
A Celebration of Death

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मृत्युमहोत्सवः
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ಮೃತ್ಯುಮಹೋತ್ಸವಃ



Introduction:

Death is one of the imponderables that one invariably encounters. Often, death is perceived as the final act in one's life. A tumultuous parting of ways of consciousness (the soul) with the mortal coil where the soul remains behind like a lamp of light, carrying with it memories of love, passion, understanding, knowledge and perception. Jainism believes that consciousness can never be extinguished. Death is merely an exchange of the corporeal self. A comma in the chain of existence which is eternally free of full stops.

We regret that we are not aware of the identity of the original writer of this concise work in Sanskrit. But whosoever he/she may be, he/she has left behind a beautiful text which gives solace and guidance to all.

ಓಂ ಹ್ರೀಂ ಶ್ರೀಪಾರ್ಶ್ವನಾಥಾಯ ನಮಃ .

ಜಯ ಜೀನೇಂದ್ರ

ಅಥ ಮೃತ್ಯುಮಹೋತ್ಸವಃ .

ಮೃತ್ಯುಮಾರ್ಗೇ ಪ್ರವೃತ್ತಸ್ಯ ವೀತರಾಗ ದದಾತು ಮೇ .

ಸಮಾಧಿಬೋಧೌ ಪಾಥೇಯಂ ಯಾವನ್ ಮುಕ್ತಿಪುರೀ ಪುರಃ .. 1..

I have begun my journey on the path of voluntary death.

May the supremely detached ones provision me for my journey

With profound meditation and enlightenment

Until I reach my destination - liberation.

ಕೃಮೀಜಾಲ ಸಮಾಕೀರ್ಣೇ ಜರ್ಜರೇ ದೇಹಪಂಜರೇ .

ಭಜ್ಯಮಾನೇ ನ ಭೀತವ್ಯಂ ಯತಸ್ತ್ವಂ ಜ್ಞಾನವಿಗ್ರಹಃ .. 2..

O soul,

This frail body is infested with worms.

Do not fear its destruction

For you are the embodiment of knowledge.

(And distinct from the body).

ಜ್ಞಾನಿನ್ ಭಯಂ ಭವೇತ್ ಕಸ್ಮಾತ್ ಪ್ರಾಪ್ತೇ ಮೃತ್ಯುಮಹೋತ್ಸವೇ .
ಸ್ವರೂಪಸ್ಥೋ ಪುರಂ ಯಾತಿ ದೇಹೀ ದೇಹಾಂತರಸ್ಥಿತಿ .. 3..

O soul,

Why fear death?

For the wise, death is a celebration.

You will retain your identity

Even when the body is exchanged for another.

ಸುದತ್ತಂ ಪ್ರಾಪ್ಯತೇ ಯಸ್ಮಾತ್ ದೃಶ್ಯತೇ ಪೂರ್ವಸೂತ್ರಮೈಃ .

ಭುಜ್ಯತೇ ಸ್ವರ್ಭವಂ ಸೌಖ್ಯಂ ಮೃತ್ಯುಭೀತಿಂ ತ್ಯಜೇತ್ ಶನೈಃ .. 4..

O soul,

Give up the fear of death!

It is evident from the scriptures that,

Your conduct is responsible

For the happiness you attain.

ಆಗರ್ಭಾದ್ ದುಃಖಸಂತಪ್ತಃ ಪ್ರಕ್ಷಿಪ್ತೋ ದೇಹಪಂಜರೇ .

ನಾತ್ಮಾ ವಿಮುಚ್ಯತೇಽನ್ಯೇನ ಮೃತ್ಯುಭೂಮಿಪತಿಂ ವಿನಾ .. 5..

O soul,

Since the time of conception,

You have been scorched by sorrows.

You are imprisoned by this body.

Only the king named death can set you free.

ಸರ್ವದುಃಖಪ್ರದಂ ಪಿಂಡಂ ದೂರೀಕೃತ್ಯಾತ್ಮದರ್ಶಿಭಿಃ .

