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Flow of Life

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Our eldest uncle, my father's brother came from Narsipatnam to our village walking six miles. My parents and we four gathered around him with joy for his coming. My mother brought him cool water from the earthen pot in a copper glass. He held the glass up above his mouth and poured the water into his mouth, the glass not touching his lips.

We observed anger and unhappiness in his eyes and face and our parents guessed why he was so. Few minutes passed silently without words and he opened his lips saying "our parents had more responsible foresight and educated us in time. We completed the higher secondary education and got appointments in government service as teachers in the villages. They provided us livelihood and in those days it was great ". He went into deep memories of the past for a while and our parents knew what he was going to tell, but maintained silence helplessly. The financial problems make one to observe lot of patience in helplessness.

He added breaking his silence "it is the moral responsibility of the parents to provide their children with some good kind of livelihood. It is also a social responsibility; if they do not have proper means of earning they may grow harmful to the family and society and militancy traps such unemployed. You are more learned and intelligent than me and you know your responsibilities. Just I want to know what you have decided about your two sons" education! They have already lost one or two year's education! He stopped looking into my father's face. Our parents were always ready to shoulder their responsibilities and they often discussed about our education. The high school was six miles away from our village and there was no bus facility. There was a river to cross to reach the road often flowing ferociously. There was acute financial problem and they were not in a position to afford to hire a room and arrange food and meet expenses for fees, books and dresses. There was absolute helplessness!

Silence was their reply! He looked at their faces and said "I am the eldest son to our parents and next to them I have to take the total responsibility of our families as ours is a joint family system. By mind and heart we are all one family only. I have come to take your two sons with me to admit them in the high school. I will take care of them in my house. Financially we

are one and same not in a position to help each other; yet I cannot forget my responsibility handed over to me by our parents and tradition!" and asked us to get ready to go with him.

Time flows; Life flows; Transformations flow. I completed six years of high school education with high ranks. There was no college at the town and no money for further studies. I was ten years old when we got freedom and independence from the British and I passed my secondary School leaving certificate examination in the year in which Andhra Pradesh was formed as separate state. I passed the public service commission examination, was selected and employed at Visakhapatnam, our district city. My brother also got his job there and we hired an old small house and settled comfortably. We were married and a new age of Life began with new responsibility

We, in unavoidable circumstances requested our parents to come to the city and join us so that we could take care of them properly. With tears in their eyes they said " later or earlier, willing or unwilling, good or bad, life flows as directed by the flow of times and transformations " and nodded their head agreeing. Our families, for generations, lived in that village and we left it and our eyes and heart shed tears. We found many houses with closed doors. Our parents felt congestion and narrowness everywhere in the city life and were trying to adjust to the circumstances.

Time flows and ideas and thoughts change in the flow of time. I was blessed with three sons and my brother yet to be blessed. On a holiday my sister-in-law said "your expenditure is more with your wife and three sons and our income is spent for your family. We will also be blessed with children though late and we have to save money for them! We want to live separately not jointly". My brother heard her and kept silent sadly. I said to her immediately" you are right and I agree with you; I will hereafter bear all the expenses for our joint family. Our parents had not yet recovered from the pains of detachment from the village and village life! If we separate now they cannot bear it as it would be a blow on their mind and heart! My motherly sister-in-law, kindly obliged to live jointly" and she nodded her head agreeing.

She could not hide glow of joy in her eyes and face. My wife, though she did not speak out was also interested to have free life of her choice. The seeds of separatism thus began to sprout leading to the collapse of joint family system and life!

My sister- in-law was given all powers along with my monthly income to manage our joint family and I observed that any kind or form of authority or power over others gives an

unexplainable joy and a feeling of supremacy! We managed the situation unknown to our parents secretly and the days were flowing smoothly.

It is known to all that death is not in the hands of man; yet my parents prayed every day for comfortable and instant death as otherwise it would be a great trouble and punishment not only for them, but all the members of the family and my mother for death before my father's.

Their prayer did not go waste! They breathed their last as they prayed for leaving us unbearable melancholy. Nature gives the strength to recover, in the flow of time, from the irrecoverable loss!

The time flowed and a year passed after the death of our parents, their sacrifices for us flowing in our mind and heart. We were separated into two small families. The love, attachment and cooperation for each other continued, but slowly and steadily began to deteriorate. I suffered from congestion and narrowness in my small family unit, but unavoidable.

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The time came to admit our children in the school and my wife was enquiring the women living in the same street where their children were studying and which was the best school. Private schools were there which earned good name, but fees was very high in addition to expenses for books, uniforms, shoes and travel and a huge amount for capital fee. The rates of house rent, rice and other food items were also high. We could not afford private education at all! But, we were deeply inclined to admit them in a private school!

