

5. Dhruva

Jihvaagre Vartate Lakshmi.

Jihvaagre Mitra Baandhavaha.

Jihvaagre Bandhana Praapti.

Jihvaagre Maranam Dhruvam.

Lakshmi,¹ resides on the tip of the tongue.

By the tongue are determined friends and relatives.

The tongue can be the cause of bondage.

The tongue can also lead to death.

Students!

With one's speech, one can win kingdoms, wealth, and friends. One can develop relationships and even invite death with one's speech. Words are crucial for profit and loss, repute and disrepute, joy and sorrow. When words are good, the result is good. Bad words produce bad results. Every man should discriminate between good and bad words, control his speech and use only appropriate words.

Dharma and justice are the foundations of the universe. *Dharma Eva Yato Moolam, Dharma Eva Mahaatgunam*—there is no foundation or virtue greater than dharma. The one who defined, practiced, and propagated dharma for the good of humanity was Emperor Manu. He had two sons. The first was Uttaanapaada and the second, Priyavrata. Uttaanapaada had two wives—Suniti and Suruchi. Suniti's son was Dhruva and Uttama was Suruchi's son.

These stories are very important for today's students. When students listen to inspiring accounts of pure souls, their tender hearts can be transformed. There are many changes in the world today. Human life itself is a series of changes—from infancy to adolescence, then to middle-age and senility. An egg

becomes a bird. A seed grows into a tree. These are all effects of change. Change is necessary not just in Nature but in humans also, especially, in youth. What kind of change? Ideal transformation. To pride yourself on changing from a boy into an educated man is not ideal change. Ego is not a sign of true transformation. Education must result in the blossoming of humility and obedience. Humility is the jewel of students. Unfortunately, it cannot be found nowadays. In the days of the *Bhagavatham*, students developed human values, contemplated on Divinity and earned the Vision of God.

The story of Prince Dhruva

Dhruva was five years old and Uttama, four-and-a-half. Once both were playing in the garden. Their father, Uttaanapaada, was watching them indulgently and enjoying himself. After some time Uttama became tired. He ran and sat in his father's lap. Uttaanapaada was extremely fond of Suruchi, the mother of Uttama. Suniti's son, Dhruva, also ran forward to do the same.

Suddenly Suruchi ran forward and flung Dhruva away from his father. As if that wasn't enough, she hurt his tender heart with harsh words: "Dhruva! You may be the King's son, but not mine. Only a son born of me has the right to sit on the King's lap. If you want to sit on your father's lap, the only way is for you to take another birth as my son! This is your fate for being Suniti's son. In this manner, Suruchi unleashed arrow-like words at Dhruva.

Dhruva walked back to his mother's palace. He entered and sat down silently in a corner. Tears were coursing down his

cheeks. Some maids noticed his condition and informed Suniti. Even when asked by his mother, Dhruva sat quietly with a tear-stained face. Suniti came to know of the incident from her maids. She lamented her plight, “Dhruva, you had the misfortune of being born to me. I am treated like a maid by everyone in the palace because the King favors the other queen. So how can my son get any respect?” She told Dhruva, “My son, pray to God and be born to Suruchi.”

Immediately Dhruva replied, “I have no more interest in life after this insult.” He blamed his stepmother for her selfishness. Suniti went close to him and stopped him, “My son, we should not criticize or blame others. Why? Because the result of that blame accrues to us also. Your stepmother’s words, despite being harsh, will result only in your good. Whatever anyone may say is for your good. Do not blame your stepmother. She has shown you the path of your destiny.” Will any mother advise likewise today? But Suniti was different. Her name was Suniti, meaning “embodiment of virtue (*niti*)”. She passed on those morals to her son also.

Dhruva said, “So what do you want me to do, mother?” Suniti replied, “Son! No one can really help another. It is God alone who is the sole refuge of everyone. He alone can fulfill all your wishes. Go to the forest and seek Lord Narayana to achieve your desires.” Are there such mothers today, who send their five-year-old sons to the forest for penance? She placed her hand on Dhruva’s head as blessing and said, “Whether you are in the forest, city, village, mountains, or sea, God is the only refuge of the forlorn. Instead of suffering in the palace, it is much better to delight in thoughts of God in the forest.

