This law of karma is again a very important factor in the evolution.

**Evolution:** Theosophy believes in evolution. This theosophical outlook is cut and cut spiritual and not at all material. It is claimed by the theosophists that they have gained the knowledge of evolution not from books but by using the supernatural power which could be cultivated within our body. The theosophists believe that there was evolution even among the minerals but that stage is now closed and now the evolution could be traced between the human beings and the animals and particularly in the human beings. The purpose of evolution is to lead matter from lower to the higher stage till the end of the divine evolution. The evolution of the theosophists does not believe in the survival of the fittest and goes
farther ana says that nothing is desired in the world. Only retarding is possible sometimes. So far as evolution is concerned three planes are very important, one is earth भूलोक, the second is the intermediate world पुरुलोक and the third is the heaven पुरुलोक. The theosophists believe that the soul if in the direction of evolution passes further, it reaches from भूलोक to पुरुलोक. Theosophy believes like the Geeta तासासि तीर्थणि पथं विहय नवनि दृढःशिष नरेषप्राप्ति। तथा केताराणि विहय तीर्थणि तन्नत्वानि नवनि देहि। 191

That our bodies are just the garments which we cast off at the end of every voluntary stage. Therefore death is not to be lamented for. On the contrary death should be taken to be an opportunity for the new divine opportunity to go further in the path of evolution. There is spirit, intuition and intelligence in man and these three aspects constitute the ego. This ego is the man during the human stage of evolution. He, the ego is in no way affected by what we call birth and death. What we commonly consider as his life is only a day in his real life. The body which we can see which is born and dies is a garment which he puts on for the purpose of a certain part of evolution. 192

Having put off his physical body man continues to live in his astral body until the force which has been generated by such emotions and passions as he allowed himself to fill during earthly life. This is so to say

191. Geeta 2:22
192. Leadbeater, C.W. 'The Other Side of Death' p.14
the physical death. Further when that has happened
the second death takes place the astral body also
falls away from him and he finds himself living in
the mental body and the lower mental world. He remains
in that condition until the thought forces generated
during the physical and astral lives have worn them-
selves out, then he drops the third vehicle in its
turn and remains once more an ego or soul in his higher
mental world. Mr. Leadbeater says there is no such thing
as death as it is ordinarily understood. There is only
a succession of stages in a continuous life – stages
lived in these three worlds one after another. Theosophy
explains further the sudden death. When there comes a
time when by accident or disease or by the slow process
of wearing out, the physical body breaks up, then the
attraction of the etheric matter for the astral matter
is eternal then it is linked to the dense physical.
When that is the case, the man leaving his body draws
out the etheric matter as naturally broken away from
the rest of the physical body. That physical body is
dead. The actual definition of death then is that the
full and final separation of the etheric double from
the breaking up of the physical body by withdrawing
its etheric part from its lower part.193 Death is
not the end of life but merely an incident in it, a
casting off of the outer garment which has happened
to man, often before. Just as sleep comes between our

193. Leadbeater, C.W. 'The other side of Death' p.21
day's work and goes so rest was between these days of labour here on earth which we call lives, there comes a loving night of astral and of heavenly life to give us rest and refreshment and to help us on our way. Leadbeater speaks with scientific certainty and not as a matter of religious belief not a mere matter of speculation but of observation and experiment.

It is really interesting to note that theosophy has put before itself very noble aims and they are trying to find out how world brotherhood could be brought about. This is not merely humanitarian but it is from the spiritual point of view. It is to be noted that Dr. Mrs. Annie Besant was delivering lectures on atheism for the last 15 years before she joined theosophy but when she was convinced and when she herself experienced the higher and higher stages of evolution and spiritual-knowledge she turned into a very staunch spiritualist believing in the supernatural powers and the unknown. Thereafter she devoted all her life to spread of theosophy. Theosophy has a close relation with the spiritualism and the attempts of the members who tried to get information of the dead from various sources. After all this is a matter of the unknown but efforts were made and are being made to know the position of the exact moment at the time of death and to have a communication with the dead or to see the individual by clairvoyance or some such methods. If theosophy is giving us knowledge about the phenomenon
of death we must welcome theosophy and try to adopt their methods for the same. Theosophical results about the psychological states of mind of the people are common with the philosophical view and thus theosophy has removed to a great extent the ignorance about the phenomenon of death in the mind of men who are terrified unnecessarily about this phenomenon which is inevitable.

