

Inspiration

Equanimity – another Favorite Word of Mine By Musafir

It's very upsetting to me. A big chunk of our sower tile in the master bedroom broke loose and fell on the floor. It's such an inconvenience. I have to climb stairs every day and use bathrooms on the second floor. It's expensive to fix the tiles. One contractor told me that this doesn't happen in a normal course. My house must have some structural problem. The possible problems, inconvenience and expenses are giving me restless nights. Should I just sell my house and move to a condominium? Should I sacrifice my lifestyle? The possible consequences have taken away my peace of mind.

Suddenly I get reminded of life in the old country where I grew up. I return there vicariously. I see young boys and their mothers working on construction sites carrying bricks on their heads under unbearable heat. I see anemic laborers working in paddy fields in the hope of bringing dry chapatis (Indian bread) for their family to eat. I see passengers riding on the roof of the train compartments to reach their destinations risking their lives. I see women and children begging for pennies with a smile.

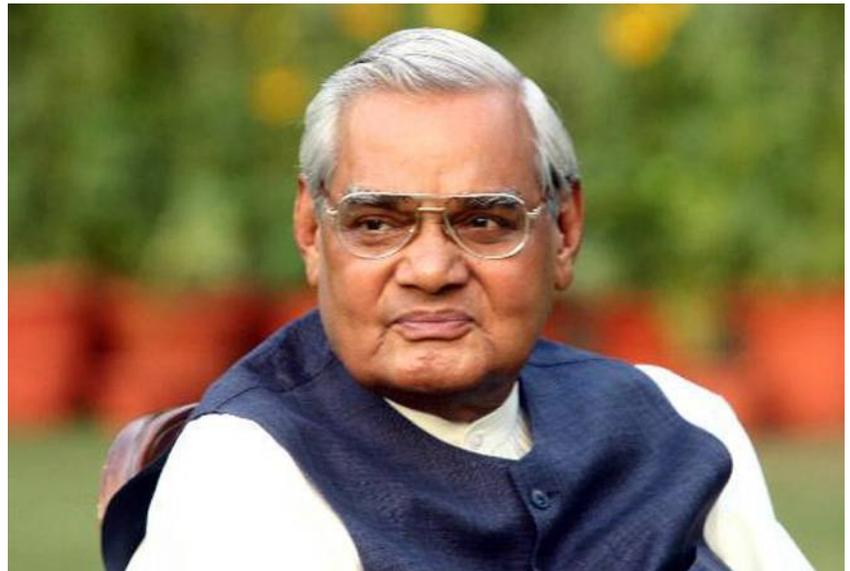
It is that smile that separates suffering from joy and connects one human to another. With poverty a way of life in these parts, many have come to embrace their situation in life with equanimity—a calm acceptance of what is. Rather than struggle against what is going on, always seeking more and better in a never-ending cycle of desire, through acceptance, life can become a joy despite the circumstances.

I also see middle-class Indians exposed to the extreme wealth of the western world. They are as unhappy as I am now. They are desiring faster computers, bigger houses, luxurious cars and other gadgets. They are unhappy because for them acceptance of the situation is not a way of life. They are becoming just like me.

I should learn to have respect for the people who have the ability to accept the "good" and the "bad." Trivialities like "it's raining so I can't go outside" or "there's no Splenda for my tea so I can't drink it" shouldn't even register. It's raining, accept it. There's no Splenda, accept it. Rather than getting bothered by such things, I should look to people who come from less material cultures spend more time enjoying what is than complaining about what's not.

After all, if I get into the habit of looking for what's wrong, I'll always find something wrong. Saving that time complaining about difficulties or worrying about problems should open me to gratitude for the things I do have. I should learn from the toil and grind of a difficult life most of the world goes through. The most important part is finding a balance that comes from equanimity and gratitude.

"Victory and defeat are a part of life, which are to be viewed with equanimity."



- Atal Bihari Vajpayee, just deceased former Prime Minister of