Wherever you may be, I am not in a position to help you. God will take care of you. Don't think of the forest as a forest but as God's abode. Go and seek Him, my son."

Dhruva accepted his mother's words as command, prostrated at her feet and left immediately. A mere five-year-old boy! He did not know what a forest was, the way leading there, how to pray, what pleases God...nothing! Yet, he didn't pause to worry about these issues. "I must follow my mother's command. I must undertake penance. I must achieve the Lord's Vision." There was no thought in his mind besides his goal.

By the power of Suniti's blessing, the Divine sage Narada met Dhruva midway. Narada divined Dhruva's intentions. He asked the lad, "Where are you going, young Dhruva? Are you going to play?" Dhruva said, "Yes, O Divine Sage, I am going to play with God." Narada asked, "Where is God?" Dhruva answered, "My mother told me to go to the forest and seek Him."

Narada exclaimed, "O foolhardy child! Don't you know that most renunciates and knowers of scriptures cannot attain the Lord even after centuries of penance? You are a child. You have no worldly experience. You don't know about God. How can an innocent, ignorant child like you achieve God? It is impossible!" Dhruva replied, "Narada, age is not important to the Lord. My mother's blessing and my determination will take me to the goal."

Narada tried to dissuade Dhruva by talking of discomfort, fear and failure. “There are many animals in the forest. Dangerous snakes will pursue you everywhere. Ghosts and evil spirits abound as well. You are accustomed to royal comforts, having no experience in the ways of the world. No, what you have determined is too much.” But Dhruva was firm. “I will never return to the palace. My resolve is a divine one, not a wicked one. God dwells in a pure heart. A decision that emerges from my heart is, therefore, a Divine decision! I will never give it up.”

Today’s students have a glorious lesson to be learnt from Dhruva. **STRONG DETERMINATION**—this is necessary for every achievement in life.

Dhruva did not give heed to Narada’s words. “It is my mother’s command. I should follow it even at the cost of my life and prove the value of a mother’s word. I must, and will, succeed. As soldiers are the life of a fort, as a signature is the life of a promissory note, similarly Truth is life to our faculty of speech. I will never give up Truth. *Sathyam Naasti Paro Dharmah*—there is no *dharma* higher than Truth. I am the grandson of Manu, who was a great proponent of *dharma*. I must be the embodiment of *sathya* and *dharma*.” These were the lofty thoughts chasing each other in Dhruva’s mind.

Narada finally admitted defeat. He admired Dhruva’s resolve and felt pity for him. He said, “Son! Your determination and purity have deeply affected me. I will come with you for a while.” They went to the banks of River Yamuna. There, Narada instructed Dhruva, “Dear child, if one chants the Name

of the Lord with a purified mind, the Lord appears soon.” They had a bath in Yamuna and Narada whispered into the ear of Dhruva, the great *dvaadasi* (twelve-syllable) mantra: ***Om Namō Bhagavate Vaasu-devaaya.***

After Narada left, Dhruva found a shady part in the forest, fixed his seat and began chanting the mantra. He chanted *Om Namō Bhagavate Vaasudevaaya* without interruption. He forgot his body. However, because of his tender age, he felt hungry and thirsty at times. During the first month, he ate fruits fallen on the ground. In the second month, he ate only tubers and leaves. In the third month, he subsisted on water. In the fourth month, he survived on air. His body was reduced to a skeleton. That is natural for the body. The body is born of food. It is called *annamaya kosa*—sheath of food.

