

as you never forget that you are an ego, that you are a man, so continuously and constantly assert that your real nature is the Self.

The forgetfulness (pramāda) of the essential divinity in us and our sense of holiness is itself death. In fact, this is real death. Living in the forgetfulness of one's own divinity is 'spiritual death'. Because, thereafter, that man can live only as a biped 'animal'. So said Brahmā's own son, Sanatkumāra.¹



न प्रमादादनर्थोऽन्यो ज्ञानिनः स्वस्वरूपतः ।
ततो मोहस्ततोऽहंघीस्ततो बन्धस्ततो व्यथा ॥ ३२२ ॥

*na pramādādanartha'nyo jñāninaḥ svasvarūpataḥ,
tato mohastato'haṁdhīstato bandhastato vyathā. (322)*

322. No greater danger is there for the Man of Wisdom than carelessness about his own real nature. From this comes delusion, thence egoism. This is followed by bondage and then by misery.

To a spiritual seeker there is nothing more tragic than this 'forgetfulness of his own real nature' (pramāda). Inadvertence erupts the volcano of all other sorrows. Forgetting our real nature means 'non-apprehension of the Reality'. We have already seen how 'non-apprehension of Reality' can create 'misapprehensions'. For a wise man there can never be any other tragedy greater than this Self-forgetfulness, as this can breed a chain of terrible consequences, each replete with insufferable agonies.

From Self-forgetfulness starts delusion (moha). From delusion comes the ego (ahaṁ-dhī). This ego sense leads to bondage (bandha). And bondage breeds misery (vyathā).²

¹ In the celebrated Sanatsujāta-saṁvāda, the conversation between Sanatkumāra and King Dhṛtarāṣṭra comprising chapters 40-45 of Udyoga-parva of *Mahābhārata*, there occur the words (*pramādaṁ vai mṛtyurmahaṁ bravīmi-3.42.4*) 'I call inadvertence itself death.'

² *jarāmaraṇāḍijanya vyathā* – misery in the fields of time and space.