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## BEYOND GRIEF AND ANGER: A REVIEW OF THE PRINCIPLE OF ANTARAXIA IN RĀMĀYAṆA SPIRITUALITY

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### Abstract

*The concept of antaraxia has deep relevance in Hindu spirituality, especially in the teachings of the Rāmāyaṇa. This epic describes how the principle of inner peace can be achieved through the path of bhakti, which is total surrender to God. This study analyzes how the spiritual values in the Rāmāyaṇa, especially through the characters of Rāma, Sītā, Bharata, and Hanuman. These characters represent the seek for inner peace amidst life's suffering and challenges. In the context of Hindu philosophy, the teachings of bhakti not only function as a means of achieving moksa, but also as a solution to the existential problems of modern humans filled with anxiety and conflict. This study uses a qualitative approach with text analysis of the primary sources of the Rāmāyaṇa and various interpretations from classical and modern Hindu literature. The results of this study indicate that the teachings of bhakti in the Rāmāyaṇa can provide deep insights into how to achieve inner balance and face the challenges of contemporary life. Thus, the legacy of Hindu philosophy remains relevant to respond human spiritual problems in the modern era.*

**Keywords:** Antaraxia; Bhakti; Rāmāyaṇa; Inner Peace; Hindu Spirituality.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Inner peace is the ideal condition that humans seek in facing various life challenges. In Greek philosophy, the concept of *ataraxia* refers to a state of mind free from emotional disturbances, such as anxiety and fear (Long & Sedley, 1987). This concept has relevance to the teachings of Hindu philosophy, especially in the aspects of *śānti* (peace), *vairāgya* (non-attachment), and *bhakti* (devotion). The *Rāmāyaṇa* as one of the great epics in Hinduism, offers a rich narrative about the search for inner peace through devotion and surrender to *dharma*. *Rāma* emphasizes the importance of practicing *dharma* without being shaken by worldly suffering. In *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* II describe “with *dharma* I will protect the world and with *dharma* I will guard this earth” (Dutt, 1891). However, in the study of Hindu philosophy, a deep understanding of the relationship between *ataraxia* and *bhakti* in the *Rāmāyaṇa* has received little attention, so further exploration is needed.

The issue of inner peace becomes increasingly relevant in the context of modern life filled with pressure and uncertainty. Many individuals experience anxiety and stress due to social, economic demands, and rapid technological developments. Although the methods of achieving inner peace have been offered, such as meditation and psychological therapy, many people are still looking for deeper and more spiritual answers. Therefore, it is important to explore the spiritual values contained in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, especially in the main characters such as *Rāma*, *Sītā*, and *Hanuman* face challenges with inner peace that comes from devotion and *dharma*.

This analysis start from the identification of various factors that indicate its urgency. These factors include: First, the teachings of the *Rāmāyaṇa* are still often understood literally without being contextualized in modern life. Second, the values of devotion in the *Rāmāyaṇa* are often only studied in the religious realm without seeing their relationship to psychological and philosophical balance. Third, although the concept of inner peace has been studied in various philosophical traditions, there are still few articles that try to bridge the understanding between *ataraxia* and *bhakti*.

This article is supported by various sources, both directly and indirectly. Literature review of classical Hindu texts, such as the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Bhagavadgītā*, and commentaries from Hindu philosophers and modern scholars, it will be the basis for understanding the relevance of the concept of *ataraxia* in Hindu spirituality. In *Bhagavadgītā* II.70, *Krishna* states that one who attains inner peace is not affected by the waves of pleasure and suffering: “*āpūryamāśam aśala-pratībhāyā samudram āpā praviśanti yadvat, tadvat kāmā yā praviśanti sarve sa śāntim āpnoti na kāmā-kāmi.*” (Like water entering the ocean, even though it continues, it remains calm and does not move; likewise a person with a calm soul achieves peace even though all pleasures enter him, but not a person who indulges his lusts) (Pudja, 2019).

