

Teachings of Sreemad Bhagavatham on Environment

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Today, the entire mankind is facing a crisis, perhaps the greatest crisis in human history. There is unrest all over the world. Chaos is spreading and the world is threatened with a moral collapse. There is no respect for mankind. People do not realize the mankind. People do not realize the importance of human values. Man's life is cheaper than anything else in the world today. People have forgotten the sanctity of man. The result has been conflicts, chaos, and confusion, oppression, exploitation and subordination all over the world. The bigger nations are trying to swallow-up smaller nations. In order to achieve this end, they sometimes indulge in wars in which there is a massacre of human lives. The solution to these problems lies in spiritual evolution. This is the only way to save mankind from the present catastrophe. Man should have the sense of spirituality which is the only solution of the present day problems.

Sreemad Bhagavatham can instill spiritual knowledge in to the minds of the people. It can rescue the world from this desperate crisis. The only solution for the present day problem is to make the people aware of Vedams and religious scriptures. Our ancestors had indepth belief in God. On the contrary modern man is like the king Venan who is arrogant and not pious. He has done everything without pleasing God. His attitude and behaviour are the root causes for all his problems. Man should develop a religious attitude towards the environment and save our planet and humanity.

Sreemad Bhagavatham brings out the concept that a man cannot survive alone and he cannot separate himself from his environment and nature where each and everything is related and interdependent.

The word religion is derived from its Latin terms 'Re', back and 'ligare', to bind. Religion is a way of life that is based on science and philosophy. That which binds the soul back to God is religion. Religion is the technique of uniting man to his original God head . Every step that is taken in life towards this union is positive religion. It is the principal note in Indian life style. Religion is a prescription to mental and intellectual diseases which is resulted by the spiritual ignorance .

Religious belief permeates the very fabric of our existence. It influences our views on our role to protect the environment. Many environmental problems have stemmed from human activity. Religion might hold some solutions to mitigate destructive patterns. Paying no heed to religious traditions people made crucial decision for scientific development which causes technological superiority over nature. Man's greed and lack of religious knowledge make him a presiding deity of modern civilization.

He gives undue stress on rights not on obligations especially with regard to environment which paves the way for environmental deterioration. Religion centered education will be helpful for bringing about environmental behavioral change. [Religion;-Hinduism]

Religious beliefs of nature can be regarded as a tool for environmental Preservation. Religious belief is the only way to direct people to wards nature Conservation. If development can sustain good environment, it will be appreciable. Prudent planning is requisite for keeping balance between development and environmental preservation. Religion considers nature and environment to be the gift of God to mankind in order to use and replenish properly.

The environmental crisis now encompasses the entire earth. The role of religion in the solution of the existing crisis between man and nature is therefore crucial. There is a central belief that nature was created by God and should be protected.

Environment means that which envelops us on all sides, the nature all around us, surroundings. Everything is included in it. Man's progress is possible only by his smooth and organic adjustment with nature. Nature makes human life rich and joyful by contributing a myriads of gifts. At the root of this benevolence, there has been man's love, good will and reverence for nature. Indian culture gave special sanctity to environment conservation. Human life has always existed in harmony with nature. The Indian Rishis had in-depth knowledge of mutually interdependent relationship between man and nature.

Nature is the art of God. We can not command nature except by obeying her . Since times immemorial Indian *shatras* have been imparting the message of environmental governance . Indian great writers being influenced by the message of this ancient wisdom, acquired a new ‘environmental consciousness ‘and included it in their writings . Kalidasa’s *Abhijnanashakuntalam* can be brought here as an illustration. In this play Shakuntala is like a daughter of nature. She treats nature as its mother and so she has affection for every tree , for every creeper and for every sprout. She does not drink water without herself watering the trees (Purohit , 4-6).

All the religions have shown some ethical concern for the environment and its creatures . They have given moral significance to other creatures . [Douglas,Keith] From the perspectives of many world religions it is clear that the abuse and exploitation of nature for immediate gain is unjust, immoral and unethical . Religion can evoke a kind of awareness in persons . It helps make human beings aware that there are limits to their control over the animate and inanimate world and that their arrogance and manipulative power over nature can backfire .

