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Valor and Compassion

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Abstract

Valor and Compassion are both aspects of noble human qualities. When they blend in harmony, they lead to the pursuit of righteous action (Dharma) or divinity in our way of life. In this short essay, we review the symbolism used to represent Valor and Compassion, followed by several practical aspects of the same in our personal life as individuals, members of the family and in working together with each other.

Introduction

Practice of Sanatana Dharma includes religious discourses. They are presentations of episodes from scriptures with symbolism and their practical implications for our daily life. In a video lecture on “Lakshmi Vaibhavam” (Glory of Goddess Lakshmi), Sri. Velukkudi Krishnan Swamy has provided a lucid description of the significance of the worship of Goddess Lakshmi ⁽¹⁾. First, we shall attempt to capture in brief the symbolism as narrated by the learned scholar. Then we will expand on the import of such symbolism in our daily life.

Symbolism for Valor and Compassion

For most readers of vEda vaaNee it is well known that Lord Vishnu is the Supreme God and His wife is Goddess Lakshmi. The incarnations of the Lord in human form on the earth are Rama and Krishna. Goddess Lakshmi

accompanies Him as the Lord’s spouse in each of these incarnations.

Following is a brief summary from the discourse, referenced above:

“Goddess Lakshmi is the first and last resort for compassion to all Her devotees. She is always available to any devotee, who is willing to surrender to Her unconditionally. She accepts both the good and the evil of the devotee. Because of Her compassion, She sorts out the good from the evil. Then, she presents the good for consideration by Lord Vishnu, who as the strict guardian rewards the good deeds. His wrath against evil is harsh. He exercises unrelenting righteous anger against evil to foster good. He exercises this valor to preserve the order and justice in the universe. Hence, pre-screening and proper presentation of the good, thanks to the kindness and compassion of the Goddess serves well for the devotee in the

face of the His valor and righteous and fearsome anger! When the Lord looks favorably at the evidence presented to Him, He grants the gift of Liberation or salvation to the devotee. But, before He grants this reward, the Lord glances at Goddess Lakshmi. Noticing Her approving look, the Lord feels convinced of His action and its appropriateness and grants the blessing to the devotee. Thus, Goddess Lakshmi and the Lord Vishnu together collaborate as the source of compassion and valor for all those who seek their grace and blessing.”

The symbolism of the Lord and His spouse is respected in all aspects of Hindu way of life. The birth of a child is greeted and celebrated as the entering into the household by the God or the Goddess. The child is raised with stories and songs from Ramayana (the journey of Rama) and Krishna Leela (the divine play of Krishna), that are intended to imbibe “Divinity” in the thoughts and habits of the child as it grows into an adult. The marriage ceremony of the bride and groom in the Hindu tradition is also celebrated in a manner that parallel the celebration of divine marriage of Lord Vishnu and Goddess Lakshmi. Hence it may not be farfetched to extend the above theological description of compassion and valor ascribed to the God and Goddess into the many facets of our daily life.

Roles played by family members to preserve valor and compassion

In family life, one among the couple invariably serves as the arbiter of the rules and regulations. Such an order is necessary for any family unit to meet its many obligations while conforming to the many competing needs, and yet progress forward. Frequently this role falls on the father. There is also a need for someone else to serve as a compassionate facilitator to steer through the rough tides of time. The tough dad and the kind mother as role models for their children are familiar to most of us. The ideal way of leading a family life is one where the family lives with a valor governed by a moral compass and steadfastness around it. Yet, such adherence to values and righteousness must be practiced with compassion and kindness that tolerate failures and failings. This appropriate balance between the husband and wife provides the proper nurturing climate for their children to challenge themselves to greater heights, while also having the space for solace and comfort that their failures do not become an irreversible path for further failure and self-destruction. Such balanced approach brings tranquility and a divine quality to family life. Its impact is also passed down through the generations for eternity. This enduring legacy may be seen as the liberation and away from the

tumult of daily rigors and the turbulent upheavals of family life.

Reflecting on Valor and Compassion within each of us

The divine qualities of compassion and valor and their intimacy can also be extended within each of us as individuals. We need our rules and regulations for strict adherence to the many valuable aspects of life such as truth, nonviolence, honesty, moral conviction, perseverance for the larger common good, etc. The more we recognize, pursue and adhere to these greater aspects of human qualities, the better we become as individuals, citizens and members of the community. But pursuits of these values are fraught with challenges.

Consider for example: “What is truth and are there limits to it?”