The main problem discussed in this article is how *bhakti* in the *Rāmāyaṇa* can be a path to *ataraxia* and how these teachings can be applied in the context of modern life, which is marked by the rapid development of science and technology and increasingly open access to information, so that the world in which we live is becoming increasingly narrow, increasingly narrow in space, and increasingly contemporary in time (Arimbawa et al., 2020). By examining the story of *Rāma* who faces a moral dilemma, *Sītā* who remains steadfast in suffering, and *Hanuman* who has fearless courage because of his devotion to *Rāma*, so this article attempts to reveal how Hindu spirituality provides a solution to the inner anxiety experienced by humans. This article has benefits, both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it will enrich the understanding of the relationship between Hindu philosophy and Greek philosophy in the context of the search for inner peace. Practically, it can provide insight for modern society about how the teachings of *bhakti* in the *Rāmāyaṇa* can be used as a guideline in dealing with the pressures of life. By exploring the thoughts of influential figures and comparing them with contemporary situations, this study attempts to contribute to the study of Hindu spirituality and social philosophy.

In a broader context, this article will also relate the teachings of the Rāmāyaṇa to the global challenges facing humanity currently, such as existential anxiety, social alienation, and loss of meaning in life. By adopting a philosophical and analytical approach, this article will explain how the spiritual values in the Rāmāyaṇa can serve as a reference in the seek for eternal inner balance. This article aims to explore the interaction between *antaraxia* and *bhakti* in the Rāmāyaṇa, focusing on how its teachings can serve as inspiration for the seek for inner peace in the current era of life. By examining characters such as Rāma, Sītā, Hanuman, and Bharata, we will see how commitment to dharma and devotion to God are key to achieving inner peace amidst challenges

## II. METHOD

This article uses a qualitative approach with a textual analysis method on the Rāmāyaṇa manuscript, especially the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa version and commentaries from various Hindu scholars. This approach aims to understand how the concept of *antaraxia* is reflected in the teachings of *bhakti* in the Rāmāyaṇa and how these values can be applied in modern life. The steps taken are analysis of the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa text, especially the parts that describe inner peace in the main characters such as Rāma, Sītā, and Hanuman. Searching for verses that support the concept of *bhakti* as a path to inner peace. Next, we analyze the commentaries of classical and contemporary Hindu scholars, such as Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa, Swami Vivekananda, as well as modern academic studies that discuss the spiritual values in the Rāmāyaṇa. References from Hindu philosophy that discuss the concepts of *bhakti*, *vairāgya* (non-attachment), and *śānti* (peace) as part of inner peace. Next, a conceptual analysis is carried out by connecting the concept of *antaraxia* with the values in the Rāmāyaṇa, related to the relevance of the values of *bhakti* and inner peace in facing the challenges of modern life, especially in the context of stress, emotional conflict, and spiritual balance. Then, we compile a reflection on how the teachings of the Rāmāyaṇa can be applied in everyday life, and present implications for the development of spirituality

in the modern era, especially in the context of Hindu social philosophy. With this approach, it is possible to explore the deeper philosophical meaning of the Rāmāyaṇa and make it a source of inspiration in the search for inner peace amidst the challenges of contemporary life.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 The Concept of *Antaraxia*

The concept of *antaraxia* was first introduced in ancient Greek philosophy, particularly in the traditions of Epicureanism and Stoicism. *Antaraxia* in Greek means calmness or restlessness. In Epicurus' teachings, *antaraxia* refers to a state of mind free from fear and anxiety, achieved through control of desire and understanding of the laws of nature. Epicurus in his Letter to Menoeceus stated that true happiness is freedom from bodily suffering (*aponia*) and peace of mind (*antaraxia*), achieved through wisdom and simple living (Long & Sedley, 1987). On the other hand, in Stoicism, *antaraxia* is understood as the result of a life lived in accordance with the *logos* (the rational law of the universe). Zeno of Citium, the founder of Stoicism, emphasized that one should not be affected by external events, but rather should develop inner resilience (*apatheia*) to pleasure and suffering. Marcus Aurelius in his book *Meditations* wrote "If you are disturbed by something from without, it is not the thing itself that disturbs you, but your judgment of it." This implies the understanding that *antaraxia* has the main characteristic of being an emotional balance obtained through a rational understanding of life. This indicates that inner peace is not a passive state, but an active achievement through a transformation of thought patterns.