ಮೃತ್ಯುಮಿತ್ರಪ್ರಸಾದೇನ ಪ್ರಾಪ್ಯಂತೇ ಸುಖಸಂಪದಃ .. 6..

O soul,

This body is the root of all sorrow.

Thanks to the friend called death,

Those who perceive the true self,

Rid themselves of the body

And attain the wealth of bliss.

ಮೃತ್ಯುಕಲ್ಪದ್ರುಮೇ ಪ್ರಾಪ್ತೇ ಯೇನಾತ್ಮಾರ್ಥೋ ನ ಸಾಧಿತಃ .

ನಿಮಗ್ನೋ ಜನ್ಮಜಂಬಾಲೇ ಸ ಪಶ್ಚಾತ್ ಕಿಂ ಕರಿಷ್ಯತಿ .. 7..

O soul,

Those who do not pursue the path of spiritual perfection,

Even when faced with the wish-fulfilling tree called death,

What will they do when confronted

By the quagmire of transmigration?

ಜೀರ್ಣಂ ದೇಹಾದಿಕಂ ಸರ್ವಂ ನೂತನಂ ಜಾಯತೇ ಯತಃ .

ಸ ಮೃತ್ಯುಃ ಕಿಂ ನ ಮೋದಾಯ ಸತಾಂ ಸಾತೋತ್ಥಿತಿರ್ಯಥಾ .. 8..

O soul,

When death causes the worn-out, aged body

To be exchanged for a brand new one,

Then why not rejoice at death,

Especially since death is instrumental

In the salvation of saints?

ಸುಖಂ ದುಃಖಂ ಸದಾ ವೇತ್ತಿ ದೇಹಸ್ಥಶ್ಚ ಸ್ವಯಂ ವ್ರಜೇತ್ .

ಮೃತ್ಯುಭೀತಿಸ್ತದಾ ಕಸ್ಯ ಜಾಯತೇ ಪರಮಾರ್ಥತಃ .. 9..

O soul,

When you are shackled to the body,

You have to constantly suffer pleasure and pain.

You even take another birth on your own.

So why fear death?

ಸಂಸಾರಾಸಕ್ತಚಿತ್ತಾನಾಂ ಮೃತ್ಯುಭೀತಿರ್ಭವೇತ್ ನೃಣಾಂ .

ಮೋದಾಯತೇ ಪುನಃ ಸೋಽಪಿ ಜ್ಞಾನವೈರಾಗ್ಯವಾಸಿನಾಂ .. 10..

O soul,

Death terrifies those

Who are enmeshed in the world

But delights those

Who are wise and free from worldly desires.

ಪುರಾಧೀಶೋ ಯದಾ ಯಾತಿ ಸುಕೃತಸ್ಯ ಬುಭುತ್ಸಯಾ .

ತದಾಸೌ ವಾರ್ಯತೇ ಕೇನ ಪ್ರಪಂಚೈಃ ಪಂಚಭೌತಿಕೈಃ .. 11..

O soul,

When lifespan determining karmas cause you to leave the body,

Then how can anything hold you back?

So do not concern yourself with the five elements, etc.

ಮೃತ್ಯುಕಾಲೇ ಸತಾಂ ದುಃಖಂ ಪ್ರಭವೇತ್ ವ್ಯಾಧಿಸಂಭವಂ .
ದೇಹಮೋಹವಿನಾಶಾಯ ಮನ್ಯೇ ಶಿವಸುಖಾಯ ಚ .. 12..

O soul,

Sorrow and disease afflict saints at the time of death

To annihilate their attachment for the body

And help them attain eternal bliss.

ಜ್ಞಾನಿನೋಽಮೃತತುಲ್ಯಾಯ ಮೃತ್ಯುಸ್ತಾಪಕರೋಽಪಿ ಸನ್ .

ಆಮಕುಂಭಸ್ಯ ಲೋಕೇಽಸ್ಮಿನ್ ಭವೇತ್ ಪಾಕವಿಧಿಯಥಾ .. 13..