7. The Concept of Time and the Phenomenon of Death.

This is one of the most difficult tasks to show the exact relation between Time and the phenomenon of death. Death occurs in Time. There is a yesterday, today and tomorrow. Time to us is so extraordinarily important that we enquire into our past, present and future and also life in Time to come after death. There are two types of Time. Firstly one is chronological time i.e. the division we make as past, present and the future. All our actions, thoughts, feelings, emotions are in Time but one does not know whether the mind can grasp this phenomenon of Time. We can understand chronological time very easily by means of dividing in our life the events either in the past or the present or anticipate them in future by dividing time into a thin mathematical line. Even that mathematical line moves from any point to any point as per concept of the point in Time. But there is another time which is very difficult to understand and it is the psychological time which we have in our
mind. There should be no misunderstanding about these two concepts of time. One is purely experiential in day to day life while the other may be experienced sporadically. Many times a question arises whether there is any time which could be grasped as a whole by the mind in an instant. Is mind capable of knowing something about time which is extraordinarily immeasurable? Our life is full of desires, efforts, success, failure and again desires and this is the chain of the process of becoming which involves time. The crux of the process of becoming is 'Is' all be something tomorrow although presently I am not. Today I am something, tomorrow I would like to become something else. This process is naturally a never ending process but the fact remains that our experiencing is in the process of time. We have our memories of the past, experiencing of the present and imagination of the future. Thus, we are involved throughout our life in the chronological time and one can never aspire to be free from this chronological time even though we are dead. People would say that a particular person died in a particular year A.D. or B.C. or something like that. But the other time which we have referred to is a psychological time which is closely associated with our concept of pleasure, happiness, grief i.e. feelings and emotions in our mind. A question arises if the pleasures of mind are stopped or in other words if the mind becomes desireless, is there a possibility of understanding the ways of the 'I'. After all mind
is the entity which is going to understand both types of time.

J. Krishnamurti has observed remarkably how we are concerned with Time. He says: "To understand the real we must become aware of the process of our thinking, of the ways of our memory and of the interrelated layers of consciousness. Our thought is the result of the past, our being is founded on the past, organically and in thought we are copies -- The self in us feels in terms of the past, of the future and of continuing the present -- In becoming aware of the process of the self, with its accumulative memory we shall begin to understand its time binding quality, the craving for continuity and identification. It is this memory which gives continuity to our thought which is ever increasing and multiplying that must be abandoned -- Memory must become as a shell, without a living organism in it." 134

With full awareness I would like to quote J. Krishnamurti again as very few philosophers have explained the phenomenon of time and death clearly. Krishnamurti says "If you would know the bliss of truth, you must become fully aware of these self defensive barriers and dissipate through your own voluntary decision. This demands steady and continuous effort. Most people are not willing to make that effort. They would rather be told exactly what to do, they would rather be like

machines, acting in the grooves of religious superstition and habit." 195

Is it not our experience that our attempts to understand pleasure and pain and the significance of life have been an utter failure because they were viewed wrongly to the total exclusion of understanding the process of Time? Krishnamurti says that there is a different way of tackling this problem of fear or sorrow altogether. "We have still the problem of fear, the problem of misery and the problem of anxiety; we still go on living in that mess. I feel there is a real way out if we can approach this whole issue differently." 196 Time is not a three dimensional thing. It is to be experienced by mind. We have hardly any experience in which there is no reference to time. When we are tremendously angry in that split of second it is neither the observer nor the observed and in such a split second there is no reference to time whatsoever. When we know the mood with tremendous intensity we observe that there is absence of reference to time. This perspective is of course not to be cultivated by efforts but the mind does have such experiences which have no reference to time. But as soon as these are remembered we again are in the net work of time. Therefore our main problem is as remarkably discussed

by Krishnamurti "The process of thinking is conflict, and out of conflict, out of that barren-ness time is born psychologically inwardly. If there was no time psychologically, if there was no tomorrow at all psychologically, the next moment you would be an entirely different being. Thought is time — but one has to step out of it otherwise there is no possibility of ever being free from conflict — unless you understand the seed of sorrow which is time there is no end to sorrow — So there can be mutation only when the mind has denied time — progress, arriving, self fulfilling, becoming, achieving, you have to wipe away all that." 197

If we really understand that death is inevitable and do not make any reference to the continuity in future we are not likely to be afraid of death. In the psychological time there is the real origin of our pleasure and pain. Ultimately therefore to understand psychological time is an extremely difficult thing but if we understand the phenomenon of fear, craving, desire, emotions, we are sure to know what Time is.