#### 3.1.1 Inner Peace in Hindu Tradition

The concept of inner peace not only developed in Greece, but also became an important part of various Eastern philosophical traditions, including Buddhism and Hinduism. In Buddhism, *antaraxia* can be associated with *Nirvana*, which is a state of freedom from suffering and emotional turmoil (*dukkha*). The bliss of *Nirvana* can't be experienced by indulging the senses, but by calming them (Dhamananda, 2007). Meanwhile, in Hindu

philosophy, the idea of inner peace has long been part of the teachings of *Vedānta*, *Sāṃkhya*, and *Yoga*. Several Hindu philosophers have elaborated the concept of inner peace in a similar way to *antaraxia*, but with an emphasis on the spiritual aspect. For example, in the *Bhagavadgītā*, Krishna teaches the principle of *vairāgya* (non-attachment) as the key to achieving inner balance. Krishna advises Arjuna by saying:

*karmaōy evadhikāras te  
mā phaleūu kadācana,  
mā karma-phala-hetur bhūr  
mā te saōgo 'stv akarmaōi  
(Bhagavadgītā II.47).*

Do only for the sake of your duty, not the result of the action (that you think about), never let the fruit of the action be your motive, nor do you just sit idle without doing (Pudja, 2019).

This principle does not merely offer a work ethic or morality of action, but guides the individual to attain a state of inner peace (*antaraxia*) through the spiritual path. The detachment (*vairāgya*) that Kṛṣṇa advocates is not neglect of the world, but active involvement in worldly duties without letting oneself be attached to the results. In this context, emotional stability and inner freedom are achieved not only through rational control over the self but also through total reliance on the will of the Supreme. When compared to the concept of *antaraxia* in Greek philosophy, the fundamental difference lies in the transcendental dimension in Hindu teachings. Stoicism relies on human rationality as a tool to free oneself from suffering, while Hindu philosophy views that true inner peace cannot be separated from the supernatural reality, namely *Brahman* or God. In other words, *antaraxia* in Hindu philosophy is rooted in spirituality and self-realization based on unity with a higher essence. Achieving peace does not merely mean controlling the mind, but also self-awareness of one's true self (*ātman*) which is inseparable from *Brahman*. In this case, Hindu inner peace is more ontological, because humans do not simply train their minds to be calm, but realize that the essence of their existence is peace itself. Some of the main aspects that reflect *antaraxia* in Hinduism

include:

1) *Śānti* in the *Upaniṣads*

In the *Upaniṣads*, inner peace is described as the state of one who is aware of the ultimate reality. *Īśa Upaniṣad* 1 states:

*īūāvāsyam iday sarvam  
yat kiý ca jagatyāy jagat.  
tena tyaktena bhujñithā,  
mā gādhaá kasyasvid dhanam.*

Know all this that whatever moves in this world, everything is enveloped by God. Therefore find your happiness in detachment and do not desire what belongs to others (Radhakrishnan, 2008).

This verse expresses a fundamental view in Hindu philosophy about the relationship between the phenomenal world and absolute reality. All that moves, all that exists, does not stand alone, but is enveloped, enveloped, and supported by God. This means that the world is not something separate from the Divine, but rather a manifestation of supernatural perfection. In this framework, inner peace or in Hinduism is not simply interpreted as the success of controlling worldly emotions or desires, as in the Stoic view. Rather, it is the fruit of a transcendental awareness, a deep appreciation that behind the changes, uncertainties, and dualities of the world, there is a single, perfect, whole, and peaceful reality, namely *Brahman*.