Truth is what we believe it is, at a given time and to the best of our knowledge. It is based on what we know, observe, understand and internalize. It includes all the relevant information pertinent to the subject viewed in an objective manner. Truth is always based on our belief in what we know. “This is what I know to the best of my knowledge” is more precise than to say, “this is the truth”. It may be even more truthful, if we are explicit and up front about the limits of our knowledge.

Truth is also based on the established standards and our close adherence to such standards.

Hence TRUTH is a matter of KNOWLEDGE, our STANDARDS and the system of BELIEF with respect to both.

Above leaves us with an unpleasant truth! (i.e.): “Truth as we know it” is not something unchanging. It is the result of our knowledge and how we display that knowledge against a standard we have agreed to live by (our belief system). Hence, we are left to interpret the original – the truth – considering our current knowledge and understanding of the standards.

With respect to our knowledge, there is a need to be constantly vigilant to assess what we already know. We should also be willing to change our knowledge based on new facts, observation and understanding. But the everlasting OBJECTIVITY in our observations and the willingness to accept change, even if it is unpleasant and counter to our earlier knowledge, must be the only matter of permanence. Anyone who practices such objectivity is the true practitioner of truth. He/she evolves as the enduring leader among us. This is the progression from Individual to Athma (representing any person) to Mahathma (Superior among all persons).

At the same time, we also need to be vigilant about the standards and make every effort to maintain that standard. It is the temptation to shift our standards that leads to shades of lie or cheating and ultimately down the slippery slope. The time and circumstances (such as the economic enticements), affect our judgment and hence our faithfulness to the standards.

Pursuing the path of constant vigilance to review our knowledge objectively and rigorous adherence to standards, would appear to be an aspect of “Spirituality in Practice”.

We face similar challenges of right and wrong in many other aspects of human behavior: nonviolence, honesty, morality, ... In all these qualities, we succeed and fail. Our failures and failings can always serve as a source of learning only when we are compassionate to the self and accept our failures. One can truly forgive the failings of others only when one can genuinely forgive the self. The compassion to be kind and considerate of our failures is intimately connected with the bravery necessary for perseverance to do well in all our higher goals. Hence the symbolism ascribed to the God and Goddess – the valor and compassion – and their interconnectedness should be experienced inside each one of us. If our mind (and its relentless reasoning between right and wrong) is the seat of our valor, then

the heart (and its relentless compassion to be kind and considerate) is the seat of compassion. Perhaps this is implied symbolically when we worship Lord Vishnu (as the seat of valor) with Goddess Lakshmi (the source of compassion) seated in His heart!

Aspects of valor and compassion while working together with others

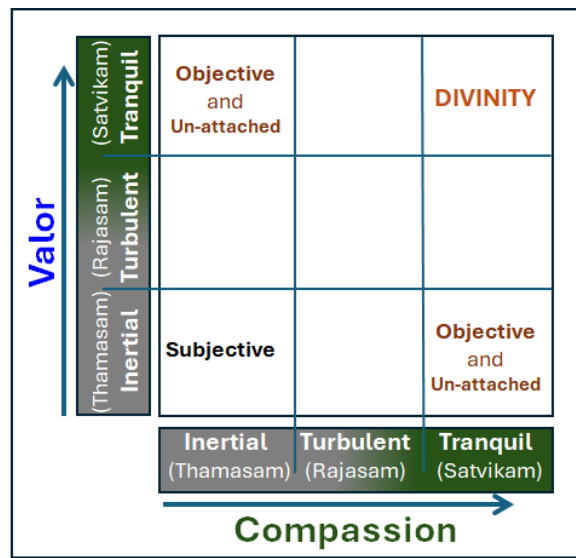
It is generally mentioned that the mind is the seat of reasoning, and heart is the store house for our emotions. When reasoning works on emotion, it transforms into compassion. For such an outcome the most important requirement is the value system. Unfortunately, the development of strong values gets sacrificed under the pressures of daily life. We find people directionless when confronted with the decision-making process in life. They normally lean towards convenience and turn a blind eye to conviction. Reasoning and reflection required for it and emotions, and their impulses always work in opposite directions. That is the in-built balance in any human being. The mind must decide whether one decides based on reasons or emotions in every situation. These situations are plenty in everyday life. Because of our compassion, often we decide based on emotions, relying on factors which are really alien to the issue and go about justifying the decisions later! Instead, it could be preceded by

a moment of reflection and reasoning. Enforcement of this discipline required for reflection/reasoning may be thought of as valor?