The perspective of Hindu religion is that humans ,Gods,and nature are integral part of one Organic Whole . Hindu scriptures put forward that *vayu* , *bhoomi*, *jala*, and *agni* are prominent factors in regulating the lives of humans, animals and plants .

Hindu religion believed that everything around us , rivers , mountains, lakes , animals , flora , the mineral world, the stars and planets is pervaded by a subtle Divine presence. The Divine reality is present as *prana* or *shakti* . Hindus greet each other saying “ *Namaste* “ means I recognize and salute the Divine within you , so do they recognize the same Divine essence in all around them.The perspectives of muslim religion is that human beings are created by Allah to be guardians of his creation .They give emphasis on maintaining the unity of humans and nature.

Human life became topsy turvy on account of disparity of environment which because of mans un satiating avarice . This covetous attitude of man made air , water and soil defiled . Imbalance can be seen in natural ratio between human beings , birds , animals and plants . Our sages exhort us not to destroy any living things .Brotherly attitude should be developed towards everything . The far sighted sages highlighted the fact that it is essential to look after our natural resources and to keep

balance of environment . They pointed out human progress is possible only through the balance of environment.

The earth – Devi is a goddess and our mother and deserves our devotion and protection . Many Hindu rituals recognize that human beings benefit from the earth and offer gratitude and protection in response . Many Hindus touch the floor before getting out of bed every morning and ask Devi to forgive them for trampling on her body . Millions of Hindu's create 'Kolams' daily . these 'Kolams' express Hindu's desire to offer sustenance to the earth just as the earth sustains them. The Chipkomovement represents a similar devotion.

The root cause of environmental and social crisis is the eviction of nature from the mind of human being . Destroy our ego - self and try to regain eco -self. The upanishadic view Thatwam Asi is the foundation of environmental enlightenment.

The main purpose and functions of making man truly civilized, cultured and refined are possible only by indusing religious belief in man . It can tame subdue the forces of violence in each individual . Religion brings to man eternal life .

The life of Lord Sree Krishna in Sreemad Bhagavatham teaches to practice a sacred ecology attributing merit to forestry and irrigation. Sreemad Bhagavatham envisages the ways to live in harmony with nature to keep ecological balance.

Hinduism which has an environmentally sensitive philosophy ascribes much prominence on environmental principles . All the ancient scriptures highlighted messages for the preservation of ecological balance . Nature is not a hostile element to be conquered or dominated . Human being has not been given any right to exploit nature . The ancient seers have shown great respect for nature . It is necessary to make man aware of living in harmony with nature . He should be learnt to identify the divinity prevails in all creations of nature.

Sreemad Bhagavatham teaches detachment from the things of this world which enable us to contribute to the establishment of a perfect environment . This offer helps to build a sound foundation for social and economic development . Ancient scriptures taught us that it is the duty of

each and every individual to respect and nourish nature which reflects the attributes of God. All things in this world are interconnected and flourished according to the law of reciprocity.

Sreemad Bhagavatham lay bare the structure of the world is nature oriented. Life of Lord Krishna reflect that human beings has to live in harmony with nature. The existence and welfare of the human society depend up on maintaining a balance with nature. The life of Lord Krishna in Sreemad Bhagavatham teaches to practice a sacred ecology ascribing merit to forestry, irrigation and horticulture. The Sreemad Bhagavatham envisages the ways to live in harmony with nature to keep ecological balance. Sreemad Bhagavatham manifests the way to purify man's heart of sins. Virtuous and clean environment contribute this purity. Bhagavatham depicts the way how Lord Krishna gives assistance to live in a pure and clean atmosphere.

In this modern world, age of Kali, man is unrighteous in his out look. Men take great delight in committing sin. Here Krishna taught us through Udhava that man should resign himself to God and recognize His presence in everything. Actually this world is insubstantial and transitory. Man should try to avoid getting entangled in the web of 'Maya'. Try to control one's senses and mind. To withdraw the mind from the objects of the senses is not easy.