The ways to understand the inter relation between the phenomenon of death and the phenomenon of time is extremely complicated for which we have to understand the extraordinary drive of pleasure and

when one understands it there is possibility of understanding the nature of time. If we have an intense desire to see such inter relation we can. If the inter relation of time is not understood properly then we cannot meet the fact with peace and when time has been rejected then probably one loses energy to meet the fact. Krishnamurti says "This means that the mind has undergone a revolution and therefore is meeting something in a totally different dimension. If one has really grasped this the mind has stepped out of time-pleasure principle and therefore is no longer looking to time as a means of evolution of getting rid of something, of achieving - - - " 138

We have to say with pain that the phenomenon of physical death is an inevitable fact and no philosophy, no religion, no science could avoid it. But at the same time the awareness of death if created in mind can understand the cunning mechanism of mind by discarding the false pursuit of security. Let us accept the human conditions as they are. In order to view things as they are we must first remove fear which is a hindrance to understanding. Mind must understand things through psychological time and self delusion must be avoided. Once the shackles of longing for permanency and security are broken, the mind will be in a different state having no reference to time

and then only the significance of time could be known. It is really very interesting to know that to understand time we have to understand fear. In order to understand fear we must view at things properly. We have to be aware of time and then only there is possibility of understanding the phenomenon of death and time. Time can make us realise solving the binding knots.

Krishnamurti states: "The mind is the result of time and time is word. How extraordinary to think of it. Time is thought. It is thought that builds fear, it is thought that builds fear of death and it is time which is thought that has in its hand the whole intricacies and subtleties of fear. So you cannot wipe away fear without understanding, without actually seeing into the nature of time which means thought, which means word. From that arises the question 'Is there a thought without word?' Is there a thinking without word which is memory?"

Though it is very difficult to understand the relation of time and death properly it is very necessary to know the psychological time. There is no difficulty in understanding the chronological time. Death occurs in chronological time while the fear occurs in psychological time. Absence of fear leads to timeless moments which is the understanding of the

psychological time and the whole mechanism of time drops away before such a timeless mind. We do get certain moments when there is no reference to time but to be aware of such moment is again creating psychological time. Uncultivated emergence of peaceful psychological state amounts to timeless mind then there is no reference to death, there is absence of fear and consequently there is the stillness of mind.

8. Philosophical significance of "Death."

As observed by Gautam Buddha, Raman Maharshi we are concerned with the philosophical significance of death from the practical side of philosophy and not merely from an academic standpoint. We want to make our life understandable and should not merely grope in the arena of the unknown, because that has no end. Philosophy must never attempt to lead a man to something out of which no practical end could be served. The urgency of knowing the significance of death lies essentially in the short span and uncertainty of life. After all, we live in the time abstracted by ourselves as past, present and future. The line dividing the past, present and future is purely mathematical but for our practical purposes we divide movements into past, present and future according to our experiences. Our life is therefore utterly short even if we expect the longevity of hundred years and that too with sound
physical strength. The physical constitution of the body is such that it is bound to disintegrate, decompose and decay. We have advocated the presence of the consciousness or awareness of death in order to understand the significance of death and life. We cannot have the privilege of being in the process of knowing our life for ever. We have to understand that this life of ours is full of misery with a few passing moments of the so-called happiness. We do not know whether spiritually we have a privilege to progress on the path of self realisation. Let us understand first in a secular way the significance of life and if experiences permit we may enter into the arena of spiritualism. We particularly emphasise our experience and do not take recourse to mere theorisation which is too much with us. Incidents in life are not isolated, they are closely inter-related and therefore philosophy being a meditation on death, they are bound to make us realise the significance of life. We hold prima facie, the philosophical significance of death lies in understanding the utter insignificant nature of human life. Further we hold that the merit of philosophy lies in seeking the best out of a bad bargain. In other words, we are to dive deep into the problems with the utmost of our capacities making use of every conscious moment. It is of no use if the philosophers formulate theories about death. Every man has his philosophy i.e. a way of thought and action. The starting point is and must be that each individual in
his own station with a step ahead on the forwarding
march trying to know the significance of life. Going
at the root of things and understanding its signifi-
cance is the crux of philosophical thinking. The
outlook must be rational and the mind must be ready
to accept however disheartening the results of our
enquiry may be. This requires tremendous alertness and
clarity of mind which is the basis of philosophical
thinking. Indeed, philosophy has done us great harm
by mere theorisation. The path of secular philosophi-
cal thinking lies in between the thorny ritualistic
religious patterns and desperate hopeless moods of
stray thinking. Philosophy is a golden mean in between.
Thus, understanding philosophy is understanding our
relationships. The impact of science and technology
has certainly made us cast off innumerable stray philo-
sophical thoughts and has brought us down to earth,
but true scientific spirit is never in antagonism
with the philosophical spirit. The only difference
between scientific attitude and philosophical atti-
dude is that the former studies isolated phenomena
while the latter looks at life as a whole. Nevertheless,
both can supplement each other the ultimate aim being
the understanding of life with death as its guiding
post.