This understanding radically changes the way humans respond to the world. Excessive emotional attachment, the desire to control, or the fear of loss become irrelevant, because everything is already in the embrace of perfect existence. True happiness does not come from external achievements, but from detachment (*vairāgya*) born of the realization that what appears separate is actually one in *Brahman*. Thus, *antaraxia* in Hindu teachings goes beyond the psychological dimension. It becomes an ontological awareness, an

awareness that in essence, nothing is lost, nothing is gained, because everything is already perfect. In this perspective, inner peace is no longer a strenuous effort to resist worldly temptations, but rather a natural emanation of the realization of existential unity. Flood (1996) in *An Introduction to Hinduism* asserts that the understanding of *Brahman* as the substratum of reality changes the relationship of humans to the world, no longer as a field of conflict and attachment, but as an expression of one and perfect existence.

## 2) *Vairāgya* as the Key to Inner Peace

In the *Yoga Sūtra*, Patañjali states that the path to inner peace is through *vairāgya* (non-attachment) and *abhyāsa* (spiritual practice), “*yogaś citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ*.” This teaching places the control of the motions of the mind (*citta-vṛtti*) at the heart of spiritual practice. Mental fluctuations, such as desires, fears, anxieties, hopes, and memories, are seen as the primary source of human unrest and suffering. Therefore, the path to inner peace according to Patañjali is not simply to temporarily calm the mind, but to fundamentally transcend all mental movements. Thus, this principle resonates strongly with the concept of *antaraxia* in Stoic philosophy, which emphasizes emotional stability and the immutability of the mind amidst the changing world. However, the difference lies in the method and depth of approach. In yoga, the practice is not merely rational-reflective, but existentially transformative. Through consistent practice, a *yogi* not only controls his mind but attains a state of pure, unshakeable awareness, which is the source of true tranquility. This shows that the inner tranquility in Hindu philosophy is more radical, not just managing the fluctuations of emotions but silencing their source, the mental movement itself. Thus, the teaching of *yogaś citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ* extends the concept of *antaraxia* to a spiritual path involving the release of

all forms of mental identification. The inner steadfastness is not achieved simply through the power of logic but through deep self-awareness and discipline, leading to existential liberation.

## 3) *Bhakti* as a Means of *Antaraxia*

In the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the depiction of inner peace is not solely rooted in emotional control or rational considerations, but rather in an attitude of deep and sincere devotion (*bhakti*) to God. Hanuman, the central character in *Sundarakāṇḍa*, is a figure who perfectly illustrates this. When facing various obstacles in his search for Sītā in the kingdom of Laṅkā, Hanuman is faced with extreme situations, such as the threat of death, a giant trap, and even physical humiliation. However, in every challenge, Hanuman never slips into fear, despair, or anger. He acts with full confidence, courage, and calm, not because of mere personal courage, but because of his total devotion to Rāma. In this episode, *Sundarakāṇḍa* implicitly shows that the source of Hanuman's mental strength is not his ego, but his relationship with something transcendent, namely his love and devotion to Rāma as the manifestation of truth (*dharma*).

This shows that in the Hindu tradition, true inner peace is not enough to be achieved only through rational discipline as in Stoicism, but must be supported by a spiritual element, namely firm faith and unwavering devotion to the divine principle. *Bhakti* here becomes an emotional and existential bridge between the individual and the transcendent reality. In this kind of devotion, the individual transcends his personal anxiety, because he surrenders the results of all efforts to the divine will, as the principle of *karma-phala-tyāga* taught in the *Bhagavadgītā*. Hanuman does not seek personal honor, nor is he afraid of losing it, because his entire identity is absorbed in his sacred mission. Thus,

inner peace in him is not the result of ego control, but the fruit of self-surrender. Furthermore, Hanuman's narrative shows that in Hindu philosophy, *antaraxia* is not only mental unshakeability, but is an inner condition rooted in the union of the *atman* (self) with the divine principle which is the highest goal of human existence. Thus, Hanuman becomes a paradigm not only of courage or loyalty, but of inner peace that comes from the spirituality of life.

