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## A Celebration of Death

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ம்ரு'த்யுமஹோத்ஸவ:

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### 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.

ஓ ஹ்ரீம் ஸ்ரீபார்ஸ்வநாதா<sup>2</sup>ய நம: |

ஜய ஜீநேந்த்<sup>3</sup>ர

அத<sup>2</sup> ம்ரு'த்யுமஹோத்ஸவ: |

ம்ரு'த்யுமாரகே<sup>3</sup> ப்ரவ்ரு'த்தஸ்ய வீதராக<sup>3</sup> த<sup>3</sup>தா<sup>3</sup>து மே |

ஸமாதி<sup>4</sup>போ<sup>3</sup>தௌ<sup>4</sup> பா<sup>4</sup>தே<sup>2</sup>யம் யாவந் முக்திபு<sup>1</sup> பு: || 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.

க்ரு'மீஜால ஸமாதீர்ணே ஜர்ஜரே தே<sup>3</sup>ஹபஞ்ஜரே |

ப<sup>4</sup>ஜ்யமாநே ந ப<sup>4</sup>தவ்யம் யதஸ்த்வம் ஜ்ஞாநவிக்<sup>3</sup>ரஹ: || 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).

ஜ்ஞாநிந் ப<sup>4</sup>யம் ப<sup>4</sup>வேத் கஸ்மாத் ப்ராப்தே ம்ரு'த்யுமஹோத்ஸவே |  
ஸ்வரூபஸ்தோ<sup>2</sup> புரம் யாதி தே<sup>3</sup>ஹீ தே<sup>3</sup>ஹாந்தரஸ்தி<sup>2</sup>தி || 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.

ஸுத<sup>3</sup>த்தம் ப்ராப்யதே யஸ்மாத் த்<sup>3</sup>ரு'ஸ்யதே பூர்வஸூத்தமை: |

பு'ஜ்யதே ஸ்வர்ப<sup>4</sup>வம் ஸௌக்<sup>2</sup>யம் ம்ரு'த்யுபீ<sup>4</sup>திம் த்யஜேத் ஸநை: || 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.

ஆக<sup>3</sup>ர்பா<sup>4</sup>த்<sup>3</sup> து:<sup>3</sup>க<sup>2</sup>ஸந்தப்த: ப்ரக்ஷிப்தோ தே<sup>3</sup>ஹபஞ்ஜரே |

நாத்மா விமுச்யதே<sup>5</sup>ந்யேந ம்ரு'த்யுபூ<sup>4</sup>மிபதிம் விநா || 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.

ஸர்வது:<sup>3</sup>க<sup>2</sup>ப்ரத<sup>3</sup>ம் பிண்ட<sup>3</sup>ம் தூ<sup>3</sup>ரீக்ரு'த்யாத்மத<sup>3</sup>ர்ஸிபி:<sup>4</sup> |

ம்ரு'த்யுமித்ரப்ரஸாதே<sup>3</sup>ந் ப்ராப்யந்தே ஸுக<sup>2</sup>ஸம்பத:<sup>3</sup> || 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.

ம்ரு'த்யுகல்பத்<sup>3</sup>ருமே ப்ராப்தே யேநாத்மார்தோ<sup>2</sup> ந ஸாதி<sup>4</sup>த: |  
நிமக்<sup>3</sup>நோ ஜந்மஜம்பா<sup>3</sup>லே ஸ பஸ்சாத் கிம் கரிஷ்யதி || 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?

ஜீர்ணம் தே<sup>3</sup>ஹாதி<sup>3</sup>கம் ஸர்வம் நூதநம் ஜாயதே யத: |  
ஸ ம்ரு'த்யு: கிம் ந மோதா<sup>3</sup>ய ஸதாம் ஸாதோத்தி<sup>2</sup>திர்யதா<sup>2</sup> || 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?

ஸுக<sup>2</sup>ம் து:<sup>3</sup>க<sup>2</sup>ம் ஸதா<sup>3</sup> வேத்தி தே<sup>3</sup>ஹஸ்த<sup>2</sup>ஸ்ச ஸ்வயம் வ்ரஜேத் |  
ம்ரு'த்யுபீ<sup>4</sup>திஸ்ததா<sup>3</sup> கஸ்ய ஜாயதே பரமார்த<sup>2</sup>த: || 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?