Philosophical approach has to begin with a
doubt, and resolute effort and in the course of
enquiry has to experience life as it is with its vacuum, nothingness, boredom, loneliness, helplessness and absurdity. We need not feel degraded at these results because they are not theoretical but experien-
tial. We must not feel sorry if by birth we are bereft of some limbs such as an eye, a hand or a foot, etc. Our limitations are apparent, our aspirations are gigantic, our efforts are meagre and the results are utterly discouraging and disappointing. But philosophy teaches us not to be overwhelmed by the frustration which we are bound to be confronted with at every moment of our enquiry. Philosophy must teach us the courage or in other words the readiness to face the facts as they are. Philosophy is not a readymade medi-
cine for the experiential frustration. Philosophy is an encounter with nothingness. This nothingness is within us. Life expresses itself in nothingness which we have got to accept resolutely. This philoso-
rical approach is not only going to change our thoughts but actions also. The thoughts and actions that produce contradictions must be resolved by philosophy with a realistic and radical approach. When the phenomenon of death is colouring the background of our whole life we cannot afford to discard the thought of death but the same can best be used with a patient, alert philosophical mind. The significance of philosophy lies in facing squarely doubt, fear, dread, despair and the sense of insecurity. Philosophy must not be a privilege of a few intellec-
tuals. It must be a prerogative of every individual.
who by virtue of his life with the phenomenon of death as part of it is competent to philosophise for himself. The acceptance of readymade theories amounts to entering into the area of dogma which is nothing short of ignorance. We cannot ask any ism, any theory, any ritual to take care of ourselves. We have got to be alert not in the passing moments of life but constantly to understand the significance of death. Death is the philosophical stone which turns every ignorant human being into a philosopher. Further it removes the abominable feeling of common-ness or ordinaryness of our beings and this is the philosophical significance of death. We regard ourselves as common beings unnecessarily degrading ourselves by losing the sight of the phenomenon of death and enter into the drudgery of a common insignificant and utterly valueless undertaking in life. Without giving assurances as are given by religions, sects, creeds, philosophy should teach us the acceptance of the things as they are however dismal the picture of life may be. Philosophy certainly does not prohibit any individual from the attempt of knowing the unknown. But those attempts must be philosophical and not the attempts of the credulous mind. Philosophy has to teach us disinterestedness towards the unknown things in the spiritual matters. Unfortunately even though we have failed, accepting singular attempts to understand philosophy in its true spirit, removing the religious clutches of dogmas we must know in this atomic age with its scientific and technological achievements.
and try to understand man not as a machine but as a human being in the real sense of the term. Philosophical significance of death lies in not allowing the degradation of man and also in not glorifying human beings unnecessarily. We may peruse for interest and not for imitation the philosophical solutions offered by philosophers in respect of nature and significance of death but let us not be carried away by them. Acceptance of readymade solution is a stupidity and amounts to denying the exercise of the privilege of the individual to philosophise.

Thus, the phenomenon of death gets a tremendous philosophical significance and no other branch of knowledge can claim to reveal the nature of life and death as philosophy can do. We may not attribute perfection to any theory or ism or a movement. Probably perfection lies in knowing the imperfection and this is what philosophy teaches us. All of us cry, weep and get disgusted with life due to the unhappy, unwanted agonising episodes in life. Indeed, there is no panacea for these ailments but if we could approach things as they are probably we may not despair. Life is neither a bed of roses nor a mere weeping doll. It is a wonderful intermingling of the two, perhaps with an edge of misery over happiness. Each moment must be an enlightening one giving us the secrets of life. Man is born weeping and philosophy will teach him to die laughing only by understanding the significance of death. All