

Faith, love, and grace

*One may acquire scholarship in all forms of knowledge,
and may win over others in any symposium,
One can fight with great valour in a battle and
emerge victorious over his rivals,
One may enjoy all the comforts and convenience
that the modern world provides,
One may count the stars in the sky or spell out the
names of all species of living beings in the world,
One may master the eight-fold systems of knowledge,
One can land on the moon.
But to control the senses, steady the mind and
turn the vision inward, is well nigh impossible.*
[Telugu Poem]

In the modern world, every person tries hard to attain peace. Peace cannot be attained spiritual percepts nor can it be got from market as a commodity. It cannot be acquired even by

knowledge of the texts, or a high position in life. Peace can be attained only by God's grace.

Though man is eager to attain peace, he confronts many obstacles in the path. Those who travel by train may be well acquainted with the slogan, "Less luggage, more comfort, make travel a pleasure." Now, man is burdening himself with limitless desires. Because of this extra heavy luggage of desires, he finds it extremely difficult to carry on the journey of life. By such proliferation of desires, he loses his balance, moves far away from his goal, and even tends to go mad.

It is for this reason that I have been stressing the need for ceiling on desires. By limiting your desires, you can attain peace to a certain extent. You have to exercise a check on your desires and make comforts to get the Grace of the Divine.

Observe equanimity at all times

In the modern world, praise and blame, exultation and humiliation, have become common. Man is elated by praise or gets frustrated by blame or criticism. To be elated by praise and distressed by blame reflects one's weakness. To maintain equanimity in pleasure and pain or praise and blame is a difficult proposition. It cannot be achieved by scholarship. To quote an example, sage Vyasa, who was the author of the eighteen great epics and the *Ithihasas* of *Mahabharatha* and who codified the *Vedas*, was restless and asked Narada for advice as to how to overcome this sort of restlessness. Narada told Vyasa, "You should not get depressed by blame nor get elated by praise. In all situations, equanimity has to be maintained." One may wonder how this is possible for mankind to maintain such equanimity.

You should ask who is the one that criticises and who is the one that is criticised. If you consider that it is the body that is criticized, then there is no need to worry because you know body is ephemeral and is bound to perish one day or the

other. It is the container of foul material like urine, fecal matter, etc. Why should you get affected by this? You are not the body. If it is *Atma* that is criticized, the same *Atma* is present in both —the person who is criticising and the one that is criticised. So this means he is criticising himself!

Both praise and blame pertain only to the body. If you respond to it, that means you are accepting the contents thereof. If he does not receive it, it goes back to the sender. So also, you do not react to the abuse or criticism leveled by some one else against you. Then it goes back to him.

What you see is only your own reflection

The accusation or abuse one makes against you is only a reflection of his mind, which is filled with hatred. Krishna asked Duryodhana for help. Duryodhana exclaimed, “How is it, Krishna, that you are asking for my help? It is only we who seek your help.” But Krishna told him, “I want you to go round the whole kingdom and find out if there is any good person.”

Duryodhana set out on his journey and, after going round the kingdom, returned to Krishna’s place and informed him, “Krishna! I did not find even a single good person anywhere. If at all there is any one with some good quality, it must be only myself.”

Krishna summoned Dharmaraja, the eldest son of Pandavas, and asked him to go round the kingdom and find out if there was any bad man. Dharmaraja returned after his survey of the kingdom and said, “Swami, I could not find even a single bad person. If at all there is any bad quality, it is in me only.” This proves that what you see is only your own reflection. Since, Duryodhana was essentially filled with wicked qualities, he could see the reflection of his own qualities in all. The condition of the world you see is dependent only on your vision. That is why Buddha said, you should have *samyak dhrishti* (good vision).

Total faith is needed in obtaining Divine Grace

There are so many *Vedantins* and self-styled scholars who preach many precepts but do not practise them. There is a story of a pandit who mastered all scriptures and was preaching to people. He used to get milk from a milkmaid who came from a distant village. Because she was not punctual in delivering milk, one day the pandit asked her why she was coming at 8 a.m. one day and at 9 a.m. another day, and not regular, which resulted in his *puja* (worship) being delayed. She said she had to cross a small river enroute, for which she had to use a boat, and the boatman was giving priority to the more affluent customers, making her to wait for the second trip. She said this was the reason for her delay.

The pandit mocked her apparent ignorance, and said, “if only you chant the name of God, *Om Namō Narayana*, you do not need the boat at all, and the river will part and give way to you. Why do you not adopt this easy method?”

