

11. Krishna and Balarama As Students

*Sadayam Hridayam,
Yasya Bhaashitam Sathya Bhooshitam,
Kaaya Para Hiteyasyaam*
A heart full of compassion,
Speech full of truth,
A body dedicated to service,
These three are essential for human life.

Embodiments of divine love!

A steady mind, truthful speech and a body dedicated to service—these are the three most important requisites for life. In *Vedanta*, this is called *Trikarana Suddhi*—Purity of the three instruments. The Upanishads define *manava* (man) to mean “one who trusts and can be trusted”. Every person lives only on the basis of this trust or faith. From dawn to dusk, all our activities are made possible only by faith.

Education must promote faith in God

To what ends do people use faith? Do they use it to perform daily tasks, to be blissful, or in service to others? Do men use faith in the right direction? We have faith in everything. It is only with faith that we go to the market or travel in a car. We promise to fulfill tasks in the future, fully expecting to be alive the next day. All actions are initiated only by faith. But humans, who have faith in everything, do not have faith in the existence and omnipotence of God.

What is the reason? Worldly objects are related to the senses. The power beyond the senses, although omnipresent, is invisible. For this reason, man is not able to believe in it. But does man believe only what he sees and reject everything that

is unseen? Can he see his mind? Is his happiness visible to him? Although they are invisible, he knows they exist. But due to weakness, he trusts only the visible. So he doesn't trust his own mind, his Self. Our ancient culture urges us to pursue education in order to cultivate strong, immovable faith in the Reality. What kind of education? Not worldly education. Worldly education caters only to your selfishness.

*From the time you wake up, till you sleep again,
You struggle constantly only to fill the stomach.
Earning worldly education by forgetting the Lotus-Eyed
Lord,
What great happiness do you enjoy, tell me truly, O
man?*

What happiness is man able to enjoy from worldly education? People only think that they get happiness from such education, but it is temporary. Lasting bliss is obtained only in spiritual education. Man enters school early in childhood and perseveres for years, learning many subjects, only to fulfill ambitions for wealth and reputation. He feels proud of his learning and degrees. But this education is not something you should be proud of.

*Pustakamul Pathinchitini, Poortiga Joochiti Sarva
Saastramul,
Nistulamaina Vidyalanu Nerchitinanchunu Garva-mela
Nee
Hastayugambu Modchi Paramaatmuni Bhakti To Kol-
valeni*

*Ee Prastuta Vidyalanniyunu Dhaatri Nirartha-kambu
Kada, O Manava?*

“I have read texts, looked at all sciences”
Why pride yourself so, on useless learning?
If you cannot join your palms and express devotion to
God,
Aren't all your studies a total waste, O man?

Worldly studies, diplomas, and degrees cannot be called “education”. These studies gradually destroy even human qualities. Peace is obtained only when human qualities are merged with our Divinity.

Sandipani's hermitage

After Kamsa's death, Devaki and Vasudeva arranged for the schooling of Krishna and Balarama. Till then, the boys had not even learned the alphabet. Why? Nanda and Yasoda were afraid that if they admitted Krishna into any *gurukula*, Kamsa might send demons there and endanger the lives of many other children.

In the interest of true education, it was the practice in ancient India to send children away from home to a *gurukula* where everyone, whether sons of emperors or ordinary people, stayed as equals in the guru's house. You heard Prahlada's story. Although he was a prince, he stayed in the house of his *gurus*, Chanda and Amarka. He did not stay at home like “day-scholars” of today.

So, Krishna and Balarama were sent to the hermitage of Guru Sandipani. Sandipani's ashram was neither in Mathura

nor in Brindavan. It was in the holy city of Kasi. Leaving Krishna and Balarama in Kasi, their parents lived fearlessly in Mathura. The students of those days excelled in physical prowess and intellectual acumen. Still, they were ever humble and obedient and tread the path of *sathya* and *dharma* under the *guru*'s guidance.