Avadhuta has wandered in search of peace and truth. Finally he has got several Gurus whom he has mentally accepted as such. He has learned many lessons from them and has become free from desires and bondages. Avadhuta has twenty four Gurus. From their ways and characteristics one can learn the lessons one need. They taught us how to live without being affected by the desires. These twenty four are : the earth, air, sky, water, fire, sun, moon, kapota(dove), python, ocean, river, moth, honey-bee, elephant, honey-gatherer, deer, fish, pingala the courtesan, kurara(osprey), maiden, arrow-smith, snake, spider and wasp.

Chapters 7,8 and 9 of eleventh Scandham delineate Avadhuta's gurus who taught us a great deal of lessons which help us to discriminate knowledge to maintain ecological balance on the earth. There are twenty four Gurus whose ways and characteristic taught us lessons of living ecologically. They are the earth, air, sky, water, fire, sun, moon, kapota (dove), Pytheon, ocean, river, moth, honey-bee, elephant, honey-gatherer, deer, fish, pingala the courtesan, kurara (osprey), maiden, arrow smith, snake, spider and wasp.

The earth taught us that a man of self-control should not move away from his chosen path even when attacked by beings under the sway of their primordial tendencies, knowing it to be due to their own destiny. Mountains and trees strive unselfishly for the good of others. Becoming disciple of trees, mountain and earth man should live for others unselfishly.

Air, Sky, water and fire

Man should be satisfied with as much of food as is required to maintain his 'Prana'. He should not crave for tasty food. Man should remain like the air untouched by the good and bad effects. Even if man performs the various functions appropriate to his material body, he should not be affected by the sense object as air is not affected by the smell it carries. Clouds are wafted by the wind. But it does not affect the sky: Though the sky seems to be completely covered by the clouds, actually there is no contact between them and the sky. The Atman is encased in the body. But in reality, the Atman is not involved with the body which is holding to.

The waters of a river are ever pure full of love for other sweet in nature and apt to purify those who come to it. Just like waters man should try to be pure to cleanse all who are his companion by his word, touch and sight.

Fire is full of its own light and heat. It consumes everything. But it is not contaminated by what it eats. On the other hand it purifies what it eats. Man should glow like fire and should be untainted even if he enjoys the things which the world offers.

The phenomenon of waxing and waning of the moon reveals the stages called birth, growth and decay of the body. It does not affect Atman. Man seems to be born, seems to grow up into youth, manhood, and old age and then seems to decay and finally die. But all these stages are not applicable to the eternal Atman. These changes are for the body and the unchanged Atman remains unchanged. Birth dies into child and that into youth, later into old age and finally death. Man should not exploit others for this dying body.

The sun absorbs water with his rays and releases it in proper time as rain. The yogi accepts objects of the senses with the senses, not for his own enjoyment, but to release them to needy people at the proper time. The sun is never interested in the water except with the desire to do well to others.

The life of Pigion taught a lesson that too much attachment to anything or any person will only cause pain and uncapping. If a person full time spends his thoughts only on his possession on his, homes, on acquiring wealth and other worldly things to please his dear ones, will, like the Pigion, be destroyed with all those whose depend on him.

The python eats what comes its way whether it is tasty or not, whether it is small or big The python never goes out of its way to get food for itself nor does it make any special attempt to satisfy its needs. Like this man should be satisfied with what he gets and he should never go in pursuit of worldly things man should learn to control his desires and senses.

The surface of the ocean is clear and lucid. But it is so deep that its depth cannot be gauged. Learn this lesson from ocean and man should try to appear as though he is very simple. But his thoughts should be deep that nobody can cross him in his purpose.

Moth is attracted by the glow of fire and falls in to it and perishes. Like this woman, gold, ornaments and clothes attract man. He falls into the blinding darkness of ignorance. as moths to fire and perish. If a man loses his power of reasoning and thinking, he will be destroyed even as the moth that flirts.

When one eats one should take in only the amount which is necessary to keep body and soul together. The honey-bee collets from the flowers. He takes only what he needs and he is careful not to hurt the flower from which he takes the honey. Even as a honey-bee collects honey from all flowers small or big, man should collect knowledge from the big and the small. All the Shasta's must be studied and he should take from them what he thinks is the essence of them. If man collects wealth and does not give it to others, he is like the honey-bee. The man is foolish since his wealth will be taken by one who is stronger than him. The wise man knows how to make others work for like the keeper of a beehive make the bee work for him and benefits by their work. If is the duty of the householder to give the best portion of what he cooks as Biksha to as cities.