Because this *upadesh* (advice) was given by the learned pandit, she had full faith in his words and rehearsed God’s name as she returned home. Next day, she uttered the name of Narayana and got into the river and crossed without any difficulty, because it gave way. She repeated in the same manner every day, and was able to deliver milk in time to the pandit.

After a few days, the pandit questioned as to how she was able to come in time daily. She told him the fact that she was following the pandit’s advice, and was able to cross the river uttering God’s name.

The pandit himself had no belief, though he gave the advice to the milkmaid. He wanted to test the veracity of her statement and proceeded to the river bank next day. He chanted the name, but without full faith and got into the river folding up his *dhoti* (lower garment) lest it might get wet, and was drowned in the river. This is the fate of a person who

preaches but lacks faith in his own preaching. The illiterate woman had no doubt at all and had total faith.

That is why the saying, “You can say a crore of things, but to practise is difficult.”

Ravikumar was telling about his father being cured, though he could not get rid of the illness even after 21 operations. The cure is due to the total faith of this family. In the drama in which Ravi acted, the blind man was approaching Jesus, praying Him to give him back his eyesight. Jesus asked, do you have faith that I can give you back the eye sight? He said, “Yes, I have full faith.”

Immediately, people have lost faith and belief, which are like the two eyes. Some have faith in God but no belief in His teachings. Total faith is needed for getting Divine Grace.

Dharma is one that cannot decline

Ashok Singhal spoke about the incarnation of an *Avatar*, when there is a decline of *dharma*. *Dharma* is one that cannot decline.

Krishna promised that He would protect the *sadhus*. Who are the *sadhus*? Those that are wearing ochre robes or those that hold Gita in their hands and preach are not *sadhus*. A *sadhu* is one who perceives unity in diversity. He will have unity of thought, word, and action. This is called education in human values, which is E-H-V. In my opinion, it is 3 H-V. It is the unity of head, heart, and hand. It is the combination of thought, word, and deed, which is the trinity of humanity.

If you practise humanness, all obstacles will vanish from your path. You should make the positive and the negative combine to give an effective result. Divine current is positive; body is negative. *Atma* is positive and body is negative.

Body is the temple, and the indweller is God. If the temple is dilapidated, even if God is inside, people may not visit the

temple. If the temple is very well kept and no idol inside, it is of no use. You must know well the relationship between positive and negative.

Peace is within; outside there are only pieces

Santhi (peace) is not in external objects. It is within. No one can give you this on a platter. It cannot be got by the teaching of a preceptor. It has to come from *hridaya*, that is, a compassionate heart. Peace is within; outside there are only pieces. Any amount of searching outside cannot give you peace.

Though Divinity pervades everywhere, only in some places is its effulgence explicit. Electric current flows through the wires. Though it flows through the wires, it is seen only through the bulbs or tubes that give light.

None can deny the existence of Divinity everywhere. For example, you stand in front of Me. My form is reflected in your eyes and your form is reflected in My eyes. If you know the unity of these two, there is no difference.

When you concentrate on Him you get His look in your eyes. If you want God to look at you, you must look at Him. People of Bharat (India) have lot of experiences of this type.

We cannot have a direct perception of the Lord within us; we can only experience it. For this, you have to make efforts with full faith. If you have good thoughts, which are directed toward the Divine, you flourish well. If you entertain wicked thoughts, you become wicked. This is the truth that God teaches man. If you have good feelings within, the reflection will be good outside. You cannot get Peace from the external world. It has to come from within.

When desires become excessive, *Atmic* consciousness cannot be realised. You cultivate desire for tea, coffee, playing cards, visiting clubs, watching television, etc. You have to curb such desires. Try to reduce taking coffee, tea, and other useless

and wasteful pursuits like playing cards, etc. You will find within two days that you have become more intelligent and happy. Because of such unnecessary desires, you become mad and slaves of habits; thereby forgetting your human nature.

The way to God is devotion and detachment

Mathi (good sense), *gathi* (goal), *stithi* (position), and *sam-pathi* (wealth) are the valuable possessions of *maya* (illusory energy), but they are all lost because of excessive desires harboured. The animal quality is predominant, and human values are absent. How can one attain peace with these drawbacks?

When sage Vyasa requested Narada to advise him as to how to get over his restlessness, Narada told him, “You have composed so many epics, but you have not progressed in the path of realisation. Compile *Bhagavatham*, describing the glory of God and the greatness of devotion.”

