

Sat Chit Anand

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Precious human life

*To your eyes a thousand years
 Are like yesterday, come and gone,
 No more than a watch in the night.*

*You sweep men away like a dream,
 Like grass which springs up in the
 morning,
 In the morning it springs up and flowers,
 By evening it withers and fades.*

*Our life is over like a sigh.
 Make us know the shortness of our life,
 That we may gain wisdom of heart.
 [PSALM 89]*

Life, our most precious possession, is a finite experience. Often we do not value the preciousness of life until we are threatened with its loss, or we face the death and loss of a loved one. Times like this - when we are confronted with the death of a family member or friend - are times to pause and reflect on deeper issues that in our business and our haste, we often neglect. It seems like we will be here for a long time, somehow we think that death will happen to other people and not to us. *"When you are strong and healthy, you never think of sickness coming, but it descends with sudden force, like a stroke of lightning. When involved in worldly things, you never think of death's approach, quick it comes like thunder, crashing round your head."* [MILAREPA]

Life and death are intimately connected. We cannot have one without the other. The moment you are born, your death starts approaching. Nobody knows how long you have to live. Life is uncertain and death is uncertain. It can happen at any time - young or old, sick or healthy. Somehow we have this false assumption that we will live until we are old and grey, and this false expectation lures us into complacency. We try our best to ignore and forget about death, because it is not going to happen until much later. So we procrastinate and postpone, and life passes us by. We forget how fleeting and transient this life of ours

is. *“This essence of ours is as transient as autumn clouds. To watch the birth and death of beings is like looking at the movements of a dance. A lifetime is like a flash of lightning in the sky, rushing by, like a torrent down a steep mountain.” [BUDDHA]*

It is helpful to stop and reflect on the uncertainty and immediacy of death. If we hold the awareness of death in our minds, it will give us increasing awareness of how precious and fragile this human life is. It exists depending on many causes and conditions. Like a rainbow depends on sunshine and moisture in the atmosphere, our life depends on so many factors. If you remove just one of them, life ceases: no breathing, no life; no heart pumping, no life; no kidneys cleaning our system, no life etc. *“The human form is more precious than the rarest gem. Cherish your body, as it is yours this one time only. The human body is won with difficulty, and it is easy to lose.” [LAMA TSONGKHAPA]*

Human existence is very precious, but often we fail to appreciate it and take it for granted. Living in the awareness of death, makes us appreciate the preciousness of our human life. We don't take it for granted. We don't waste time. We don't waste our lives on unimportant things. So often we lose perspective. We get lost in trivial things and we forget the bigger picture – what is really important. Little things consume our time and energy. We get caught up in the daily grind of surviving: working and making money. One day, when I have time, then I will listen to the calling of my heart and do all the things I want to do. But that might be too late. Death helps us to put life into perspective. What is really important? It is easy to get trapped in empty materialistic concerns and completely lose touch with any real source of happiness in our lives, to neglect the spiritual aspect of our lives, and to fail to cultivate our inner potential.

Awareness of death helps us to live our lives more fully and meaningfully. We have so much potential, so much latent wisdom and loving-kindness, so much to offer to the world. We need to realize and rejoice in our good fortune. While we have life we must treat it with reverence and respect, and appreciate all the possibilities it offers us. The precious gift of life must be made meaningful and used to bring about the greatest possible benefit, so that we can leave a beautiful footprint behind when we go. *“Every day, think as you wake up: Today I am fortunate to have woken up. I am alive, I have a precious human life. I am not going to waste it. I am going to use all my energies to develop myself, to expand my heart out to others, to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all beings. I am going to have kind thoughts towards others, I am not going to get angry or think badly about others. I am going to benefit others as much as I can.” [DALAI LAMA]*

OM SHANTI, MAY PEACE AND LOVE BE WITH YOU, LEELA

Photo: thank you Lawrence :-)

NOTE: We will be closed next week. I will be in Kimberley for the funeral of Maurice's father, RICHARD BARKER, who died of a heart attack. His soul is now released from all the troubles of his life, and may it find the peace and love that is its true nature. We are so identified with our present personas, but actually this is not who we really are. Our soul, our being, is so much greater than this present little body and mind, that is limited in time and space to this present life. Our soul is connected to the Source of Love - our very being is Love - and this Love will be waiting to receive and embrace us when we leave this physical body behind: it will envelop us in the love and light that we truly are, we just don't know it and that's why we suffer. May Maurice's dad encounter the great compassion at the heart of life, and come to rest in the ocean of mercy and unconditional love that extends to everyone.

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<http://www.satchitanand.co.za/programme.htm>

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