ஸம்ஸாராஸக்தசித்தாநாம் ம்ரு'த்யுபீ<sup>4</sup>திர்ப<sup>4</sup>வேத் ந்ரு'ணம் |  
மோதா<sup>3</sup>யதே புந: ஸோ<sup>5</sup>பி ஜ்ஞாநவைராக்<sup>3</sup>யவாஸிநாம் || 10 ||

O soul,

Death terrifies those  
Who are enmeshed in the world  
But delights those  
Who are wise and free from worldly desires.

புரா<sup>4</sup>ஸோ யதா<sup>3</sup> யாதி ஸுக்ரு'தஸ்ய பு<sup>3</sup>பு<sup>4</sup>தஸ்யா |  
ததா<sup>3</sup>ஸௌ வார்யதே கேந ப்ரபஞ்சை: பஞ்சபௌ<sup>4</sup>திகை: || 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.

ம்ரு'த்யுகாலே ஸதாம் து:<sup>3</sup>க<sup>2</sup>ம் ப்ரப<sup>4</sup>வேத் வ்யாதி<sup>4</sup>ஸம்ப<sup>4</sup>வம் |  
தே<sup>3</sup>ஹமோஹவிநாஸாய மந்யே ஸிவஸுகா<sup>2</sup>ய ச || 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.

ஜ்ஞாநிநோ<sup>5</sup>ம்ரு'ததுல்யாய ம்ரு'த்யுஸ்தாபகரோ<sup>5</sup>பி ஸந் |  
ஆமகும்ப<sup>4</sup>ஸ்ய லோகே<sup>5</sup>ஸ்மிந் ப<sup>4</sup>வேத் பாகவிதி<sup>4</sup>ர்யதா<sup>2</sup> || 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.

யத் ப<sup>2</sup>லம் ப்ராப்யதே ஸத்<sup>3</sup>பி<sup>4</sup> வ்ரதாயாஸவிட<sup>3</sup>ம்ப<sup>3</sup>நாத் |  
தத் ப<sup>2</sup>லம் ஸுக<sup>2</sup>ஸாத<sup>4</sup>யம் ஸ்யாத் ம்ரு'த்யுகாலே ஸமாதி<sup>4</sup>நா || 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.

அநார்த: ஸாந்திமாந் மர்த்யோ ந திர்யங்க<sup>3</sup> நாபி நாரக: |  
த<sup>4</sup>ர்மத<sup>4</sup>யாநீ ஸதா<sup>3</sup> முக்தோ மர்த்யோ நித்யம் மஹேஸ்வர: || 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.

தப்தஸ்ய தபஸஸ்சாபி பாலிதஸ்ய வ்ரதஸ்ய ச |

படி<sup>2</sup>தஸ்ய ஸ்ருதஸ்யாபி ப<sup>2</sup>லம் ம்ரு'த்யு: ஸமாதி<sup>4</sup>நா || 16 ||

O soul,

Those who practise penance,

Follow the vows and study the scriptures

Attain serene, peaceful voluntary death.

அதிபரிசிதேஷ்வவஜ்ஞா நவே ப<sup>4</sup>வேத் ப்ரீதிரிதி ஹி ஜநவாத:<sup>3</sup> |

சிரதரஸரீரநாஸே நவதரலாபே<sup>4</sup> ச கிம் பீ<sup>4</sup>ரு: || 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

ஸ்வர்கா<sup>3</sup>தே<sup>3</sup>த்ய பவித்ர நிர்மல குலே ஸஸ்மர்யமாநா ஜநை:

த<sup>3</sup>த்வா ப<sup>4</sup>க்திவிதா<sup>4</sup>யிநாம் ப<sup>3</sup>ஹுவித<sup>4</sup>ம் வாங்சா<sup>2</sup>நுருபம் த<sup>4</sup>நம் |

பு<sup>4</sup>க்த்வா போ<sup>4</sup>க<sup>3</sup>மஹர்நிஸம் பரக்ரு'தம் ஸித்வா ஸூணம் மண்ட<sup>3</sup>லே

பாத்ராவேஸவிஸர்ஜநாமிவ ம்ரு'தும் ஸந்தோ லப<sup>4</sup>ந்தே ஸ்வத: || 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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*A Celebration of Death*

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Please send corrections to [sanskrit@cheerful.com](mailto:sanskrit@cheerful.com)