Based on the above description, the concept of *antaraxia* in Greek and Hindu philosophy has fundamental similarities in terms of achieving inner peace, but differs in its epistemological approach. In Greek philosophy, *antaraxia* is more oriented towards rational acceptance of life and self-control, while in Hinduism, inner peace is more related to aspects of spirituality, detachment, and devotion to God. The relevance of this concept in the modern world is enormous, especially amidst the increasing pressures of life due to economic, social, and technological demands. Hindu philosophy offers a more transcendental approach to achieving inner balance, by teaching that true peace can only be achieved by understanding true reality (*Brahman*), controlling desires (*vairāgya*), and surrendering to God (*bhakti*). Thus, both in the context of Greek and Hindu philosophy, *antaraxia* remains a relevant concept to face the challenges of the modern era, both through rational and spiritual approaches.

### 3.2 *Rāmāyaṇa*: A *Bhakti* Pilgrimage Towards Inner Peace

In the Hindu philosophical tradition, the concept of *bhakti* (devotion) is one of the main paths to inner peace and spiritual freedom (*mokṣa*). *Bhakti* is not only understood as a form of love and devotion to God, but also as a spiritual method that can free individuals from worldly suffering and anxiety. One of the Hindu texts that deeply describes the role of *bhakti* in achieving inner peace is the *Rāmāyaṇa*. In this epic, characters such as Hanuman, Sītā, and Bharata show how devotion to Rāma led them

to inner peace despite facing various sufferings and challenges (Arimbawa, 2023). Thus, the *Rāmāyaṇa* becomes a source of inspiration for spiritual seekers who want to achieve true peace through the path of *bhakti*.

Philosophically, *bhakti* in Hinduism is categorized as one of the four main paths (*mārga*) to liberation, namely 1) *Karma Mārga*: the path of action without attachment to results; 2) *Bhakti Mārga*: the path of devotion to God with sincere love; 3) *Jñāna Mārga*: the path of knowledge through metaphysical understanding; and 4) *Raja Mārga*: the path of meditation and self-mastery. In the *Bhagavadgītā*, Kṛṣṇa emphasizes that *bhakti* is the easiest and most effective path for humans to achieve inner peace:

*bhaktyā māy abhijānāti  
yāvān yaú casmi tattvataá,  
tato māy tattvato jñātvā  
viúate tad-anantaram.  
(Bhagavadgītā XVIII.55)*

By devotion to Me, he knows who and what I really am, and by knowing My nature, he attains Me later (Pudja, 2019).

This verse asserts that devotion is a path that leads one to a deeper understanding of the ultimate reality. In this context, *bhakti* is more than just an emotional expression or personal relationship filled with feelings of love and devotion towards God. This devotion has a transformative power that can change the nature and condition of one's mind. *Bhakti* is not just a religious act or ritual, but a spiritual path that leads to liberation from worldly attachments and the attainment of enlightenment. Through *bhakti*, the individual opens himself to the nature of God and integrates this understanding into every aspect of life, thereby creating inner peace and true serenity.

*Bhakti*, in this teaching, describes a deeper and transcendental relationship between man and God, which is not just a mere expectation of blessings, but also a recognition of the infinite nature of God. In *bhakti*, the individual not only seeks to understand God, but more than that, seeks to become one with Him, achieving perfect unity in spirituality. Therefore, *bhakti*

can be seen as a force that transforms one's life, making him more aware and in tune with the true nature of life, which in this context is the Supreme God. It teaches that by understanding the nature of God through pure devotion, one can overcome any emotional and mental obstacles that hinder inner peace. This calm is parallel to the principle of *antaraxia*, not only achieved through self-control or intellectual wisdom, but also through spiritual attainment that leads to understanding and total devotion to God. Thus, *bhakti* becomes a path that not only deepens a person's relationship with God, but also purifies and calms the soul, bringing the individual to an inner state that is free from worldly anxiety and suffering.

