

Grace – Universal Worship – June 8, 2025 - Rev. Mumtaz Kammerer, Siraj – for Universal Worship, Baltimore PA

Today's theme was inspired by a reading on divine grace from Hazrat Inayat Khan which Cherag Rahmana included in a Universal Worship Simple Service. Here's what I'd like to share with you today.

Then we see the kindness and the compassion of God, which is always hidden from our view because we are always seeing what is lacking, the pain, the suffering, the difficulties. People are so absorbed in them that they lose the vision of all the good that is there. We can never be grateful enough if we see like this, that it is not the law, but that it is the Grace of God which governs our life. And it is the trust and confidence in this Grace which not only consoles a person, but which lifts one and brings one nearer and nearer to the Grace of God.

Divine Grace is a loving impulse of God which manifests in every form, in the form of mercy, compassion, forgiveness, beneficence, and revelation. No action, however good, can command it; no meditation, however great, can attract it. It comes naturally, as a wave rising from the Heart of God, unrestricted or unlimited by any law. It is a natural impulse of God. When it comes, it comes without reason. Neither its coming nor its absence has any particular reason. It comes because it comes; it does not come because it does not come.

It is in Grace that God's Highest Majesty is manifested. While pouring out His Grace He stands on such a high pedestal, that neither law nor reason can touch it. Every blessing has a certain aspect, but Grace is a blessing which is not limited to a certain aspect, but manifests through all aspects. Grace is all-sided: health, providence, love coming from all those around you, inspiration, joy, peace.

I recall in my Presbyterian church as I was growing up hearing “grace is when God gives us what we need, not what we deserve.” Now, this isn't a “Get out jail free” card, our actions have consequences, but it does give us insight into the magnanimous, loving nature of the One Divine Being. As Inayat Khan says, “...it is the Grace of God which governs our life. And it is the trust and confidence in this Grace which not only consoles a person, but which lifts one and brings one nearer and nearer to the Grace of God. Divine Grace is a loving impulse of God which manifests in every form, in the form of mercy, compassion, forgiveness, beneficence, and revelation.” “It is the Grace of God which governs our life.”

The scriptures also support this. Krsna, as the Supreme Godhead, tells Arjuna, tells us: “God dwells in the heart of all beings, Arjuna: thy god dwells in thy heart. By his grace thou shalt obtain the peace supreme, thy home of Eternity. Leave all things behind, and come to me for thy salvation. I will make thee free from the bondage of sins. Fear no more.” Grace gives liberation.

In the Zoroastrian scriptures we heard: “Yea, as one enlightened in Thy Law, and who has possessions, giveth unto one’s friend, so giveth Thou unto me, O Great Creator.” This concept of God as friend lets us know grace is more than reciprocity; it’s beyond reciprocity. Just as a friend gives willingly, wanting only another’s betterment, feeling joy in another’s joy, so God gives grace so freely.

Thinking of God’s grace should take us beyond words and concepts. As Inayat Khan says, “Divine Grace is a loving impulse of God which manifests in every form, in the form of mercy, compassion, forgiveness, beneficence, and revelation.” Revelation: what the seeker, the mystic, the believer wants—to experience the Divine. Grace takes us into communion with the Beloved.

How do we then take this revelation, this realization, this experience of grace and manifest it in our lives? If God, the Most High, can be gracious to us, can’t we be gracious to ourselves and to others?

“We help God forgive by forgiving ourselves,” Inayat Khan tells us. Be good to yourself; take care of yourself; don’t beat yourself up. Free yourself of the barriers and impediments you may have erected by applying God’s Grace alive in in your life. Pir Vilayat often spoke of how liberating forgiveness was. Let’s start by forgiving ourselves of our shortcomings and make the effort to do better.

Then we let grace imbue our thoughts, words, and deeds. This makes me think of a line from the Prayer for Peace: “Send thy Peace, O Sovereign, that amidst our worldly strife we may enjoy Thy bliss.” God’s grace is freely given and accepting it can be transformative; giving us poise, insight, peace, a better attitude, and, yes, even bliss.

Accessing and actualizing grace can make life better for us and for others. Let’s consider some of the lines from the hymn we sang today. It was written in a turbulent time, 1930, when the world was in an economic depression and the horrors of WWI were still a fresh memory. People were struggling; people were wondering if there was any hope their situations would improve. It begins by calling on “God of Grace and God of Glory.” The poet wanted to invoke both the omnipotence of God and first the God who gives grace to all. Supplications are made; here is what we’re wanting: “on Thy people pour Thy power,” “free our hearts (from fears and doubts) to work and praise,” “heal your children’s warring madness, bend our pride to your control,” “save us from weak resignation to the evils we deplore.” It’s a call to let grace reign in our lives.

Then there’s the wonderful refrain “Grant us wisdom, grant us courage.” Does it take courage to be gracious? Yes actually, it does when self-indulgence and a corrupted sense of individualism is the mode of the day. Speaking and acting against injustice, exploitation, abuse, cruelty, and violence with the strength of

grace is effective and so necessary. This a hymn for our times: “Grant us wisdom, grant us courage for the facing of this hour.” “Grant us wisdom, grant us courage for the living of these days.”

May we know and experience God’s Grace and make it a reality in our life; sharing it in ways large and small.