Bhagavatham (Telugu pronunciation) has five letters: *bha*, *ga*, *va*, *tha*, *mu*. In this five-letter word, *bha* stands for *bhakti* (devotion), *ga* stands for *jnanam* (wisdom), *va* stands for *vairagya* (detachment), *tha* stands for *Thatwam* (sacred principle), and *mu* stands for *mukthi* (liberation).

The primary need for liberation is *bhakti*. It gives *shakti* (power, energy), and *shakti* leads to *rakthi*, which in turn leads to *virakthi*. *Virakthi* is the gateway for *mukthi* (liberation). When you sow the seed of devotion, wisdom develops, which leads us to liberation. *Vairagya* is to shed *raga* (attachment). *Bhagavatham* shows the way to liberation through devotion and detachment.

The story of Prahlada occupies an important place in *Bhagavatham*. His father put him to all types of suffering, like rolling him from a hill, throwing him in the deep ocean, trampling by an elephant, throwing him in a snake pit, and so on. He chanted Hari’s name constantly, and no harm could be

done to him. His father, Hiranyakasipu, hated Hari and was annihilated by Hari.

In the *Ramayana*, Ravana abducted Sita in Rama's absence. He hated Rama. By hating God you cannot achieve anything. By loving God, you can get everything.

Prahlada's heart was filled with Hari's name. When Hiranyakasipu, his father, sent Chanda and Amarka to teach him what is opposed to Divine love, they could not make any impression on the boy, who maintained his chanting of the name of Hari without a break. Since he loved God and was filled with devotion, he had no trace of fear; nor did he shed a tear.

Faith is the basis for curing ailments

If you constantly chant God's name, you will get everything, namely, wealth, wisdom, health, bliss, etc. If you have total faith, God will bless you with everything you need. Ravi said he was given medicine. That was created by Bhagavan.

You may question as why Bhagavan builds hospitals when He can create medicines and cure the patients. It is because of the faith of the people in the treatment. Even if a nurse or doctor gives an injection of distilled water, patients are happy and get cured, because of their faith. So, the Hospital is intended for people who have faith in hospitals. Cure is based mostly on the faith of the patient.

God coming in human form is to facilitate people to have the proximity of the Divine, so that He can transform them and give happiness. Only a human can confer solace to the humans. *Samepyam* (coming closer to God) helps in the final merger with the *Sayujyam* (Divine). Conversation with Bhagavan solves problems. His *darshan* helps in the annihilation of sins – *Papanasanam*.

Love is God; live in love

Man should have the three ideals: *Daiva preethi* (love of God), *papa bheeti* (fear of sin) and *sangha neethi* (morality in society). These ideals will help to uplift the individual, the family and the society. In this sacred land, sacred ideals are followed by several saints and seers. That is why, in spite of several challenges and obstacles, the cultural heritage of Bharat (India) is still maintained. It is mysterious, wonderful and immortal.

We have become slaves to the Western culture and have neglected our own highly-valued culture. The Westerners are now showing respect for our culture and are adopting the culture in large measure. It is their faith in Bharat's culture that has stimulated them to adopt this culture. *Bharathiyas* (Indians) should realise the merits of their own culture and stop neglecting it.

Our culture teaches that there is one religion, the religion of love, and one caste, the caste of humanity. Our culture is based on love, which is latent in everyone, whether theist or atheist or nationalist. There can be no one without love.

We commonly see how the cow licks the new born calf with so much tenderness that the calf gets up only after this maternal touch. It cleans the calf. Cleanliness is Godliness. Purity should be developed, which encourages unity and leads to Divinity. But you have only enmity and community; these are animal and demonic qualities.

Man must try to elevate himself to the Divine state and not descend to the animal and demonic states. "*Sathyam vada; dharmam chara* (Speak the truth; do righteous duty)" is the *Vedic* injunction. It is easy to speak the truth. It is very difficult to tell a lie and sustain it. By speaking the truth, you are laying the foundation for the wall of *dharma*. You can have *swanthi*

(peace) through this. Develop the principle of love. Love is God. Live in Love.

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If you must bring the power from the power-house to your residence to illumine your place, you have to put up poles at regular intervals and connect the house to the power-house with cables. So too, if you must win the Grace of God, do sadhana (spiritual exercises) at regular timings and connect yourself with God by the cable of smarana (remembering the Lord).

– Baba