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The Voyage Of Death

*When the thoughts in the mind are pure,
Our actions are blessed with success.
The fruits of our actions are tainted,
If the mind is full of impure ideas*

Embodiments of Divine Love!

The fruit of love grows in every tree of life. However, it is covered by lust, anger, envy and ego, making it difficult for us to taste the hidden sweetness. Only those who can peel off the outer skin can enjoy the sweet juice within, although anyone is eligible for such an experience. Untainted by selfishness and fear, this fruit is above the distinctions of race, caste, religion and the stage of life (*varna*).

The supreme *Vedic* wisdom is called *rasa* (juice) by the *Upanishads*. This highest spiritual wisdom has love as its nature. To taste this love, one must rid oneself

of lust, completely surrender himself to the Lord and experience identity with Him. The experience of identity with the Lord leaves no room for desires, while the feeling of being separate from Him, engenders desires. Control of the senses is essential for the attainment of Divinity. One may begin with ordinary love in the beginning and achieve the sanctity of total surrender through gradual and constant practice.

Dhruva, who started his penance with the desire for a kingdom, turned this desire into a longing for spiritual beatitude after he had been blessed with a vision of the Divine. However, the desire for sovereignty was responsible for his getting the vision of the Lord. Therefore, it is remarked that a man cannot develop a yearning for liberation without passing through the initial stage of desire for worldly objects.

The nature of *Akshara* and *Aumkara* as expounded in *Akshara Para Brahma Yoga*, the eighth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, should be understood. The phrase “*Prana prayane prabhoh*” compares life to a journey. Krishna taught Arjuna about the nature and destination of this journey of life. The various journeys by car, bus, train or aeroplane undertaken by man in daily life are regulated by considerations of time. But the journey of *prana* or life has been going on ever since creation began and shall go on forever. Unlike other journeys, this journey can never be canceled or even postponed! It is inevitable for all men, be he prince or

peasant, messiah or mendicant. Forgetting that this ultimate journey is unavoidable for all those who come into this world with a body, man is foolishly arrogating immortality unto himself. Engrossed in the transient matters of the world, he is becoming a victim of misery and suffering.

Childhood is spent with companions and playthings; youth is thrown away in romance and dance; middle age is wasted in the pursuit of wealth and old age is a sad tale of repentance and relentless attachments. Unable to discard evil habits and seek the path of liberation, man wallows in the mire of worldliness and fritters away the precious gift of human life!

To man, who is unable to recognise his innate divinity and is forgetful of his real abode, the *Bhagavad Gita* preaches that divine bliss and perfect love can be attained through surrender and dedication. The absence of trust consumes a man with anxiety and worry. A person on a tour of another region and staying in the house of a friend there, cannot be free to visit the sights of that place if he lacks confidence in his host and does not leave his valuables in the latter's custody. So also, by not reposing trust and faith in the Almighty who is our dearest friend, we are subjecting ourselves to endless worry, difficulty and fear.

The human body composed of the five elements, can drop off at any time and at any place. The wise person recognises the inevitable nature of death and

knows the frail mortal body to be a mere water bubble. Swami Vivekananda used to remind his disciples of this and tell them that the knowledge and awareness of death enables man to understand the nature of truth. We often see that the goods wagons carry the word, “Return” along with the date on which they should be returned to the workshop. The human body is like a goods wagon sent to this illusory world by the Creator. Though the date of return is not marked on it, the body has to be returned on some day or the other. Unable to grasp this truth, we seek ephemeral pleasures and subject ourselves to endless anguish.

We are so engrossed in worldly affairs concerning the present moment that we become mindless of our future. One person is said to have remarked that he has no time even for death! How foolish it is to think so, because death shall never spare anyone. Fascinated by the world of the senses, man is not able to know the truth of his own existence. Recognising the transitory nature of wealth, power and pomp, he should prepare himself for the ultimate journey. When we want to go to a cinema or for an evening walk, we get ready by putting some money in our pockets or putting on our shoes. When we wish to visit a nearby town, we pack our clothes in a bag. But what preparations are we making for the ultimate journey, the voyage of death?

Death is certain. As long as we have this body we must discharge our obligations in an exemplary manner.

When a photographer is taking your picture he tells you to be ready at the time he clicks. If you are not posing correctly at that instant, the photograph taken will not be a good one. However, the Lord is a photographer who takes the photograph without cautioning us with the word, “Ready”. Therefore, for us to be photographed well in the film-plate of the Lord’s Heart, we should be ready always.

Our body can be compared to a camera. Our mind is the lens and our heart is the film-plate in the camera. Our intelligence acts as the switch and our thoughts provide the flash. When all these synchronise properly, we attain the stage of perfect concentration. Control of the senses is essential for such concentration. Youth is the best period of life to achieve control over the senses. If the senses are not mastered when one is young, they will be irrepressible during old age.

“The old monkey cannot move; its eyes have grown dim; its face is wrinkled; its hair has turned grey”, saying thus, youngsters gather around old men and dance mockingly. Sense control must be practised when the mind and intelligence are in proper trim. By turning our vision inwards, we should prevent agitation and excitement from entering our minds. With our spiritual strength enhanced, we should be able to wander fearlessly like a lion in the forest of life and undertake service activities. Instead, however, due to the cultivation of body-consciousness, we are becoming timid and nervous like mere sheep.

Every young man should be like the heroic Abhimanyu who had exclaimed, “When I wish to pounce like a lion on an elephant and tear the enemy to pieces, is it proper for you stop me from going instead of sending me with your blessings?”

Students must plunge into the field of service and reform India. They must banish the rampant ignorance, unrest and injustice from their motherland. They must spread the ideals of truth, righteousness, justice and love, and work for the happiness and prosperity of their fellowmen. Where there is faith, there is love; where there is love, there is peace; where there is peace, there is God and where there is God, there is Bliss. Therefore faith is the basis for the experience of Bliss. Faith is like our Life-breath; it is impossible to live even for a minute in this world without faith.

It is My hope that you will develop your self-confidence, strengthen your faith in Divinity and discharge your daily duties in a spirit of absolute surrender. Just as a torch light is superfluous to see the moon which can be visualised with the aid of its own light, God (the embodiment of love) is perceived only through Love. Thus, in order to realise Him, we should enrich our hearts with Divine Love.