Within this physical sheath are *praanamaya kosa* (sheath of life), *manomaya kosa* (sheath of mind), *vi-jnaanamaya kosa* (sheath of knowledge) and finally, *anandamaya kosa* (sheath of bliss). Dhruva neglected only the *annamaya kosa*. He merged the name of the Lord with his *pranamaya kosa*. With inhalation and exhalation, he repeated *Om Namō Bhagavate Vaasudevaaya.*

Next, *manomaya kosa*. Dhruva clearly pictured in his mind the form of the Lord as described by Narada, which was imprinted in his heart. What is the inner meaning? He recited the Lord’s Name while picturing His Form. And he pictured the Lord’s Form while reciting His Name. Name and Form—this became Dhruva’s penance.

Name + Form = penance (*tapas*)

The whole forest became hot due to Dhruva's one-pointedness. Sages dwelling there could not bear it. They were astonished that a five-year-old boy could sustain such iron control over the mind. They tried to obstruct his concentration in manifold ways. They created snakes, which circled his body. They sent wild animals and evil spirits to trouble Dhruva. But nothing could disturb him, much less harm him. Dhruva thought, "My mother said that God is the refuge of the helpless. So the Lord will take care. I need not worry!" What deep faith he had! When nothing could even distract Dhruva, the Gods in heaven went to Narayana to intervene on Dhruva's behalf.

Dhruva's eyes were closed. He didn't even want to look at the world. "I do not desire anything belonging to this world," he had decided at the outset. "This body is composed of the five elements. It is bound to collapse one day. But the Indweller has neither birth nor death. That Indweller is God. I have assumed this body for the sole purpose of seeing that Indweller." Gradually, he became so weak that his voice was no longer audible. He repeated *Om Namō Bhagavate Vaasudevaaya* in his mind. Finally, the Lord responded. Lord Narayana appeared in front of Dhruva.

As the Lord came closer and closer, His effulgence intermingled with Dhruva's aura and Dhruva shone brighter and brighter. Suddenly, finding his heart empty of the Lord's Form, Dhruva opened his eyes. He saw the Lord standing in front of him. Smiling, Dhruva said, "O Lord, as long You were in my

heart. Now You are outside me. Are You trying to leave me? I won't allow it."

Dhruva had recognized that what we see outside is a reflection of our own hearts. If you feel that someone is bad, that bad is not in him, but only a reflection of your heart. Your own thoughts, both good and bad, appear to you outside as reflection, reaction, resound.

Even Lord Narayana was taken aback at Dhruva's ideal qualities! The Lord mused, "How surprising that these eternal feelings have entered this young boy! He is enjoying the benefits of many past lives spent in the divine Quest." Thinking thus, the Lord laughed within Himself. Dhruva had lost his voice but still, he started extolling the Lord. He described all the ten *Avatars* of the Lord and His exploits. He gazed upon the Lord continuously, without blinking. He held the Lord's Lotus Feet tightly. The Lord asked him, "Child, what do you want?" Dhruva could not produce any sound. He appealed to the Lord mentally. The Lord touched his cheeks with His Conch and fresh energy coursed through his body, restoring his speech. Then the Lord stood back, clenching His Hands together.

Dhruva approached the Lord, closer and closer. The Lord asked him again, "Dhruva, tell Me what you desire." Dhruva was so enraptured that the Lord had to repeat the question many times. Finally Dhruva said, "My Lord! Why do You insist on drowning me in *maya*? You knew where I was, what I was doing and who I was praying to. Otherwise You could not have come here. Knowing all this, don't You know what I desire? Of course, You do!"

Dhruva was talking high philosophy! But God had read two books more on spirituality than Dhruva! Lord Narayana replied, “Child! The thought that prompted your penance was the desire to sit in your father’s lap. You put this thought into action by performing this penance. But it remains to be seen what your word will be.”

Students should recognize clearly what God was looking for. *Manasekam Vachasyekam Karmanyekam Mahaatmanam*—unity in thought, word, and deed is the mark of a great soul. “You resolved upon a goal. You acted as per your resolve. Now, I want to hear from your lips: What do you seek?” the Lord clarified.

Dhruva replied, “Dear Lord, in ignorance I desired my father’s affection. Unable to bear an ordinary insult, I sought to sit in my father’s lap and enjoy my rightful privileges as his son. I acted upon that resolve. Now that I’ve seen You, touched You and talked to You, I want only You. I craved a drop of water and found Divine Nectar itself. I desired a piece of glass and found a diamond.”

