

Janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhi-duḥkha-darśanam

Seeing the limitations in life itself

Janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhi-duḥkha-darśanam

Reflection on the limitations of birth, death, old age, sickness and pain

This long word, **JANMA-MṚTYU-JARĀ-VYĀDHI-DUḤKHA-DOṢĀNUDARŚANAM**, is a Sanskrit compound noun that stands for a certain rigorously objective attitude toward life.

Anu, the penultimate word of the compound, means repetitively, or again and again. **Anu** is prefixed to **darśanam**, a beautiful word that means 'seeing'.

ANUDARŚANAM

What is the **anudarśanam**, the repeated seeing that Lord Kṛṣṇa is talking about?

It is seeing the limitations in life itself, from birth to death.

JANMA - MṚTYU

Life begins with birth, **janma**. Along with **janma** comes death, **mṛtyu**, the inseparable mirror-twin of birth. There is no birth that does not bring death along with it; everything that begins, ends. What is born has to die.

The old man, death, always comes along with birth. While you are busy doing things, he is there patiently waiting.

'All right, let him be busy' he says, but when he thinks you have played enough, he comes. **Janma** and **mṛtyu**, are but the opposite sides of a single coin.

JARĀ

In between **janma** and **mṛtyu** there are other limitations, **doṣas**, to see.

These are old age, **jarā**, disease, **vyādhi** and so on. You may still be very young or perhaps strong and vigorous in your middle years but one thing you can count upon, if **mṛtyu** sufficiently spares you, **jarā** will creep in.

The longer you elude **mṛtyu**, the more certainly a time will come when your hearing will grow dull; your vision will grow dim; your step will be unsteady, you may be uncomfortable while sitting; you may be uncomfortable while lying down. You will have problems-hearing problem, eating problem, digesting problem, thinking problem, remembering problem, sitting-standing-walking problem. What is this? it is old age, **jarā**, which is lurking around the corner.

VYĀDHI, DUḤKHA

You may say, 'I am young and healthy. There is a lot of life to enjoy before old age and death draw close to me.'

Young you may be, but youth is no escape from the limitations of life. Two others, disease, **vyādhi** and pain, **duḥkha**, will introduce themselves to you in infancy, perhaps even before birth. Disease is something that goes with you all the time. Sometimes it shows up, sometimes it does not, but it is always there, a shadow in your life.

Similarly, **duḥkha**, is a life-long companion. **Duḥkha** means all forms of pain, physical or mental, large or small, from the bite of a mosquito to grief over loss of a loved one. Pain, like disease, cannot be avoided. Careful as you may be, pain will catch you.

ĀDHYĀTMIKA, ĀDHIBHĀUTIKA, ĀDHIDAIVIKA

Pain or troubles coming from within are **ādhyātmika**, from the outside, **ādhībhāutika**, and from a heavenly source, **ādhidaivika**.

Ādhyātmika duḥkha, internal pain, comprises the aches and pains and troubles of my individualised person.

Ādhībhāutika duḥkha, external pain, is made up of the problems the world around me, the smoke in the air, the blast of my neighbour's radio, the furnace that fails on a cold day and so on.

Ādhidaivika duḥkha is the painful result of an event over which there is no control whatsoever, a tsunami, an earthquake or an erupting volcano.

Thus, we see the limitations, **doṣa**, in life. With birth, certain limitations come such as death, old age, disease and pain of all kinds. You cannot escape them. Therefore, bear in mind the nature of life. It is uncertain, painful and swiftly moving towards old age and death.

KEEP YOUR MIND ON YOUR PURPOSE IN LIFE.

Don't fritter it away.

Thus, the value, **JANMA-MṚTYU-JARĀ-VYĀDHI-DUḤKHA-DOṢĀNUDARŚANAM**, that Lord Kṛṣṇa teaches Arjuna, is an important value.

It is not negative but simply factual.

Its purpose is to direct your attention to the need to see the life objectively, just as it is, so that you will be able to make use of the time that is available in your hands right now.

Available time is precious time. Make use of it, consciously. Consciously use your time for your activities and pursuits.

If you make use of time consciously, you are a master, **swami**, of time.