### 3.2.1 Rāma as a Symbol of Emotional Balance

Rāma consistently displays extraordinary emotional balance, even in the face of difficult decisions. His attitude reflects how *dharma* is the basis of inner peace in Hinduism. And in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Rāma is the personification of *dharma* and perfect *bhakti*. The sacrifices he makes, such as accepting fourteen years of exile without resistance, are manifestations of devotion to truth and respect for parents. When Kaikeyī demands that Daśaratha exile Rāma, Rāma not only obeys, but accepts it with equanimity and without anger, as part of his moral duty. Rāma's attitude shows that *bhakti* does not merely involve a transcendent relationship with God, but is also immanent, rooted in adherence to the principles of *dharma* in the real world. Rama's steadfastness in the face of grief over his father's death, Sita's abduction, and the fierce battle against Rāvaṇa all reflect spiritual maturity that results in inner peace. In Hindu philosophy, true peace is not denying sorrow, but overcoming sorrow through understanding eternal truth.

In addition, as a leader, Rama also faces various moral dilemmas. He must choose between his responsibilities as a king and his loyalty to Sita. In every decision, Rama shows high self-control and acts based on *dharma*. As stated in *Uttara Kāṇḍa* 42.12 "You are not worthy to live with me because this world is subject to the law of goodness, and Brahmā, the creator of the world, also wins through *dharma*."

### 3.2.2 Lakṣmaṇa as a Symbol of *Sevā-Bhakti*

Without any coercion, Lakṣmaṇa chose to leave the comfort of the palace and follow Rāma into the forest. She served not only as a protector, but also as a true friend who always accompanied Rāma and Sītā. Lakṣmaṇa's sacrifice was so total, she was even said to have almost never slept in order to protect the safety of Rāma and Sītā. This reflects *bhakti* as an active action driven by pure love, not just a passive feeling of devotion. Thus, Lakṣmaṇa is the ideal prototype of a human being who overcomes the ego through love, courage, and sincere service. Lakṣmaṇa teaches us that inner peace is not only achieved through contemplation, but also through active involvement in noble duties, service to the beloved, and consistency in prioritizing love over ego.

### 3.2.3 Sītā as a Symbol of *Bhakti* in the Form of Patience and Loyalty

If Hanuman shows *bhakti* in the form of active action, Sītā reflects *bhakti* in the form of patience and determination. This can be seen when Sītā was kidnapped and held captive in Lanka, she experienced great suffering. Rāvaṇa continued to try to persuade her to marry him, but Sītā remained steadfast in her devotion to Rāma. In a stressful situation, she chose to focus her mind on Rāma, believing that her loyalty and devotion would bring true happiness, as stated in *Rāmāyaṇa* V "I do not want life or heaven, I only want to be with Rāghava (Rāma), my brave husband." From the perspective of spiritual psychology, Sītā shows how *bhakti* provides mental strength and calmness even in the most difficult situations. She did not let suffering overcome her, but remained steadfast in her spiritual beliefs.

### 3.2.4 Hanuman as a Symbol of Unwavering *Bhakti*

Among all the characters in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Hanuman is the most prominent embodiment of *bhakti*. His devotion to Rāma is not merely loyalty, but also a form of total surrender that frees him from all forms of fear and anxiety. In *Sundarakāṇḍa* it is mentioned that Hanuman was sent to search for Sītā who was kidnapped by Rāvaṇa. This task is full of challenges, he

must cross the ocean, enter the heavily guarded kingdom of Lanka, and face the powerful forces of the giants. However, instead of feeling anxious or doubtful, Hanuman remains calm because of his complete faith in Rāma, as quoted in *Rāmāyaṇa* V “As long as I act for the sake of Rāma, no harm will befall me.”