The Lord smiled. “Dhruva, by thought and deed you desired your father’s proximity. But by word, you desire only Me. Your thought, word, and deed are not in harmony. However, note that the majority lies toward your initial desire. Hence, it is My command that you return to your father’s kingdom and make your mother happy.”

Do you see, how subtle, mysterious, and impeccable are the Lord's ways? The Lord did appear. He showered grace on the boy in manifold ways. But Dhruva's thought, word, and deed were not in harmony. For such a small fault, poor Dhruva lost to the Lord! Finally Dhruva said, "I offer everything to You," and left the decision to Narayana. The Lord said, "Son, obey My command. Till now, you followed your mother's command. Now, I am your father, mother and everything. There is no lasting happiness in the world.

*Janma Dukham, Jaraa Dukham, Jaaya Dukham Punah
Punah Antya Kaale Mahaa Dukham, Tasmaat
Jaagrata Jaagrata!*

Birth, old age and death are full of sorrow.
The final moments are most pathetic.
So beware, beware!

I am sending you back so that you fulfill your initial resolution. You must return without hesitation," said the Lord. Having said this, the Lord waited for Dhruva's response.

Dhruva said, "It is Your command and I will obey it. No matter what I may experience by leaving You and returning, no matter how disappointing, I will follow Your command." Only after he made this promise, the Lord came forward and took Dhruva in His embrace. Holding him close, the Lord spoke endearingly to the young lad. "Dhruva! For God to be earned by such a young boy as you—this has never happened in the world."

There is an acute need for such boys and girls in the world today—truthful, obedient to parents and devoted to God. There is no meaning in devising new social orders and principles. Is it enough to merely change societies in this manner? No, thoughts must change! Divine, novel, elevating feelings must be encouraged by students.

The Lord continued, “Dhruva! You have to teach much to the world about the glory of the Divine Name. Now I will enter you.” A light emerged from the Lord and entered Dhruva. The boy who was so frail for the past few months was filled with energy and brightness. He jumped up and touched the Lord’s Feet. The Lord disappeared.

The Lord’s ethereal voice continued speaking to Dhruva. “Dearest child! You must rule the world as an ideal emperor for many years yet. Your father is repentant. He looks forward to your return, moment to moment. He has given up food and sleep and wants only you. Go back, go back, go back. After you complete the task of ruling the kingdom, I have set aside an exalted position for you. The Polaris Star situated in the midst of the *Sapta Rishis*, the Sun and the Moon shall henceforth be called Dhruva Star. All celestial bodies circle the Dhruva Star. Even Polaris itself may change but you will be eternal. You are an embodiment of immortality. Your life will be an expression of Bliss.” The Lord also promised that Dhruva would reach Him at the end of his life span.

Just look at how much Grace overflowed to Dhruva when he agreed to follow the Lord’s command! Dhruva obtained immortal fame, the Lord’s constant presence within

himself and the Lord's love. Much, much more than what he originally desired. That is why it is not necessary to ask God for your desires. Just follow the Lord's commands and His Grace will overflow, unasked.

The sanctity of the *Bhagavatham*

In this manner, the *Bhagavatham* is full of devotion. But there is no one today with even a thousandth part of Dhruva's devotion and virtue. The sanctity of *Bhagavatham* is unsurpassed because it contains the lives of such exalted souls. But people neglect this scripture and even cast wrong accusations on it. *Bhagavatham* is nothing but God's Love, from start to finish. But all cannot understand Divine Love. Some scholars' interpretations of Krishna's leelas are atrocious!