Seeking Divinity through Valor and Compassion

Every aspect of human activity is composed of three traits, characteristics or connectors (Guna). These are Tranquility (*Satvikam*), Turbulence (*Rajasam*) and Inertia (*Thamasam*). Indeed, all these three traits co-exist in all our activities. Yet, the predominance of one over the other two reflects our behavior or experience. It is through moving away from Subjectivity (self-driven and impulsive behavior and action) and towards Objective engagement (reflective and considerate of all aspects and inputs) and with non-attachment (without relentless emphasis or desire towards the outcome – *Karma Phala Thyagam*) that we tend towards Tranquility in our actions and choices. (Reference: Chapter 14. B.G.). These principles apply to valor and compassion as well. It is such progression towards valor and

compassion simultaneously – rigorous enforcement of reasoning and logic together with kindness and consideration based on the situation and circumstances – that is described as the way forward to everyone in our daily life? Is that the “Divinity” that we seek as the blessings from the Lord through our prayer and worship services? This simultaneous enhancement in our behavior through valor and compassion, leading towards “divinity” in our way of life is illustrated in the schematic as noted below:



Seeking Divinity through Valor and Compassion

Hari Om

Reference

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vy8cS2gZquI> (Accessed on Nov. 2, 2024)

About the Author



Dr. Krishnamoorthy (Subbu) Subramanian is an Engineering / Management professional with over forty years of global experience in industry, innovation and mentoring. He is the author of three books, His studies and writing on Vedic Philosophy can be seen at www.Sipractice.com His recent webinar for the Veda Samskriti Samii (VSS) can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8d6pi471sf0> Dr. Subramanian is presently serving as an Honorary Editor of VEda vaaNee e-Journal.

Mantra Pushpam

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Abstract

In this brief essay, the author explores the meaning and significance of this frequently used prayer song at the conclusion of every Sanatana Dharma prayer service or Puja. Mantra stands for “that which is reflected upon through our mind”. This prayer song offered to the Lord, together with flowers—Mantra Pushpam—when reflected upon, conveys deep and profound philosophic meaning in a universal or cosmic context as outlined in this short essay.

Introduction

Attainment of moksha, freedom from the cycle of birth and death, freedom from the bondages of life, Identification of and union with the almighty resident within our body and there by enjoy the blissful existence near our god in vaikuntam are said to be essential objectives of life. Scriptures say that one of the easiest ways to reach God and attain these objectives is Bhakti Margam. Krishna in Bhagawath Gita, Prahlada and Naradha have presented to us different ways of cultivating this bhakti. Out of several ways suggested, performance of Daily Pooja to an Ishta devata, is the one, believers in sanatana dharma have embraced over the ages. Scriptures under Agama sastras have recommended different ways of performing puja, out of which Shodasa Upachara is highly sophisticated. These upacharas (worship services containing sixteen

parts) include offering of scent (gandham) in the form of sandal paste, sambhrani smoke etc. giving water with thulasi leaves in it, perform archana with flowers, decoration of the idol with flowers, showing aarati of lamp and its flame, offering food items like Pongal, fruits, sweets etc. Lord Vishnu is said to be Stotra Priya and Siva is said to be abhisheka Priya. such pooja s are said to make our god happy and He is all set to bless us. Different slokas have been composed in praise of different gods and they are recited loudly in chorus. Slokas are said to be stutis. Pujas generally conclude with recitation of mantra pushpam slokams. in the following article we will study one particular mantra pushpam slokas extracted from Yajurveda. Such slokas are said to bring harmony in our life along with good health and all-round prosperity.

Generally, flowers are offered in the form of garlands for decoration of the lord and for archana to God. GODADEVI, more popularly known as ANDAAL is said to have attained union with the lord by offering garlands. Arjuna is said to have pleased Lord Siva doing archana with jasmine flowers

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The *Mantra Puspam* mantras (Prayer song) is revealed in the 1st Chapter, *Aruṇa Praśna* [1-22 (78-84)] of the *Yajurveda Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*. *Aruṇa Praśna* is devoted to Lord Suryanarayana. It contains 33 Anuvakas and more than 29 Rishis are involved in this including Kasyapa Maharshi, father of Pratyasha Narayana, Sri Surya Bhagavan. We will now look at the meaning or messages behind the mantra pushpam slokas. Different scholars have given different explanation to this set of slokas Following is a summary by the author of his own impressions on the significance of these slokas.