O soul,

The anguish caused by death

Is like ambrosia for the learned ones.

Because it is well known

That an earthen pitcher has to bear the heat

Before it may be used for cooking.

ಯತ್ ಫಲಂ ಪ್ರಾಪ್ಯತೇ ಸದ್ಧಿ ವ್ರತಾಯಾಸವಿಡಂಬನಾತ್ .

ತತ್ ಫಲಂ ಸುಖಸಾಧ್ಯಂ ಸ್ಯಾತ್ ಮೃತ್ಯುಕಾಲೇ ಸಮಾಧಿನಾ .. 14..

O soul,

Upon venturing forth on the path of voluntary death,

You will comfortably attain the spiritual wellness

Which would, otherwise,

Only be attained

By ascetics through extreme penance.

ಅನಾರ್ತಃ ಶಾಂತಿಮಾನ್ ಮರ್ತ್ಯೋ ನ ತಿಯಂಗ್ ನಾಪಿ ನಾರಕಃ .

ಧರ್ಮಧ್ಯಾನೀ ಸದಾ ಮುಕ್ತೋ ಮರ್ತ್ಯೋ ನಿತ್ಯಂ ಮಹೇಶ್ವರಃ .. 15..

O soul,

One without saturnine meditation dies peacefully.

And is reborn as a human being,

Not as a sub-human or a hellish being.

One who has pious meditation is always free

And, upon dying, is sure to attain the great wealth of liberation.

ತಪ್ತಸ್ಯ ತಪಸಶ್ಚಾಪಿ ಪಾಲಿತಸ್ಯ ವ್ರತಸ್ಯ ಚ .

ಪರಿತಸ್ಯ ಶ್ರುತಸ್ಯಾಪಿ ಫಲಂ ಮೃತ್ಯುಃ ಸಮಾಧಿನಾ .. 16..

O soul,

Those who practise penance,

Follow the vows and study the scriptures

Attain serene, peaceful voluntary death.

ಅತಿಪರಿಚಿತೇಷ್ಟವಜ್ಞಾ ನವೇ ಭವೇತ್ ಪ್ರೀತಿರಿತಿ ಹಿ ಜನವಾದಃ .

ಚಿರತರಶರೀರನಾಶೇ ನವತರಲಾಭೇ ಚ ಕಿಂ ಭೀರುಃ .. 17..

O soul,

It is well known

That familiarity breeds contempt, and

That one is fascinated by novelty.

When the older body is destroyed,

You will get a new one.

So why fear death?

Epilogue

ಸ್ವರ್ಗಾದೇತ್ಯ ಪವಿತ್ರ ನಿರ್ಮಲ ಕುಲೇ ಸಸ್ಮಯಮಾನಾ ಜನ್ಯಃ

ದತ್ತಾ ಭಕ್ತಿವಿಧಾಯಿನಾಂ ಬಹುವಿಧಂ ವಾಜ್ಞಾನುರೂಪಂ ಧನಂ .

ಭುಕ್ತ್ವಾ ಭೋಗಮಹರ್ನಿಶಂ ಪರಕೃತಂ ಶಿತ್ವಾ ಕ್ಷಣಂ ಮಂಡಲೇ

ಪಾತ್ರಾವೇಶವಿಸರ್ಜನಾಮಿವ ಮೃತುಂ ಸಂತೋ ಲಭಂತೇ ಸ್ವತಃ .. 18..

O soul,

The pious ones descend from heaven,

Take birth in families with pure conduct

and are worshipped.

They never lack for wealth, and

(*Indulge in sensual delectation day and night.


This is how they spend a short time on earth.

At the end, just as actors shed one persona to don another,


They shed this body and attain liberation.

- Manish Modi

(*The Jain religion does not promote sensual indulgence or any behaviour that increases the soul's attachment to the body, to other people and worldly objects. What the epilogue says is that even those who indulge in temporal delectation can attain liberation provided they take up the path of asceticism and shed all attachment.

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