



# VICTORY OVER DEATH

Prof. Shivanand

**H**ow can we accept death? It is the test of our knowledge and devotion of life. Soul is immortal but the body deteriorates, decays and becomes diseased. It becomes old, weak and destroys like old clothes. There is nothing to be surprised or feel unhappy about it. It is a natural process. Yogiraj Shri Krishna says, 'The man discards his old and torn clothes and wears new clothes, similarly the soul discards the old body and gets into a new body.' (Gita 2/22)

Soul is permanent and imperishable; body is temporary and destructible. The person leaves the body, world, dear ones, relatives, family, wealth, property and everything that he attains during his lifetime after death. Death gives wisdom – it is the guru. The man is single when he comes into the world and dies alone at the time of death. The man sometimes commits sins in order to accumulate wealth and gains high position in the name of protection and security of his kith and kin. But, everything is left behind after his death. Therefore, one should consider himself or herself separate from wealth and property and should not have any attachment.

A thing has a beginning and an end. The body begins its journey in the world with birth and ends it with death. The body takes birth and dies but the soul is unending and permanent. The body alone goes through different stages like birth, youth, old age, deterioration, diseases and finally death. There is a custom of casting the horoscope at the time of child's birth; it is an indirect way to know about the longevity of the child. Death after birth is the ultimate truth. It has been said 'जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च।'

The water from a pot leaks if there happens to be a small hole, similarly our life also has the hole in the form of death and the body has the tendency to decay gradually. Wealth, family, name and fame are increasing but we are proceeding towards death with each passing day. The man moves towards death immediately after birth although we celebrate birth anniversaries for com-

pleting one more year of our life.

Death is a natural process, which has to take place in case of every living creature. But, the man is afraid of death just like a small child who is scared of darkness. The man has the constant fear of death; there is no other fear greater than the fear of death in a man's life. Therefore it is also known as the master fear. Those who win over this fear are able to win over all other fears. A person who considers death as a friend be-friends life. A person who suffers from the fear of death feels the life as a burden.

The thoughtful remembrance of death takes the person towards virtues, he does not remain fearful. The death becomes a celebration when a person overcomes the fear of death. If leading a beautiful, comfortable and happy life is an art then embracing death is also an art. A person who leads a good, disciplined and ideal life alone can sacrifice his life for those principles. Persons living and dying for their principles are noble and death is a celebration for them.

A wise person does not worry for death. It is obtained after birth. The feeling that "I am not body, I am eternal, I am immortal. There is no question of my death. The soul is carried in the body through the five elements and it is mortal" is the real wisdom and knowledge.

The person earns lot of wealth and leaves everything behind just like a wanderer who stays in a shelter home for sometime and moves to other destinations. The feeling that the worldly things are mine, doing sins in order to obtain them, having attachment, claiming ownership or authority, is very painful, it is the biggest mistake.

Friends, relatives and close ones go along with the body till the burial ground and the dead body is burnt on the pyre. After sometime everybody become busy in his or her own work. The good and bad deeds done in this life become virtues and are carried forward into the next birth along with the soul. The wind flows from one direction to the other and takes away the foul smell along with it, similarly the soul takes away the mind and sensory organs along with it into a new body. Lord Shri Krishna says –

शरीरं यदवाप्नोति यच्चाप्युत्क्रामतीश्वरः।

गृहीत्वैतानि संयाति वायुर्गन्धानिवाशयात्॥ (गीता 15/8)

The real earning of a person is that which remains with him and becomes helpful in his next birth. The

wealth kept in banks, lockers, which is earned through hard work and protected will remain here. The donations, charity and service to others will go along with us. Only the soul is true, rest everything is myth. This is the beauty of truth and false, this is wisdom. We protect myth, temporary things and disturb our peace of mind. We see a number of persons dying in front of us who go empty handed, but still we do not believe death. We try to remain strong. We aim to live for hundred years and are not certain of next moment. In Mahabharata, Yaksha asked Yudhishtar as to what is the biggest wonder in the world? He replied –

अहन्यहनि भूतानि गच्छन्ति यममन्दिरम्।

शेषाः स्थावरमिच्छन्ति किमाश्चर्यमतः परम्॥

(महाभारत, वनपर्व 313/116)

“The living creatures die everyday, but even then man wants stability (they act egoistically as if they have to live here permanently), what else could be the biggest wonder in the world?”

Some people lose hopes in difficult situations and become scared. They ask for death in order to avoid those difficulties. Some people take poison and commit suicide. This is the biggest sin. God has gifted us with life and we should use it in the best possible way. We get human life after doing lot of good deeds. There is a need to evaluate it properly. Some dull-headed people do not overcome their ego that is the root cause for their unhappiness (attachment is the root of all problems) and take alcohol in order to forget the difficulties for short time. They pollute the temple of god and destroy it.

The body made of five elements has to decay and destroy. Therefore there is a need to keep it healthy and in good condition. But it is foolishness to be proud of its beauty as it is like a water bubble. The body looks beautiful and attractive with pure and positive thoughts, speech, and actions. Internal purity is reflected on the face. Today the deficiencies (of good deeds, speech and thoughts) are being overcome with the help of cosmetics. The attachment towards body becomes an obstacle in the way of liberation at the time of death and the death appears to be very dangerous and painful.

Many great saints discard the body when it becomes old and weak and when they find it beyond treatment. They drink only holy water of Ganges and sacrifice their lives. They sacrifice solid food, medicines, water etc. and embrace death naturally. Death is a celebration for the saints, and they experience a special feeling at that time. They have the happiness of meeting the almighty after crossing the doors of death.

One should leave attachment and affection with fam-

ily members, friends and all worldly things and remember god, chant his name and meditate when death comes near. Leave the body with the feeling of non-attachment. One should get involved in peaceful state, get established in the soul and think beyond physical and mental happiness or unhappiness. Get engrossed in god, the name of Ram is true and one gets liberation when he chants the name of Ram. Chant his name on the deathbed for obtaining peace.

One should not wish for death when alive. Similarly, one should not wish for life when he or she is nearing death. Do good work, help others, involve in charity and lead a selfless life to get a peaceful death. A person who does atrocities and involves in bad deeds faces lot of pain at the time of death. For example, the last words of Aurangzeb clarify this point. Mahmood Gaznavi had discarded wealth when he was near death, for which he had subjected people to lot of atrocities. The whole life rotates in front of our eyes at the time of death and gives happiness or unhappiness. A tolerant person experiences ultimate happiness at the time of death.

One should not cry at the time of death and the friends and relatives should also not cry in front of the person because it disturbs the peace of mind. Socrates had ordered the weak women not to cry in front of him and also his admirers. Some people die at very young age, which causes grief to the parents, family members and friends, but god's action should be accepted gracefully. Only the gardener knows as to why he cuts off the green plants. Sometimes new houses are destroyed for widening of roads. Besides everybody enjoys long or short life depending on his actions. God's actions are faultless. It is not wise to cry and increase the sorrow due to attachment and affection. It is also not correct to cry and make others cry. Many times people who give condolence start crying and cause lot of grief to others. They do not try to reduce the pain.

Uniting and separating is a natural process, it is the truth of life. Some birds flock together at one tree. Then they fly and sit on another tree and forget old relations. When we travel in train we talk to co-passengers and pass the journey. When we get down we forget about them. We have to get down at our destination. The game of life is very strange. One person is crying at the death of a person and at some other place the mother is happy with the birth of her child and celebrating. We forget our old relations with death, which proves that it is all a myth.

Experience happiness when you are close to death. Establish Ram in your heart and get engrossed in his devotion. This is the best way to attain success in the journey of life.