Yopaam pushpam veda, pushpavaan, prajavan pasumaan bhavati

This is the first line of a set of slokas generally called Mantra pushpam, that we chant as part of our day-to-day puja at our houses and temples. Chanting of these slokas will help us achieve all round prosperity, is the longstanding belief. These slokas are derived from Yajurveda.

In the evolution of life form from genesis to its culmination, pushpam is a very important stage. If this stage is not reached, we cannot derive the phalam which is the next stage. The phalam gives you the seed required for the creation of next generation. The word pushpavati associated with ladies and pushpavaan with men indicates their state of maturity. Thus, you get to know the value of word and entity **pushpam**.

The word pushpam is derived from the root push to nourish. From this you get the word Pushti, a good state of nourishment and good health. From pushpam we get sentences like *pushpaani vikasanti, spuranti cha*. Pushpams bloom, spread sweet aroma and decorate a place. Pushpam is never used in singular; they are always in quantity and quality. Quality is an important VIRTUE leading to next stage of *phalitam and praja srusti*. Praja refers to the next generation. So, quality of pushpam will decide the quality of generations that follow. Pushpam and its vasana are equivalent of knowledge.

If you observe this set of slokas, you will see three words that keep repeating. They are *apaam, aayatanam and veda*. It is interesting to know about these three words. Apaam means water. This water is related to pushpam. You know the importance of water to life. It sustains life. Without water life cannot exist. More than 75% of earth is covered by water. Even in our body, water forms a substantial part. So, in this mantra pushpam, sloka, pushpam is related to water first. If pushpam is indicative of creation as mentioned above, know that water is its base or support. Without water, pushpam cannot emerge. This knowledge is important. So, you get to know the need for keeping water clean. Clean water yields good creation.

The word *aayatanam* has many meanings like place, abode, house, resting place, support, belonging, aadhaar etc. In this context *aayatanam* stands for adhaar, support. Pushpam has water as its support or base. Every created thing needs support. Nothing is totally independent. Interdependence is the determinant of sustenance. It is important for all to understand significance of this aayatanam.

The word *veda*, in this context means to know. It is derived from the root vidh to know. The collection of all knowledge that we call vedas keeps telling us to get to know, be knowledgeable about what supports what. Without being aware of this, life is a waste.

In this sloka of Mantra pushpam, this *pushpam* and water get related sequentially to *vaayu* (air), *agni* (Fire), sky, sun, moon, stars, cloud, rain and time. These ten entities (including Pushpam) together contribute to creation. If you miss any one of these, one cannot exist. We mentioned quality above. Even though there are so many planets in the universe, not all of them are capable of supporting life. Earth is unique because it is aayatanam for life in its different forms. The ten entities referred above also illustrate interdependence and one who knows interdependence of different elements of creation qualifies for greatness.

It is difficult to integrate elements like water, fire, air, etc. in a simple aggregation or combination as they are of bilaterally conflicting nature. (e.g.): Fire can evaporate water and water can put out fire. Air can stoke a small fire into a great inferno and at the same time it can put out a fire under controlled use. To make such conflicting agencies to work together in the creation process requires tremendous power. This is the power seen in the creator for whom pooja or prayer is offered through chanting of mantra pushpam.

Let us now look at reference to moon, sun, the stars, clouds and rain in the slokas. These are important for sustenance of created life.

Moon is stated prior to the sun. The component of mind in the life forms comes

from moon. Moon inspires different sentiments. The moon is said to have emerged from depth of ocean. Its rays are called Sudha on account of rejuvenating qualities to manage the heat of sun during daytime. Moon is said to be karaka (agent that supports) for crops of grains that nourish life forms.

Role of sun in sustaining life has been well established. Sun causes clouds and rains. Rainwater is essential for irrigation of fields, for the growth of life sustaining crops. After sun, stars are mentioned. What roles do stars play in sustaining life on earth? Rain happens only when sun transits through certain stars while passing through different zodiac signs. Even though sun is present every day, it does not rain every day. Cloud formation, its condensation are time specific as per stars sequence and regions. Creation of life forms without stars is not conceivable.

After nakshatra (stars) samvatsaram is mentioned. Samvatsaram (year), is a measure of time elapsed over 12 months. Different seasons are events of each year.

The entire essence and purpose of life is creation. Continuous creation leads to

perpetuity, sense of permanence. The process is also time-bound. The act of creation and extent of created life are all at particular time and within the boundaries specified by time. Time distinguishes yesterday from today and tomorrow. The past, present and future are all time based. The creator and time have one thing in common. Both have no beginning nor end.

