

27. Direct your life to acquire your last moment's mental tendency

A merchant calculates the debit and credit at the end of a week or month or year and draws up the balance sheet, to arrive at one figure—his earnings. So too, in this business of life, everything ends in some bit of net earnings after all the giving and taking concludes. At the very end of life, it is this small quantity that will come into memory. The experiences that persist to the very last moment, the two or three that well up into consciousness when one recalls all that has happened in life, these are the real sustainers, the genuine achievements.

This does not mean that all other acts and experiences have been a waste. Forgetting them means only that their work has been accomplished and their value realised.

When business is done with thousands of rupees, one's heart freezes if a loss of a few thousand is sustained and leaps in joy if a few thousand are gained. Such is the story of the business of life. At the point of death, if one yearns to cater to the tongue, it is proof that throughout life the tongue has been the master. At the point of death, if a woman remembers her child and seeks to fondle it, the inner desire (*samskara*) of child-love has been predominant all through life. It proves that all other experiences have been thrown into oblivion.

Thus, of the inborn desires (*samskaras*) of life, some are stronger than the rest and stand out to the last. Life is like that; this has to be learned. The net result of all this living and toiling is whatever comes to memory at the last moment of life. Therefore, direct the entire current of life toward acquisition of the mental tendency (*samskara*) that you want to have during the last moment. Fix your attention upon it, day and night. The feeling that dominates the moment of death works with great force in the coming life. This truth must guide a person for the journey of this life too, for inborn desires are the wherewithal for this journey as well as for the journey after this.

Therefore, from tomorrow, always keep death, which is inevitable, before the eye of memory and engage yourself in the journey of life with good wishes for all, with strict adherence to truth, seeking always the company of the good, and with the mind always fixed on the Lord. Live, avoid evil deeds and hateful and harmful thoughts, and don't get attached to the world. If you live thus, your last moment will be pure, sweet, and blessed.

Disciplined striving throughout life is needed to ensure this consummation. The mind has to be turned over to good mental tendencies (*samskaras*). Everyone must examine themselves rigorously, spot defects, and struggle to correct them. When people uncover and realise their own defects, it is like being reborn. People then start anew, from a new childhood. This is the genuine moment of awakening.

Life is eternally stalked by death. Yet, people don't tolerate the very mention of the word "death". It is deemed inauspicious to hear that word, though, however insufferable it is, every living thing is every moment proceeding nearer and nearer to it. Intent on a journey and having purchased a ticket for the same, when you enter a train the train takes you willy-nilly to the destination, whether you sit quiet or lie down or read or meditate. So too, each living thing received a ticket to death at birth and has come on a journey; so, whatever your struggles, safeguards, and precautions, the place has to be reached some day. Whatever is uncertain, death is certain. It is impossible to change that law.

People have taught the eye, ear, and tongue the luxury of constant novelty. Now, the opposite tendencies have to be taught. The mind has to be turned toward the good; the activities of every minute have to be examined from that standpoint. Each deed is a chisel stroke shaping the rock of human personality. A wrong stroke may spoil and disfigure the rock. Therefore, even the tiniest of acts has to be done with great care and devotion.

For a drowning person, even a reed is some support. So too, to a person struggling in the sea of inborn desires (*samskara*), a few good words spoken by someone might be of great help. No good deed can go to waste; no, not even a bad deed, for that too has its consequence. So, strive to avoid the slightest trace of evil activity. Keep your eyes pure. Fill your ears with words of God and stories of Godly deeds; don't allow them to listen to calumny. Use the tongue for uttering good, kind, and true words. Let it always remind you of God. Such constant effort must grant you victory. It is to earn these holy mental tendencies that one has to maintain the uninterrupted flow of high feelings and thoughts.