This quote shows that *bhakti* creates strong faith so that individuals are free from anxiety. Hanuman no longer thinks about the end result of his mission, because for him, the most important thing is to do his duty for Rāma. This is in line with the concept of *niṣkāma* karma in Hindu philosophy, where one acts without attachment to the outcome. Furthermore, when Hanuman arrives in Lanka and finds Sītā in sorrow, he does not lose his composure. Even though he is surrounded by danger, he remains patient and relies on his devotion to Rāma to guide him. Even when he is captured by Rāvaṇa's army and his tail is burned, Hanuman remains calm because he believes that he is an instrument of Rāma's devotion. This shows that a person with true devotion will not be easily shaken by worldly suffering. He has an inner center of calm that is unaffected by external events.

### 3.2.5 Bharata as a Symbol of *Bhakti* in the Form of Rejection of Worldly Power

Bharata, the brother of Rāma, is also an ideal example of *bhakti*. When Rāma was exiled to the forest for fourteen years, Bharata refused to take over the throne even though he had the right to do so. Instead, he chose to wait for Rāma's return and rule only as his representative by placing Rāma's sandals on the throne as a symbol of his authority. In this context, Bharata shows that a truly devoted person is not bound by power or personal ambition. He chooses simplicity and devotion as the path to true happiness. In addition, Bharata's attitude shows that *bhakti* frees humans from the shackles of ego and materialistic desires. By surrendering oneself to God, one can find a deeper inner peace than worldly pleasures.

Based on the narrative and analysis of *Bhakti* as the Path to Inner Peace above, it can be concluded that *bhakti* in the *Rāmāyaṇa* is not only an expression of love for God, but also a path to true inner peace. In modern life full of

stress and anxiety, the principle of *bhakti* in the *Rāmāyaṇa* can be a spiritual guide for those seeking inner peace. By surrendering oneself to the divine will, one can free oneself from the shackles of worry and find eternal happiness. Therefore, the values in the *Rāmāyaṇa* remain relevant in facing the challenges of contemporary life. In a modern era filled with stress and uncertainty, the principles of *bhakti* and inner balance taught in the *Rāmāyaṇa* can be a spiritual solution for many individuals.

### 3.3 Finding Inner Peace Amidst the Rumbblings of the World

In human life, the search for inner peace is a basic need that is often overshadowed by the hustle and bustle of the modern world. In various philosophical traditions, the concept of inner peace has long been a major concern, both in Greek philosophy, Hindu philosophy, and in religious teachings. In Greek philosophy, the concept of *ataraxia* was introduced by the Stoics and Epicureans as a mental state free from anxiety and suffering. Meanwhile, in the Hindu tradition, inner peace is often associated with the path of *bhakti*, namely devotion and love for God that frees individuals from worldly suffering (Radhakrishnan, 1996). However, in the modern era full of social pressures, materialistic expectations, and rapid technological advances, how can the concepts of *ataraxia* and *bhakti* remain relevant?

In Greek philosophy, *ataraxia* refers to a mental state that is not disturbed by fear or anxiety. The Epicureans emphasized that true happiness comes from freedom from fear and simple pleasures. Meanwhile, Stoics such as Seneca and Marcus Aurelius saw *ataraxia* as the result of accepting fate and controlling emotions (Hadot, 1995). Epicurus in his Letter to Menoeceus wrote “if you want to make yourself rich, do not increase your possessions, but reduce your desires.” This suggests that inner peace can be achieved not through accumulating material things, but by limiting desires and accepting life as it is. Stoic philosophy, on the other hand, emphasizes that individuals should accept everything that happens with equanimity. Marcus Aurelius in Meditations states “the happiness of your life

depends on the quality of your thoughts.” From this perspective, *antaraxia* is a mental discipline that allows one to remain calm in the face of life’s difficulties.

Then in the Hindu tradition, the concept of inner peace is closely related to the path of *bhakti* (devotion to God). *Bhakti* is not just a form of worship, but is a spiritual path that frees individuals from worldly suffering, in *Bhagavadgītā* XVIII.66 it is stated “Leave all your duties, come to Me alone for refuge, do not grieve, for I will free you from all sins.” This verse carries a profound meaning that devotion enables one to surrender all worldly burdens to God, thereby freeing oneself from anxiety.