Although Krishna and Balarama had destroyed many demons in infancy and earned universal fame, they performed household chores in Sandipani's house, lived their *guru*'s commands and acquired true education. They would go into the forest daily and fetch firewood for the kitchen. Only by following the disciplines of the *gurakulas* in humility, students of those days transformed themselves into ideal men and set glorious examples for posterity.

Sandipani had only one son, who died young. Sandipani and his wife bore this burden of sorrow with great effort. In those days, there was a practice called *guru dakshina*. After completing their education, before departing to become householders, students would make a token offering of gratitude to their guru. This offering was *guru dakshina*. Balarama and Krishna also went to Sandipani. Standing humbly with folded hands, they prayed, "Guru Deva! It is time for us to return home. Kindly tell us what we may offer to you as guru dakshina."

Sandipani said, "My dear sons! It was my greatest good fortune to be guru to ideal students like you. Your prowess and divine attributes are known the world over. During your stay here, your behavior was exemplary, not requiring a

single corrective remark from me. What can I ask of divine personages like you?” Thinking for awhile, Sandipani said, “Balarama, Krishna! You are all-knowing and all-powerful. Once you resolve upon a task, you achieve it under all circumstances. I have cherished a desire for long. My son died many years ago. I want you to resurrect him and bring him back to me.”

Balarama and Krishna set out. With their superhuman abilities, after much exertion, they were able to bring the boy back to life. In this manner, they exemplified how students should spend time in a *gurukula*, display humility and self-confidence, honor the *guru*, and enhance the reputation of their parents.

The establishment of dharma

Meanwhile, the King of Magadha, Jarasandha, along with his allies, attacked Mathura. Jarasandha was Kamsa’s father-in-law. He hated Krishna and wanted to avenge Kamsa’s death. Jarasandha attacked not once or twice but seventeen times! Hearing this news, Balarama and Krishna hurried to Mathura from Sandipani’s hermitage. The brothers thought, “Why have we taken *Avatars*? To free the world from sinners, to strengthen the forces of good.”

By killing Jarasandha, his gargantuan armies would not be depleted. So they decided to eradicate his army and spare him. Whenever Jarasandha attacked, Krishna and Balarama annihilated his army and sent him back unharmed. Jarasandha would return with another army, go back defeated again and so

on. Thus, he invited humiliation upon himself seventeen times. Finally, Krishna eliminated Jarasandha also.

All the kings who professed friendship with Jarasandha formed a clique. Name a king, and he was a hater of Krishna. These kings began harassing Yadavas. Krishna gave this matter much thought. He wanted to provide sanctuary to Yadavas in a secure place. He summoned the architect of the heavens, Vishvakarma, and told him to build a city in the middle of the sea. Vishvakarma could construct any structure by mere willing. He obeyed Krishna and built Dwaraka. overnight, Krishna transported all Yadavas to this miraculous city.

The world still abounded in tyrants and demons, and Balarama and Krishna evolved strategies to destroy them. Dwaraka was the most beautiful city in the world. Dwaraka's beauty spoke of its heavenly origin, in contrast to man-made cities, which were plain. Yadavas were able to lead secure and happy lives in Dwaraka. Students should recognize the difference between Yadavas and *gopikas*.

Humility and obedience

Yadavas thought, "Krishna is our relative, our friend." They related to Krishna with attachment based on pride. This wrong kind of attachment fed their ego constantly, bringing about their destruction many years later. But the *gopikas* were different. Instead of telling Krishna, "You are ours," they said, "We are Yours." This surrender earned them security and divine Love all their lives. Humility and obedience poured out of the *gopalas* and *gopikas*. Humility and obedience are very essential for everyone, especially for students.

Education teaches humility.

Humility grants deservedness.

Deservedness bestows wealth.

Wealth facilitates acts of dharma.

Dharma Grants Fulfillment Here and Hereafter.

The student stage is a peculiar period. It comes and goes as a flash across the screen of life. It is in youth that man ruins his future years. Young people run after fleeting joys and jeopardize the rest of their life. Human life itself is temporary. And this period of youth is still more temporary! Students today enter into unnecessary gossip, indulge in unrighteous acts, pursue destructive goals and cause insecurity to the nation. This is not what students should be doing.

