

Life

Mira Mehta

LIFE IN BALANCE

Beware
The cancer darkly growing,
Preying slowly on its host,
Sucking life out drop by drop.

Beware
Its power, fatal, creeping,
Seeping sickness into tissues,
Crumbling health into decay.

Beware
Its vice-like tightening,
Imprisoning and choking breath,
Bringing death by strangulation.

*Cut! It must be cut,
Or there will be dying, dying.*

Weigh up
Sleeping trauma's waking,
Frightening all with fearing face,
Needing speedy, calm attention.

Trust in
Benign fingers snipping,
Searching out malignancy,
Incising skin to excise threat.

Draw on
Faith and prayers for curing,
Reinforcing loving care,
Wishing wellness full and fast.

*Healed! Let all be healed,
For the sake of living, living.*

What is it about life that makes us hold onto it so tenaciously and to recoil from death?

In the Yogic view clinging to life (*abhinivesha*) is a deep-rooted propensity of the mind.¹ Labelled an affliction (*klesha*) because it does not lead to the ultimate beatitude of spiritual liberation. It is a self-propelling force that is well nigh impossible to eradicate.

This overwhelming urge of self-perpetuation has, according to Yoga philosophy, two purposes. One is experience itself (*bhoga*). The second is emancipation from experience (*apavarga*).²

The link between these two polarised aims is the mind. It is the mind which receives, invites and reacts to experiences, shaping the course of life. The mind is driven by instincts and volition. Instincts are innate and beyond easy control. But volition can be analysed, understood, trained, changed and transcended. Volition is will: a powerful force that can be wielded judiciously or rashly in any situation. The choice is always ours. On it depends our very life.

¹ Yoga Sutra 2.9

² Yoga Sutra 2.18

The poem is taken from Mira Mehta's book *Cascade of Stars*, published by Shephard-Walwyn (www.shephard-walwyn.co.uk). For information about her classes and other publications visit www.yogicpath.com.