Pushpam can be considered same as our creator or Parabrahmam. Chanting of this mantram of pushpam is doing pooja to the creator, praising his immense power integrating everything into creation.

If you become aware of such associations, you get to understand the powerful creator. You transform into a boat to help you through the journey called life. Through such prayers we seek the blessings of the Lord to be prosperous, famous and respected (pushpavaan, pasuman, prajavan bhavati.) So, with such understanding of the meaning behind these prayer songs, please chant mantra pushpam slokas every day and derive all the benefit.

MANTRA PUSHPAM Text

*Om yopam pushpam veda, pushpavan prajavan pashuman bhavati
chandrama-va-apam pushpam,
pushpavan prajavan pashuman bhavati
ya evam veda, yopamayatanam veda, ayatanavan bhavati*

*agnirva apamayatanam, ayatanavan bhavati
yo-agnerayatanam veda, ayatanavan bhavati
apo va angerayatanam, ayatanavan bhavati
ya evam veda, yopamayatanam veda, ayatanavan bhavati*

*vayurva apamayatanam, ayatanavan bhavati
yo vayorayatanam veda, ayatanavan bhavati
apo vai vayorayatanam, ayatanavan bhavati
ya evam veda, yopamayatanam veda, ayatanavan bhavati*

*asow vai tapannapamayatanam, ayatanavan bhavati
yo-amushya tapata ayatanam veda, ayatanavan bhavati
apo va amushya tapata ayatanam, ayatanavan bhavati
ya evam veda, yopamayatanam veda, ayatanavan bhavati*

*chandrama va apamayatanam, ayatanavan bhavati
yas-chandramasa ayatanam veda, ayatanavan bhavati
apo vai chandramasa ayatanam, ayatanavan bhavati
ya evam veda, yopamayatanam veda, ayatanavan bhavati*

*nakshatrani va apamayatanam, ayatanavan bhavati
yo nakshtranam-ayatanam veda, ayatanavan bhavati
apo vai nakshtranam-ayatanam, ayatanavan bhavati
ya evam veda, yopamayatanam veda, ayatanavan bhavati*

*parjanya va apamayatanam ayatanavan bhavati
yah parjanya-sya-ayatanam veda ayatanavan bhavati
apo vai parjanya-sya-ayatanam ayatanavan bhavati
ya evam veda yopamayatanam veda ayatanavan bhavati*

*samvastaro va apamayatanam, ayatanavan bhavati
yas-savatsarasya-ayatanam veda, ayatanavan bhavati
apo vai samvatsarasya-ayatanam, ayatanavan bhavati
ya evam veda, yoapsu navam pratishthitam veda, pratyeva tishtati*

*Om rajadhirajaya prasahyasahine, namo vayam vaI-shravanaya
kurmahe, sa me kaman-kama-kamaya mahyam, kameshvaro vaI
shravano dadatu, kuberaya vaishravanaya, maharajaya namah*

About Author

Sri T.K. Ragunathan – A retired Marketing executive took interest in spiritual studies, Sanskrit language, and astrology, after retirement. He has written four books that were published from Hyderabad. He is presently working as Principal of JKR Astro Research Foundation, Hyderabad, teaching advanced prediction techniques based on Naadi principles.



Veda Samskruti Samiti

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Veda Samskruti is an inherent intellectual property of Bhaarata dEsham. It is the basic duty and right of every citizen in Bhaarata dEsham to protect this Intellectual property. Indian Constitution and Law provides provision for protection and preservation of its culture, its monuments, architecture etc.

The Chaturvedas said to have 1131 shaakhaas right up to the time of Aadi Shankaraachaarya and thereafter during last more than ten centuries, many shaakhaas are out of practice due to various reasons and presently only seven shaakaas are in the practice of Guru shiShya parampara.

There is a need to continuously preserve these available shaakhaas which may likely to disappear in future due to various external forces acting in the country vigorously with the power of money and global politics. It is time for the intellectuals of Bharata dEsham to wake-up and work collectively to protect and preserve Veda Samskruti of Bharata dEsham, by empowering the Youth of Bharat dEsham, the future care takers of this great Indian Heritage , with suitable education of our correct history and culture.

The above background led to formation of this Veda Samskruti Samiti which is registered under Societies acts of Government of Telangana, with Regd. No. 961/2016 by Sri A.H. Prabhakara Rao, who is the Founder and President of the Samiti.

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