A male elephant is lured in to a pit by the right of a female elephant. A wise man should not go for intimacy with a woman as she many prove death to him at the hands of a more powerful rival, just as in the case of an elephant competing with another for a female.

A deer is captured through the hunter's imitative cry of the doe. A wise man should not listen to vulgar music that he should thereby get entangled. Mrigi's son by name Rishyasring was enslaved by woman and became a mere toy in their hands, because of witnessing their sensuous dances.

Man should beware of the sense of taste. To eat less in the first lesson to be learned by man. A wise man conquers all his other senses except this one sense organ is tongue. The fish is tempter by the piece of meat placed as bait and it is easily caught. Just as fish perish by swallowing the angler's baited hook, so do men perish through the attraction of the palate which causes intense excitement to the mind.

The story of Pingala taught us that Desire is the source of the most poignant of sorrows. Pingala gave up her perverse desire to attract lovers and went to sleep with a peaceful mind. One should give up intense desire for everything. Then he can sleep happily and peacefully. If each and everyone thinks in this way, it will be helpful for the welfare of the society.

The lesson from the young girl is that living with many people will only cause quarrels and dissatisfaction. It will cause ecological imbalance. Even two people one enough to cause conversation which may lead to unpleasantness later. Concentrate is essential to attain oneness with the Paramatman.

A snake avoids the company of men since it is highly suspicious of their intentions. It is alone. It has no dwelling place of its own. It never transgresses any rule. It lives alone with itself. Like this serpent men should be a lone wander, always vigilant and solitary without any assistants.

Spider brings out its web from within itself through the mouth, sports in it for some time and then withdraws it in to itself. Here the Supreme Being creates, spread and withdraw the universe all by himself. When Adharmam envelops the whole universe and thereby ecological imbalance happens Lord Narayana destroys the whole universe by means of his power of time.

Whenever there is ecological imbalance, a rise of irreligion, Lord Vishnu took the incarnation to protect the good, to destroy the wicked and to re establish religious principles. Sreemad Bhagavatham embodies the teachings of the Lord. Even a verse of this scripture can transform one's life totally. Peace of mind comes only with knowledge. Lord Krishna told us that whatever we do whatever we eat whatever we offer to the sacred river, whatever we bestow as a gift, whatever we do by way of penance, offer these all to

God. Gift and charity one gives ultimately reach the Lord. Krishna reveals another truth that He, who is the friend of all, is the Supreme one capable of resolving all problems.

To please Lord Krishna is not at all a Herculean task. God, the Supreme power is present in all living and non living creatures around us. Man should be kind to all creatures and be friendly to them giving up asura nature to please the Omnipresent. Humble devotion without expecting anything is the only way to please the Almighty.

Man's ego makes him exploit all the resources of the world. Thereby his ego creates ecological imbalance in the universe. The teachings of Sreemad Bhagavatham can deprive man of his ego and make him humble. A paradigm shift is essential which is possible by this holy scripture Bhagavatham. Then this humble man can care for all animate and inanimate things in nature. Thus Sreemad Bhagavatham helps maintain ecological balance and redress social crisis in this modern world.

Today it is essential to pour the Sreemad Bhagavatham message in to the mind of modern generation who have been suffering from the deterioration of dharmam. Our ancient seers recommend a life style giving prominence to dharmam and spiritual knowledge. The amalgamation of spiritualism and materialism is quintessential for the perfection of man's life.

Sreemad Bhagavatham taught us that in all the animate and inanimate objects of the universe there is the presence of Lord SreeKrishna. If this knowledge dawns in one's mind he will not try to do any unrighteous actions. On the other hand he will try to love and help others. Thereby he makes his mind pure. Purity of mind is a prominent factor to sustain ecological balance.

Reconstruction of society in the light of religious ideals is of great importance in these difficult times. Today the world is in a perilous condition because nobody knows values of life, of philosophy and religion. Life remains unfulfilled until there is a vision of the supreme. SreemadBhagavatham declares that he who is devoted to the Lord is one who does not perturb the world and whom the world does not perturb.

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