

VALUE EDUCATION THE THRUST OF PRAHLADA CARITHAM

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Vedic scriptures are the spiritual literature of ancient Indian culture. Culture means the exposure of nations' soul. The word 'Veda' is a Sanskrit word which is derived from the root 'Vid' which means 'to know'. These Vedas deal with material and spiritual knowledge of high order. Vedic truths are absolute. Spirituality is the hallmark of Indian culture. In India there inhabited a race of highly spiritual people, during the period of Satyayuga. They believed that the manifestation of divine beings was for helping humanity at crucial periods.

Common man could not apprehend Vedas. A great deal of time and tasks were essential for mastering it. Vedavyasa maharishi revived the Veda by editing it in to four books. After compilation of the Vedic literature, purāṇas etc., still experiencing great dissatisfaction and unrest was relieved of his frustration by the advice of Naradamuni who instructed him the cathursloki bhāgavatam, the quintessence of Vedas. Vyasadeva expatiated four verses to compose the Srimadbhāgavatham. It is described as:

“Nigama kalpataroḥ galitam phalam
Śuka mukhādāmṛitadravasamyutam
Pibata bhāgavatam rasamālayam
Muhuraho rasikā bhūvi bhāvukā.”

It is the nectar of the fruit of the Tree of Vedas, flowing from the

mouth of the great parrot, Sri Śuka, perched on the tree of wisdom and pecking at its fruits. The story of Srimad Bhāgavatam has emanated from the essence of the Vedas and Upaniṣads. The first verse itself of the Bhāgavatam.....

“Janmādyasya yatonwayātitarata-
 Śchwārthaswabhiḥjña: swarāt
 Tene brahma hṛudāya ādi kavaye
 Muhyanthi yat sūraya:
 Tejovārimṛtām yatha vinimayo
 Yatra trisargo mriṣā
 Dhāmnā swena sada nirasta kuhakam
 Satyam param dhīmahi”

Especially the last line contains the elixir of Indian culture. Srimadbhāgavatam focuses on devotion to Lord Krishna. Srimadbhāgavatam is as bright as the sun. When a person loses his vision on account of the darkness of ignorance, he can embrace this fifth vedam which can throw light on him. In the seventh skanda the life of Prahlada testifies a few guiding principles which help us to mould our world, outlook, attitude and conduct. Prahlada was an exemplary in conduct. He was recognized as a glorious example of Indian culture. Actually he is depicted as the embodiment of ancient Indian culture. Vyasadeva portrays the vivid presentation of Indian culture through the character and doings of Prahlada. Srimadbhāgavatam is an exquisite poetry and teachings on devotion.

Vyasadeva portrays the character of Prahlada in the seventh skanda of the fourth chapter of Srimadbhāgavatam. He was a man of great virtues, likes to embrace truth, conquered his senses and showed devotion like the attitude of a steward to the holy and the learned man. He considered his teachers equivalent to God and was congenial, compassionate and kind hearted to the poor and the afflicted

even though possessing wealth, noble birth, acute intelligence and knowledge. But his mind was not replenished with pride. He knew the fact that all the gaieties in this mundane world are transient and hollow. Prahlada has been depicted as an exemplification of purity and holiness. Here Vyasadeva sets forth a few guiding principles to be followed in our life to attain the state of bliss. Prahlada exhorted us to seek shelter in Sri Hari in order to annihilate sorrow and suffering.

“Na kevalam me bhavataśca rājan
Savai balam balinam cāpareṣām
Parevareṁī sthirajangamā ye
Brahmādayo yena vaśam pranītā:”

These lines from VII.8.8 deals with the advice of Prahlada to Hiraṇyakaśipu that the Supreme Being is the source of strength for him and for all considered strong.

We should flourish in our mind these kinds of positive attitudes of devotion to God. In Indian culture learned Rshis lived in the hermitages. They devoted their life to the practice of Virtues thereby enhance thoughts of god and to cultivate knowledge. We should try to practice these virtues from the family ambience itself and to assimilate this from the very early childhood. In this kaliyugam, deprived of all human values, it is essential to cultivate an atmosphere of positive thoughts. If a persons' attitude is negative, it is very difficult to take the gauge of its repercussions. Hiraṇyakaśipu's fate in Srimadbhāgavatam exemplifies this.

The Indian culture focuses on intense devotion to God. The seventh skanda of the sixth chapter of Srimadbhāgavatam depicts Prahlada's sermon. Here Vyasadeva makes mankind enlightened from the condition of people steeped in worldly pleasures. It was very pitiable. He portrayed the vanity of worldly life. Life expectancy in

this World is momentary hence the noblest thing we can do in this short span of life is to surrender ourselves at the feet of Lord Krishna. Vyasadeva evokes Prahlada's exhortation to renounce. If a man is indulged in worldly objects, he cannot practice renunciation. People who are entangled in the possessions of this world and experience the enjoyment of the senses are like a blind man being led by other blind men. In this Kaliyugam man aims at procuring wealth and power. Actually he forgets the truth that all these are just like bubbles in water and he cannot live a joyous life if not endowed with the blessings of God. He is attached to his family enslaved by the affection. Man cannot forego his desire for wealth; he forgets his ultimate aim of his life i.e., attaining the state of Bliss, attaining the condition of ātman. To fulfill his aim he has to practice renunciation from early life. Then only he can seek shelter in the lord.

