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Buddha was once asked,
“What is the greatest mistake
a human being can make?”

He replied,
“To think that we have time.”

Conquering Death

Welcome to this episode of the Kartik Inspiration!

Today, I would like to share an incident that occurred as we were entering Vrindavan-dhama.

We drove through Varsana, and on one of the side roads we took, death had suddenly struck a Vrajavasi. There were around fifty to seventy people mourning around him. One person from the crowd came over and informed us, “Brain haemorrhage. Now there are nine children—eight young girls and one boy, and one cow, which are left behind and need to be taken care of by the village.”

This reminded me of a saying from the Buddha. Buddha was once asked, “What is the greatest mistake that a human being can make?” He answered, “The greatest mistake which we human beings make is that we think we have time.”

At any moment, the end could come close, as in the case with the man from Varsana.

When Lord Rama finally succeeded in slaying the demon Ravana, He told Laksman, “Go to Ravana. He is, after all, one of the greatest scholars of the Vedas this universe has ever seen. Ask him for his advice. You can learn something from him.”

So, Laksman came to Ravana—the great warrior who knew the whole Vedas, but whose heart was set against the Lord. Ravana said with a faint voice, “I will tell you what real power is; however, this power is not with human beings. Real power is if the son always outlives the father. However, we find in this world that we have absolutely no control over our death. Look at me and understand: use your time properly! The end is

always stalking or walking behind us.” And then Ravana closed his eyes.

Yes, this is a theme that runs through the Vedic scriptures: we, as human beings, and indeed all beings, are walking with each step closer to our physical death. A conscious person will not become dejected by it. For a spiritual person, this is a reminder, an inspiration, and a motivating force to use their time consciously.

The greatest miracle in this world is that we see around us death taking the life of every living being, but still we think we will be eternally here.

I request that you take a moment to reflect on your own brief stay here. When, during this time, you can be together with Radha and Krishna in your mind, then you are on the path of deathlessness.

In the Vraja-vilasa stava, there is a description of the beloved maidservants of Srimati Radharani. They consider themselves as dead and feel almost like dead when even for a moment they are not able to see Sri Radha. This means that real life is to spend our time with Radha and Krishna, especially in this month of Kartik. This will be our deathlessness! And even when death comes at an unexpected time, there is nothing to worry about, because we are just experiencing another sunset in our life. The sun, however, will soon rise. Hopefully, it will rise on the banks of the Yamuna. Hopefully, we will join Krishna again.

See you for the next Kartik inspiration!

Ratnandana Prasad
SACINANDANA SWAMI