But, I was quite against corruption and there was an incident which made me so! When I joined as a clerk in the district collectorate, a contractor put a five rupee note in my pocket unseen by anyone and went out rapidly. When I reached home I gave to my mother with joy and told her how I got it. My father heard it and with uncontrollable anger said "the government pays you monthly salary for the work you do; that is earned and legal. If you take any money or anything in any form from anyone, that is illegal and called corruption! It is a social crime very harmful to you and also to the society".

After some minutes, he further added "corruption is very cruel! You have accepted rupees five today, it will make you in course of flow of time to accept rupees five lakhs! It is so cruel! It is a very strong enemy to the people, democracy and social living! Immediately, without wasting a moment you go and give back the five rupee note to the person from whom you have

accepted! I will not take food until you did it!" I did not know until he told that corruption was so wrong and cruel! My father was a committed Gandhian follower and we had our food only after I did what he told!

I served in the government for over thirty years fighting against corruption and had lost a lot and earned more enemies! Yet I felt that it was good and lived a happy life among more enemies and less friends!

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We admitted our sons in government school. The private school and college managements and the politicians joined hands directly or indirectly to make government education useless as most of the private education was owned and managed by politicians! It grew gigantic now devouring the incomes of the parents and the creativity of the students! It is often called killer education!

The education became the stepping stone and cause for social inequality making 'Haves' richer and richer! The private school students often insulted my son's calling them 'Potato' school boys and with tears in their eyes, they complained to us. We comforted them explaining how the boys studied in government schools became great men in our country and also abroad.

Tolerating all the insults and problems, my sons completed their higher secondary school education with highest ranks at district and state level. They joined government colleges and thereafter government universities and institutes and completed their higher education with proud highest ranks. During the period of their higher education, they cooked their own food, washed their own dresses, borrowed books from the libraries and friends and faced many a financial problems.

But their proud success with highest ranks helped them to forget all that and go ahead. I was in service at different places in India and my three sons at three different places. The circumstances paved the way to social transformations that not only the married girls, boys too could not stay and live with their parents for many years and both are just holiday guests!

The sincere efforts of the professors and students earned good advancement and Fame in mathematics, science and technology especially in computer science and technology and opportunities for employment in foreign countries. The incomes of the middle and lower middle

classes thus increased to have to some extent stable and peaceful life. The internet gifted the families to have face to face contact as a solace for them to some extent!

I realized a social truth from my life that the love for the past should not work against the development and progress of anyone, anything and the society. I retired from service. We came back to our native town, built a small house and settled comfortably. My sons arranged all that needed for our comfortable modern living. Changes occurred in the marriage institution also. My wife asked our sons "if you are in love with any girl, tell frankly. We will contact her parents to make your love successful." They replied without chewing water that there was nothing like that saying that marriages fixed and made by the parents are mostly successful. They said "we should not take any dowry in any form as it amounts to inequality between the man and woman ". We nodded our heads in happiness. Awareness dawned that both wife and husband should work and earn to be able to meet the basic needs to make life happy and also that women's talent and skills which are useful for societal development and progress should not go waste.

Our three sons were married with girls selected by us from lower middle class families. They were with us for about a fortnight and went to the foreign countries where they were employed with their wives. Both were working, earning and living happily.

The wife and husband live together life long and such opportunity is not there for the couples in the present young generation! Wife and husband work at different places or husband works at a place where there is no good school for the children's education or the husband works in a foreign country and under such circumstances, the wife lives at their native place for the children's education or to take care of the old in the family and thus even the wife and husband cannot live together! Similar circumstances arose in our family also!

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My eldest son was blessed with a son and our joy knew no bounds! My daughter-in-law sent his birth certificate immediately after his birth to a rich posh school for his admission! After completion of three years, an interview would be conducted for the parents and the child and the successful children admitted in the school! The children should be in the school hostel only! The total expenses for the child's education per year would be around two lakhs!

We were never informed about all that and we came to know it later through a different source! We were worried terribly! The children from their early childhood grow like an animal

in a cage away from their parents and other family members and social living without sharing the love and affection and awareness of social living!

Is a selfish and wild social living ahead of times?! The flow of times answers it !!.

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About the Author:

Jayanthi Papa Rao (Born in 1938 in Andhra Pradesh, India) has published over a hundred short stories, a novel and six research books in Telugu and in English a novel and a collection of 25 short stories. He also edited and published four collections of short stories and essays based on the literature written by well-known writers. His novel and stories were translated to Hindi, English and Malayalam and research for M.Phil; PhD; and D. Litt degrees was carried out and published. He has made his writings available to readers through his blog <https://jayanthipaparao.blogspot.in>

After retirement from central government, he is looking after his own agriculture.