To please Lord Krishna is not at all a Herculean task. God, the supreme spirit is present in all living and non living creatures around us. Man should be kind to all creatures and to be friendly to them abandoning the Asura nature to please the Omnipresent. Humble devotion is the only way to please the almighty with out any expec

“Jahyāsuram bhāvamimām tvamātmanah:
 Samam manodhatsva na santi vidviṣa:
 Ṛte, jītātmana utpathasthitāt
 Taddhi hyanantasya mahat samarhaṇam.”

This slokam from VII. 8.10 corroborates Prahlada's appeal to Hiraṇyakaṣipu to abandon his monstrous character. There is no enemy beyond ones own mind, if it is uncontrolled and caught in the path of vice. The supreme worship of the lord consists in keeping the mind unperturbed, seeing no difference between friend and foe. Further, the Seventh skanda of Chapter nine portrays the hymn of Prahlada. We should try to extol the majesty of the lord. Worship is the only

way for the purification of oneself caught in the “Māyā” created by the lord. Prahlada made an effort to inculcate us with the nine salient methods of worshipping Nārāyaṇa. They are Śravaṇam, keertanam, smaraṇam, pādasevanam, archanam, vandanam, dāsyam, sāmkyam and ātmanivedanam. The pervasive lord can be approached by any of these nine methods. To cultivate exclusive devotion to god and recognize His presence in all nook and corner are the ultimate aim of our life.

If we do not take the dust of the feet of persons who looked on everything with detachment, our mind will never be embedded in the feet of the lord who is the only truth. We can set our mind on the Lord even as we tear ourselves away from this world. The desire for the lord should come on its own accord. A guru or a company of good people cannot play a pivotal role to instill the attitude of devotion in us. We are all bestowed with these splendid bodies and wonderful minds. If we squander them, it will be a great misdemeanor. They are conferred to us to bring the utmost purpose of our life to fruition. The mind should be set on the lord. The body should be used only for the worship of the lord. The rishi Nārada, an ardent devotee of Nārāyaṇa, has given these lessons. Devas squabbled with Asuras and surrendered them even as the Devas got that Hiraṇyakaṣipu has gone away for penance. Indra ushered the pregnant Kayadhu, the wife of Hiraṇyakaṣipu, to devalokam. Knowing this to be wrong, sage Nārada took her to his hermitage and imparted spiritual knowledge to her considering the baby in her womb. The baby became devoted to the Supreme Being. The teachings of Nārada were firmly etched in his mind.

In this corporeal world people are confronted with each other in the name of wealth and power. If Prahladacaritham in Srimadbhāgavatam can be brought in to the minds of these modern people, they will be convinced of the fact that only the devotion to

god can satisfy their mind and not the wealth and power. It instructs us that the person who has intense devotion to god can only develop harmony and unity in the society. The constant practice of devotion to god helps a man to annihilate his attachment to worldly objects. He can fight powerfully against the forces of social degradation. Man's sincere dedication to god obliterates all kind of evils, worries and sufferings and induces divine bliss. Freedom and perfect joy can be enjoyed, when we capitulate ourselves at the feet of god. We can fabricate prosperity and progress if adhere to the sermons of Prahlada to love, respect and help others. Life of Prahlada as well as, his sincere devotion is a thrust and message for the people who live mechanical life like robot. Prahlada caritam exposes a terrible incarnation of Lord Mahaviṣṇu, Narasimhāvataṛam, to obliterate callous Hiraṇyakaṣipu. It makes us aware of the hardships faced by those who become arrogant and forget the Supreme Lord and reveals that even a small boy with true devotion can reach out to the Lord and get His blessings.

In our Indian culture we can see that the affluence and ecstasy of human race depend upon living a devout life in harmony with nature. If man's task should not gratify god, it will result in great disaster. The 10th skanda of chapter 24 of Srimad bhāgavatam lays bare Indian culture that food grains, the greatest paramount commodity of life, will be abundant only if society is religious. Grains are dependant on sufficient rain fall which depends on following the laws of god as prescribed in the scripture. Srimad bhāgavatam manifests the way to purify our heart of sins. Purity of consciousness is essential in order to secure Mokṣa. Virtuous and clean environment contribute this purity. Srimad bhāgavatam depicts the way, Lord Krishna gives assistance to live in a pure and clean atmosphere. Lord Krishna purified the Yamuna River, which was contaminated by the serpent kāliya, by driving away kāliya to Remanakam Island. Similarly, in Srimad

bhāgavatam Krishna declares that among trees “am aswattham”. Aswattham acts as ozone layer preventing radiation from sun and this is also used for making life saving medicine.

The Indian culture emphasizes the nature to be God’s cosmic body. We can express sincere dedication to god by keeping the earth and sustaining its natural resources. Modern generation is not aware of this truth. They try their best to subjugate and destroy earth. The lives of Lord Krishna and Prahlada motivate us to procure mokṣa which is the ultimate goal of our life. It put forth the message that man will be perfectly human only when he lives up to Values and carries out the good life. It lays stress on the principles of equality.

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