

‘A Monk Who Sold His Ferrari’: A Transformation of Life

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Abstract:

‘A Monk Who Sold His Ferrari’, is a fable of Julian Mantle who was obsessed with overwork and material prosperity. Later he underwent a heart attack and realized the values of life. He decided to know real meaning of life. He came to India, met ancient sages at the Sivana. Yogi Ramana taught him truth of life. The mystic fable of a monk is a story of ignorance to transformation. Julian became a monk and he gave up his desires, bad habits even he embraces to the path of meditation, simplicity and vegetarian diet. The fable reminds us the teachings Buddhism, its eightfold ways to reduce suffering from life. The fable connects with the oriental wisdom of India.

Keywords: Truth, transformation, meditation, wisdom, Buddhism.

In the modern materialistic age, life has become more comfortable with the luxurious things at our hands although happiness and contentment going out of our hand. This is the path leading us to unhappiness, discontent and mental anguish that makes life mundane and listless. Because of this, people in modern age want to get rid of this mundane life and live a life of full of happiness and contentment. Due to mental disturbance, they become addicted to drugs, alcohol or other intoxication to evade from harsh realities of life. After the advancement of science and technology, corporate sector spread widely across the globe, which called upon developed countries to invest their time, energy and wealth and earn more profit and luxuries. This urge for more advancement lead to their greed and leads them at mental and spiritual emptiness.

In every age literature represents the hue and cry of the society. In post modern age self improvement literature is being produce to energize listless people. The crops of self help books have taken effort to discuss wisdom in the form of fable or antidote. Motivational speakers and writers have used these novel techniques to convey their wisdom more effectively and impressively. The present research is based on the best seller book ‘A Monk Who Sold His Ferrari’. Robin Sharma is one of the celebrated authors and speakers who work as the life coach and trainer to the multinational companies. The fable narrates the story of Julian Mantle, once he worked diligently as a lawyer. In little span of time he earn popularity and wealth but he failed to extend it further however he gradually declined from his professional success and mental peace. There are thirteen chapters, each chapters depicts internal and external situation of Julian Mantle. The fable opens with the quote of George Bernard Shaw, “Life is no brief candle for me. It is sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it onto future generations.”¹

The quote of Shaw expresses momentary aspect of life; a wise man must pass his wisdom to next generations. Robin Sharma penned ‘A Monk Who Sold His Ferrari’ in 1999. The fable is used to make relevant ancient philosophy of India, it is the land of several schools of philosophy that have thoughts on the truth of life, suffering, sorrow etc. though it suggests ways to liberate from all kind of worries, anxiety and psychological pangs. The writer has used a fable of Julian Mantle, once a prominent lawyer who met a heart attack at the packed court room. It was the wake up call to Julian Mantle thereafter he thought seriously on his life and its transformation. In Indian philosophy, monk symbolizes that he is awoken from all kind miserable things of life. He knows how to get liberate from all kind of worldly desires, greed’s. The title indicates a monk sacrifice his luxurious life, he chose the way of truth to know the beauty and nobility of real life. At the beginning, we are introduced the character of Julian Mantle. “He was a brilliant, handsome and fearless trial attorney with dreams of greatness. Julian was the firm’s young star, the rain- maker in waiting”².... The character of Julian is strong, fearless and promising in his

legal profession. But later his extracurricular activities were probable as well known. Late night visits to the city's restaurants with sexy young fashion models, or reckless drinking escapades with the rowdy band of brokers his "demolition team", became the stuff of legend at the firm. The hero of the fable belongs to an educated and well culture family though he wanted to escape from the drudgery of life, he became escapist to evade the harsh reality therefore he declined from glory to the wretchedness.

The narrator of the fable is John who is a graduate of Harvard Law School. He was so impressed by the personality of Julian Mantle even he witnessed his gradual departure from professional advancement. The fable is so relevant to post modern people who are workaholic and obsess with the ideas of success and economical prosperity. Julian Mantle became representative of ambitious professionals, their emptiness and directionless journey towards physical illness. Julian met a heart attack at the age 51, then he decided to know the meaning of life. He visited India to seek the true meaning of life. He came to the 'Shivana' where he saw monks clad in robes; they were observing and practicing simple truths of life to get liberate from misery of life.

In the chapter two, the Mysterious visitor, Julian returns from the *Shivana* to see John, who was going through same ordeal once Julia went by. Mr. John could not recognize that Julian was there. He transformed a lot; this transformation is so pleasant and incredible to John. In the Indian tradition of *Guru Shishya parampara* (mentor and disciple), the guru teach his disciple how to tread on the path of truth and enlightenment. The entire fable is full of oriental wisdom, it noted down the philosophical inheritance of the subcontinent. Julian met *yogi* Raman who taught him to be free from wickedness of desire and techniques of meditation. While reading the fable, the discourse of wisdom has resembles with the Buddhism but why does writer not referred the name of Buddhism? Even he discusses the concept of Nirvana but he does not acknowledge it. Is it the ignorance of writer or he did it intentionally?

A modern life is full of stupid conception of success and prosperity. This stupid conception compels people to be the slave of their worldly desire, of wealth and success. Meanwhile they drifted away from real happiness of life; they forget to rejoice with simple things in the company of beauty and bounty of nature. The fable of Julian Mantle teaches us the wisdom of life, and this wisdom is hidden gems of mind. The fable reminds me The Waste Land of T.S.Eliot, who wrote on the agonies of modern people and their invisible suffering in life. Eliot called it living dear or death in life.

The following Seven virtues are shared by Julian to John. These are well elaborated separately in the last seven chapters of the book. In these the message shared in the chapter is presented in the summarized form. The extract of these messages is as follows:

1. Master Your Mind: Learn to focus, consciously eliminate negative thoughts from your mind, and envision your dream becoming reality
2. Follow Your Purpose: Examine yourself, know your goal, attach a timeline to it
3. Practice Kaizen: Focusing on continuous self improvement
4. Live With Discipline: Recognize the importance of willpower while forming new habits
5. Respect Your Time: Adopting a "death-bed mentality" – living each day like it's your last
6. Selflessly Serve Others: Daily acts of kindness and cultivating richer relationships
7. Embrace The Present: Live for today – stop looking ahead and waiting for things to be better down the road; enjoy things as they happen

The fable of Julian encompasses the simple truth of wisdom that have been elaborated which construe the value of wisdom and its relevance in everyday life. Many quotes from the renowned sources have been employed to generalize the topic of oriental wisdom.

Conclusion: A Monk Who Sold His Ferrari depicts the story of a modern man who is obsessed with his work and gradually is disinclined to enjoy his life. He met with a heart attack and very soon understood the urgency of transformation in his life. A disciplined and simple way of life leads us to contentment and happiness in life which finally carry us to the stage of Nirvana. The fable is remarkable for its truthful and honest narration of wisdom and has its relevance in the modern and materialistic way of life.

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