At what age did Krishna play with the *gopikas*? Krishna was a five-year old boy! At that age is it possible to interact with *gopikas* as commonly portrayed? Krishna went to Mathura when He was five years and one month old. He never returned to Gokula. Did you not play with your sisters when you were five years old? Can this be perceived as immoral? When Pareekshit asked Suka about Krishna's behavior, Suka explained it to him in the same way. Suka was a celibate. A perfect celibate delighted in Krishna's sports with the *gopikas*. Isn't this surprising? Suka said, "Pareekshit! Do you see Krishna as God or as a man? If you consider Him God, you cannot entertain such low feelings. These defects are really in you. You see your own faults outside you as reflection, reaction, and resound. Even if dirt approaches God, it will turn into purity."

Brahmaanandam Parama Sukhadam, Kevalam Jnaana Moortim, Dvandvaateetam Gagana Sa-drisham, Thath Thwam Asyaadi Lakshyam, Ekam Nityam Vimalam Achalam, Sarvaadhi Saakshi Bhootam, Bhaavaateetam Triguna Rahitam....

“Ever blissful, granting happiness, embodiment of wisdom, beyond duality, infinite as the sky, primordial, final goal, One, eternal, stainless, immovable, omnipresent witness, beyond feeling, devoid of the three *gunas*”—such is God.

God is an ocean. The feelings and desires of devotees are streams. When both merge, the ocean remains the same but the streams get purified. The ocean is never disturbed. Another example. If you mix one cup of milk in ten cups of water, you decrease the value of milk. But when one cup of water is mixed with ten cups of milk, the worthless water acquires the value of milk. Thus, when two entities merge, the purer and greater one lends its qualities to the other.

God is beyond the three *gunas*. Will He behave like one trapped in *gunas*? Whatever thoughts anyone entertained towards Krishna, He was totally pure and unattached. It is true that the *gopikas* related to the body of Krishna but even that was not in any immoral sense. The *gopikas* were pure and unsullied. The meaningless interpretations of scholars have stained people’s perceptions of the *Bhagavatham*. God is ever pure and selfless. These scholars cheat people when they look upon God as anything less than Purity itself.

The return of Dhruva

The tender heart of Dhruva set an example for everyone. Dhruva started back toward his father's kingdom. Uttaanapaada was informed. In great excitement, Uttaanapaada sat in a palanquin with Suniti, Suruchi, and Uttama and set out to welcome Dhruva. As Dhruva walked through the forest he looked like a luminous star. He had so much brightness! He was only five years old. Skipping and jumping, he laughed in pure joy as he ran home.

Uttaanapaada jumped down from his chariot and ran forward to embrace Dhruva. He lifted Dhruva in his arms and said, "Forgive my faults, son. To me you are Narayana Himself. Falling prey to attachment, I was unfair with you. I made your mother suffer in many ways." Dhruva replied, "Who am I? Who are you? You are not the father, I am not the son. I am Narayana, you are Narayana, everything is Narayana. Where is the question of pardon?" Speaking of unity of the *Atma*, Dhruva melted his father's heart. He taught *Atma Vidya* even to his father!

Uttaanapaada said, "Enough time has been wasted already. Come now." He sat in the palanquin and took Dhruva on one thigh and Uttama on the other. In this manner they reached the kingdom full of joy and excitement. Suniti witnessed this scene. She had been away from her husband, and her son was in the forest. She had endured a lot of pain. She had spent the many months wondering, "I don't know what sins have brought upon me this suffering—the pain of separation from my husband and my son. Which woman can live in this manner?" This Suniti, who had been submerged in despair,

could not contain her joy and excitement on this day. She also took Dhruva in her arms and played with him joyously.

Dhruva's penance had lasted five months. He came home when he was five years and five months old. And he was crowned as the emperor when he was only six years old! Uttanapaada rightly realized that for one who had realized God, it was not a big task to rule over a kingdom. During the coronation, Uttama held the royal umbrella over Dhruva's head while Uttanapaada and his wives sat on either side of him. The parents felt, "If our son, so tender and young, could achieve God's Grace, why should we waste our time? Human life is not for enjoying wealth and comfort, but to reach God."

