

30. The True Nature Of Friendship

O Lord, play your Murali to enable Prakruthi to dance in ecstasy around you and enjoy the sonorous music flowing out of your Murali; which spreads the vibrations of love in the atmosphere, fills up every heart with love and promotes love under all circumstances.

The concept of the ideal human relationship evolves when it is inspired by love and based upon truth. *Sathya*—truth and *Prema*—love form the foundation of this kind of friendship. This sort of connection is divinised with the sincere mingling of the hearts. Friendship based on altruism adopts the motto: love for all and malice towards none, keeping in view the well-being of others, overlooking personal interests. Such an attitude makes life enjoyable and helps, also, to

set right the world. Such attitudes make persons voluntarily give more and receive less, whereas if egoism creeps in you, then you like to receive more and give less. The difference in attitudes of egoists and altruists reveals the contradiction between the concept of ideal friendship and the actual manner in which it is practised in everyday life.

Friendship should not be based on considerations of fear and favour. On the one hand, you try to be friendly with a person who is in authority and power out of fear; and on the other hand, you try to be friendly with an affluent and wealthy person in the hope of gaining some personal benefits. Wealth and status being temporary, our friendships will also turn out to be of a transitory nature.

If a person is adopting wrong ways, a true friend should not be afraid of pointing out his errors with a view to improving him. It is not enough to merely share joy with each other; but it is more important to share the sorrow with each other. Sacred friendship is that which enables one to help others, at all times, and in all circumstances.

You know that Krishna and Kuchela were friends in the *ashram* of Sandeepa in their young age. As they grew up, Krishna became a king and Kuchela was so poor that he could not even feed his children. At the insistence of his wife, Kuchela approached Krishna for some help. The gatekeepers stopped Kuchela at the

entrance. Kuchela hesitatingly revealed his identity to the guards and requested them to inform Krishna that an old boyhood friend had come to see Him. As soon as this message reached Krishna, Kuchela was escorted to the palace. Kuchela met Krishna, spoke for some time happily, and took leave of Krishna. On returning home, he found that Krishna had already showered His grace resulting in all kinds of riches given to him. Kuchela told his wife, “Krishna received me with great love, and this shows His kindness and generosity towards the poor people. He looked at me from head to foot. Out of His love, He gave me all the riches for the little parched rice that He ate from my hand.”

Friendship, in these days, can be illustrated by a story. A person had three friends. He had taken to several bad ways and consequently had to face a court case. He went to a friend and sought his help. The friend frankly told him that he would not like to associate himself with the crime committed by him. He refused to give evidence to rescue him. The second friend, when approached, told him that he would only go up to the court but would not be a witness in a witness box. Thereafter, he approached the third friend for help. He immediately responded and said, “Yes, your troubles are mine, my troubles are yours and I shall help you in whatever manner you wish me to help.” It is quite clear that amongst these three the third is the best kind of friend. For our life also, we have three such friends. At the time of death, one has to leave behind all that one owns. Wealth and status do not accompany

you. Your friends and relations may come till the burial ground to bury or cremate the body, and thereafter all will return home. Only the good and bad acts that you have performed in your life will accompany you. Your next birth will be carved out according to your deeds in this life.

In order to remain good, you must cultivate respect for truth which is permanent, whereas everything else including your body is subject to change, decay and death. So it is desirable to undertake various practices to win the grace of the Lord at this young age while you have the energy and ability to learn and concentrate. It is quite probable that some of your friends may point out to you that this is the age to make a success of yourself in worldly affairs. They will advise you to earn money and enjoy life. According to their way of thinking, the pursuit of God can be kept in abeyance till the age of retirement from active life. But, the fact is that the young age, being impressionable and formative, is the right age to develop sacred ideas and practise spiritual *sadhanas*. It is common knowledge that if throughout one's life one pursues *Maya*, then at the time of death it will not be possible to divert one's thoughts towards God. Therefore now is the time for you to lay the foundation for a good future.

Pavitratma Swarupas!

Today, we may or may not know the significance

of *prema*. From now on, you should make a determination to cultivate friendships based upon love. Do not allow the current meaning of friendship to corrupt your minds.

In this connection, one is reminded of the love the gopikas and the gopalas had for Krishna and on account of their love, they gladly bore all the sufferings. This illustrates the sacred friendship based on love for the divine. At the time of Krishna's departure to Mathura, many gopikas tried to hold back the legs of powerful horses to prevent them from going forward. The wheels of the chariot were held by them, but they could not succeed in preventing the chariot from moving forward. Finally, unable to do anything, they addressed Akrura, "You have the name Akrura but you are the most cruel person we have ever met." After Krishna had gone, all the gopikas were expressing their sorrow in many ways. One gopika addressing Krishna said, "You should stay back and play your Murali, whatever else others may say. We depended on you and hoped to be at your feet. Will you leave us and go away to Mathura?"

A mother also shows great affection to the son. This aspect too is similar to friendship. Yasoda, the divine mother, did not find Krishna and all her thoughts were on Krishna. The mother sang in the following words: "You have always blessed us by playing your Murali. Why are you not showing your face now? Have you forgotten the *prema* of your mother? I have been waiting all these days in the hope that you will return. I cannot

wait any longer. Please come soon.”

On the other hand, Krishna had gone to Mathura and Kamsa gave him a lot of trouble there. The news reached Devaki and Vasudeva who were in prison. Devaki was very much disturbed on hearing the news that Kamsa was troubling Krishna. She was continuously looking through the windows, fearing that some bad news would reach her any moment. In immense distress she would think that: “The demons who are in the form of men have taken Krishna to the city of Mathura. They must have given him a lot of trouble. Kamsa is a very cruel person. He must have brought wild elephants to fight with Krishna. He has no heart in him. Can he not think of the fact that Krishna is very young? It is unfortunate that we have lived to see the troubles that Kamsa is causing to Krishna.” These sentiments strengthen the feelings of friendship. Only such sacred relationship, associated with *prema*, springing from the fountain of one’s heart, is true friendship. You must transcend dissension and live in harmony, by raising your hearts to God.

సరి చరణాంబుజ నిర్మల బక్తః
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