In the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Hanuman is an ideal example of someone who attains *antaraxia* through *bhakti*. When he is sent to search for Sītā, he is not anxious because he believes that his task is a form of devotion to Rāma. Even when facing danger in Lanka, Hanuman remains calm and confident. Meanwhile, Bharata shows another form of *bhakti* that brings him inner peace. When he is given the throne of Ayodhyā after Rāma is exiled, he refuses and chooses to rule only as Rāma's deputy. This decision shows that *bhakti* can free one from attachment to worldly power and ambition, which are often sources of anxiety. However, as world civilization advances with the rapid development of science and technology, challenges to *antaraxia* and *bhakti* are increasingly inevitable. (1) Materialism and Hedonism are getting stronger. Happiness is often associated with material achievement and sensual pleasures. The philosophy of capitalism and consumerism creates the illusion that the more a person has, the happier he or she will be (Fromm, 1976). However, reality shows otherwise, the greater a person's desires, the greater his or her anxiety. In Hindu teachings, it is stated that desires are the source of anger and suffering. Thus, *bhakti* offers an alternative by teaching that true happiness lies in devotion and acceptance, not in fulfilling worldly desires. (2) Technology and Mental Overstimulation. Technological advances bring great benefits to human life, but also create new challenges. Excessive social media and news make it increasingly difficult for humans to achieve inner peace. Compared to

ancient times, where humans could easily meditate or worship with focus, the modern world is full of distractions that make it increasingly difficult for humans to achieve *antaraxia*. (3) Crisis of Meaning in Life. Many people in the modern era feel that they have lost the meaning of life because their lives are trapped in a monotonous work routine. Stoic and Hindu philosophy offer solutions through the perspective that the meaning of life does not depend on external success, but on inner quality. Therefore, the concepts of *antaraxia* and *bhakti* remain relevant in facing modern challenges. By applying these teachings, humans can rediscover inner peace in a world full of anxiety and uncertainty.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

*Antaraxia* and *bhakti* are two complementary concepts that are closely related in achieving inner peace. The *Rāmāyaṇa* describes the lives and devotion of heroes, both of which are explained very clearly through characters such as Bharata, Hanuman, Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa, and Rāma. Each of these characters illustrates a different aspect of achieving inner peace through spiritual faith and devotion to God. Bharata, for example, even though he had to undergo great hardship when his brother Rāma was exiled, he remained loyal to *dharma* and carried out his duties as a ruler humbly, giving up personal desires for the greater good. Hanuman, with his steadfast devotion to Rāma, shows that inner peace comes not only from wisdom, but also from complete devotion to God. In every challenge he faced, Hanuman remained calm and convinced that his duty was to serve Rāma wholeheartedly. Sītā, in her struggle against abduction and suffering, also demonstrates the quality of extraordinary devotion, remaining steadfast to the principles of *dharma* despite extreme hardships. Lakṣmaṇa, who is always faithful to Rāma, represents unwavering devotion and devotion in the face of life’s trials. Rāma himself is the ultimate symbol of perfect devotion and *dharma*, who lived his life with virtue and patience despite many challenges. The many examples in the *Rāmāyaṇa* teach that even though life is full of trials and tribulations, we

can achieve them by holding on to higher spiritual values and surrendering to a higher power.

The relevance of this teaching remains strong amidst the challenges of modern life. In a world filled with social pressures, rapid cultural change, and identity conflicts, many people feel adrift and struggle to achieve inner peace. The tensions of life caused by work stress, complex social relationships, and shifting values in society often disrupt inner balance. However, by adopting the principles of *bhakti* and *antaraxia*, we can find a path to balance between the material and spiritual worlds. *Bhakti* teaches us not to get caught up in the pursuit of worldly and temporary happiness, but to focus on our relationship with God, which gives true peace. *Antaraxia* teaches us to detach ourselves from emotional dependence on the external world, and thereby achieve a stable inner peace, undisturbed by external circumstances. In everyday life, these principles can be applied to create inner harmony, reduce anxiety, and provide peace in facing life's challenges.

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