Only then did Uttanapaada recognize the true meaning of the term *manuja* (man). Manuja = *Manu* + *Ja* (born of), meaning, child of Manu. All humans should behave like children of Manu, embodying his characteristics. Manu always followed dharma. He defined justice for the good of humanity. The law followed in every court today is based on Manu's exposition. Thus, it is our duty to practice dharma as laid down by Manu. After Dhruva's coronation, that very day, his father and mothers left for Skanda Ashrama to spend the remainder of their lives in solitude and meditation.

Dhruva ruled for many years and won the love of his subjects by ensuring their happiness. He waited patiently for his merger with the Lord, recalling the Lord's promise. During his last moments a chariot came from the Lord to take him. Dhruva told the charioteer, "Where do I need to go? Why do I need to go, when God is everywhere?" He taught the Supreme

Truth even to the charioteer sent by God! “You expect me to go to God in this chariot. That is meaningless. God is here, as He is everywhere. I will merge into Him now,” he said. He sat down in the chariot and chanted *Om Namō Bhagavate Vaasudevaaya*. The light in him merged into the Lord.

The power of devotion

Such sweet, blissful and dharmic stories are found nowhere except in the *Bhagavatham*. You heard the Lord telling Sage Durvasa yesterday that even God’s Will pales before the power of devotion. God says, “I will gladly accept defeat but never let a devotee down. I am a servant of My devotees. I wait day and night as a watchman in the prayer room of My devotee! Do you know why? My devotee could express any desire at any time. I want to be present to fulfill his slightest wish. I am the final authority everywhere—except with my devotee. My devotee alone has the final say.”

Through His actions, God has always demonstrated that there is no force greater than the power of devotion. What is *bhakti*, devotion? *Bhagavad anurakti* (attachment to God) is *bhakti*. Within *bhakti* are contained *bhukti* (food), *rakti* (desires), *yukti* (cleverness), *anurakti* (attachment, love), *virakti* (detachment), and *mukti* (liberation).

Where did the word *bhakti* originate? Man’s primary need is food, *bhukti*. *Sareera Maadhyam Khalu Dharma Sandhanam*—the body is a means for observing dharma and it needs food. Next, man needs *rakti*, desire. The third is *yukti*, worldly intelligence. It is necessary to know how to live in this world. Next comes *anurakti*—we must love all without distinction.

These are followed by *virakti* and *mukti*. In all these words, the common syllable is “*kṭi*”, “*Bha*” from Bhagavan (God), and “*kṭi*” from these words combine to form *bhakti*.

Therefore, He who grants you *bhakti*, *rakti*, *yukti*, *anurakti*, *virakti*, and *mukti* is God. Bhakti is not limited to performing worship, doing *aarati* and so on. We must offer ourselves to God! We must hold on to *Prema* in all situations. This is *bhakti*.

Dhruva attained victory in every test. He was only five years old. Boys of that age enter our Primary School in the 1st Standard. Meaning, this 1st Standard boy showed such great dedication. Where did Dhruva obtain such strength? He achieved everything with DETERMINATION. We must achieve with determination also—achieve not worldly victories, but God Himself. We should not fear troubles and give up. Only then our devotion will be blessed with strength from God. For everything, pure Love is the basis.

A devotee approached Ramakrishna Paramahansa and asked, “Master, how can I see God?” Ramakrishna replied, “O madman, you cry for wife, children, and wealth. All your grief is wasted. Cry for God instead. Then you will achieve His Vision, without a doubt.” Therefore, we should not cry for worldly ends. “*Naara*” is water, and “*Nayana*” means eyes. The *naara* flowing from your *nayana* must be offered to none other than Narayana! These are tears of joy.

Only tears of joy (*Ananda*), not tears of misery, can transport us into the *Anandamaya Kosa*—the sheath of Bliss.

Everyone must go beyond the *annamaya kosa*, *pranamaya kosa*, *manomaya kosa*, and *vijnaanamaya kosa* and reach the *anandamaya kosa*. You must try in all possible ways to achieve Bliss. For everything, God's Grace is the foundation. Become worthy of His Grace.

¹. Goddess of Prosperity.