



God in Goodness

G Venkatesh

One of those days during the Covid lockdown. Lessons, they said, were there for those who would care to be mindful – divine messages, cosmic tutorials, karmic exams. I had started visiting the temple again, after having waged a bitter tussle in my mind with the demons of reason which were trying to topple my faith. Faith and Reason, Science and Spirituality, two pairs of irreconcilables, forever at each other's throat. My faith in a kind God, whom I could worship as a benevolent father had flown out of the window, the same night my wife

Varshita's soul left her tormented corpus and started its ascent to the heavens above. Untimely, unjust, cruel, unfair. And they told me, supposedly to comfort me, that God tests those who are closest to Him, those who trust Him the most. Just for fun. Child's play. Think of Job, think of Harishchandra, think of the Pandavas, blah blah blah... I heard without listening, looked into their eyes without seeing who they were. Frozen. Like the last movie I and my wife had seen on a very cold evening when the mercury had dipped to -12° C, a couple of weeks before she passed away. Three weeks before she lay frozen in the coffin for people to pay their respects and bid her a final goodbye. I recall that she never failed to wish people *'Bon voyage'* when she knew that they would be travelling, and likewise, she always cherished such wishes which others gave her. Perhaps, that movie had been chosen wantonly by her – *'Venkat, I want to see that movie, Frozen 2, no matter what.'*

Well, out of the reverie now readers....I made a mental note of the things I would have to do that afternoon – buy a rose for the wife's framed photograph, buy grapes and bananas, buy some Marie biscuits and feed the stray dogs en route to the Lord Hanuman temple. I had, I thought, partly managed to vanquish the demons of reason and had started believing in God's mercy and kindness again. Partly. I purchased a rose, then a dozen bananas, and walked down to look for someone selling grapes. I had forgotten to check how much cash I had left in my purse. I saw an old man with a dozen bunches of grapes in a basket sitting and staring into space on the pavement. I asked him to weigh a kilo of green grapes for me, and he did so and emptied the same into my cloth bag.

'70 rupye zaale' (70 rupees), he said in Marathi.

I dipped into my purse and out came a 10-INR note. I had to pay him 80 INR.

‘Paishe naheet mazyakade. Tumhi angoor parat gyaa. Mee paishe geoon yetho.’ (I am short of cash. You take back the grapes. I shall return with the money).

He however insisted that I must take the grapes home and not bother about the payment for now. He told me that he would be leaving in 10 minutes, as his son was hospitalised, and he had to go see him. ‘Tumhee nehmeche graahak saheb. Teva angoor aani nantar dyaa paishe.’ He gave a tired toothless smile, which concealed a lot of pain, sorry, sorrow and anguish, at once detectable to a person like me who had been trying to smile and conceal my pain.

I took the grapes, ran home, reached in 4 minutes, and hastened back with 500 INR in 4 minutes, just to see him pack up and about to leave.

‘Kaaka, he gyaa,’ (Uncle, please take these), I said, proffering the 500 INR note.

‘Kai, tumhee pann, Ghai kashaala?’ (Come on, what was the hurry?)

It was a roasting 38°C that day, a sharp contrast to the night Varshita had passed away in the month of January in Trondheim.

‘Sutte paishe naheeth mazyaakade,’ (I do not have change), he said, wrinkling his forehead and looking at the sweat dripping from my forehead.

‘Sutte nako malaa. Tumhee tumchya mulgaasaathi, zaataana, fal geyoon jaa,’ (I do not need change, you buy fruits for your son with the remainder of the money). So saying, I glanced at his bewildered face, and quickly turned and walked away, giving him no time to debate with me. I had to feed the stray dogs after all.

I had seen and served God, in the guise of a trusting, old, wizened man, who was being a responsible father and a good human being. The stray dogs I fed came and lay down at my

feet and continued to look into my thoughtful eyes, as if they could read what was going on in my mind. It seemed as if Varshita's soul energies were communicating with me through them.

I did not have to visit the mace-touting, mountain-bearing, monkey God in his abode that evening. I came back home, took a bath and sat down to write this piece...

G Venkatesh

G Venkatesh, born in Chennai and brought up in Mumbai, is currently an Associate Professor at Karlstad University in Sweden. He holds two Master degrees – Mechanical Engineering (India), Industrial Ecology (Germany/Singapore), and a PhD in Industrial Ecology (Norway). Venkatesh has published four volumes of poetry, four e-books, and over 100 scientific journal publications; crosswords, and articles of various genres in magazines around the world.

[Get Your Book Reviewed](#)

If you have got any book published and are looking for a book review, contact us. We provide book review writing service for a fee. We (1) write book review (2) publish review in CLRI (3) conduct an interview with the author (4) publish interview in CLRI. [Know more here](#).

[Authors & Books](#)

We publish book releases, Press Release about books and authors, book reviews, blurbs, author interviews, and any news related to authors and books for free. We welcomes authors, publishers, and literary agents to send their press releases. Visit our website <https://page.co/Vw17Q>.