Expand your heart

Students are meant to establish peace and security in the nation and the world. They should serve fellowmen and aspire for the welfare of all. This should be their chief aim. But sadly, they follow the opposite path. Modern students have no respect for gurus, no love or respect for parents. Who else will they respect? What good is their schooling if such is their behavior? Prahlada said, "Father! I have learnt the essence of all education." What is this essence? It is only the expansion of the heart, blossoming of discrimination.

But the students of today have extremely narrow hearts. Their love is "contracted". Therefore, students need to practice "expansion of love". You must renounce the distinctions of "I" and "they". Just as you amass wealth by working

diligently over years, you must amass peace and contentment by entertaining divine feelings. Humanness can be transformed into Divinity only when peace and contentment are allowed to flourish.

One who knows swimming (*eeta*) does not worry about the depth of the water. Similarly, one who knows *Gita* is not worried about the unrest in the world. He just follows the divine command, lends peace to the society and crosses this ocean of birth and death.

Therefore, we must practice God's words in every situation. Not just practice, but derive bliss therefrom and share it with others. Instead of selfishness (*svaartham*), share your joy with others in the spirit of spirituality (*paraartham*). Only then can society become ideal.

Students! You were born in society, brought-up in society and you are living in society. If you are not sensitive to the needs of society, for how long do you expect society to nourish you? Through your education, you must ensure peace and security for all. We should not lead a life of isolation like a drop of oil on a leaf. You should live in harmony, in unity with all. Understand the suffering and pain of others and make efforts to relieve them, thereby increasing your own purity. Only then will your life be meaningful.

Students are future leaders. The ones on whom the future will place such responsibility should promote righteousness. If we have only God's Grace, we need not fear wherever we go. Exert your utmost to become worthy of such Grace. The one who buys a ticket can sit anywhere in a train. He is

not worried about anyone asking him to leave. But the ticketless passenger mistakes every uniformed official for the ticket collector! He is in constant fear. Likewise, the one who acquires the ticket of divine Grace can go anywhere without worry. He will not bend in any situation.

Faith in yourself is faith in God

Today, we experience frustration, worry and fear every moment. What is the reason? We have no faith. Faith is absolutely essential. Lack of faith makes man susceptible to imaginary fears. What is faith? You must believe in yourself! That is self-confidence. Self-confidence is the strong foundation of our lives. On this foundation build the wall of self-satisfaction. Lay the roof of self-sacrifice on this wall. Then you will earn the bliss of Self-realization.

First develop self-confidence, without which you will experience many troubles. Self-confidence is faith in God. One with such faith has no problems. Lack of self-confidence is also the reason for not doing well at studies. Students say, “I study, but I don’t remember my lessons.” One without self-confidence lacks memory power. With self-confidence comes memory power. Hence, develop confidence and stand out as examples.

Students! First believe in yourselves! **Faith in yourself and faith in God—this is the secret of greatness.** Life will have no value if you do not have faith in yourself. You and God are not separate. Faith in yourself is the same as faith in God.

Swami wants students to be ideal. With ideal students, Bharath will become an ideal nation. Mainly, students should not entertain differences of community, caste, religion, color, and nationality. All are children of God. “Brotherhood of Man. Fatherhood of God.” People of all nations are humans. There is only the caste of humanity. All are brothers, brothers, brothers.

But there is one feeling higher than the feeling of brotherhood. That is the sense of unity on the basis of the One *Atma*. Sometimes there is animosity even between brothers. So, the unity of the *Atma* is better than brotherhood. It is not easy to develop, but do not give up, saying it is not possible.

You can achieve WHATEVER you desire! Students should cultivate such determination. Without determination, you cannot achieve anything. Don’t say, “I will try.” Say, “I must do!” Don’t even use the word “try.” If you say “try”, it will be “dry”! So say, “I must do.”

Observe Limits

Students are not at fault. Parents and teachers lead them astray. How? They consider worldly life to be permanent. Yes, we need worldly life. But there is something beyond. An example: Consider a game of football [soccer] with six players on each team. There are goal posts at either end. If the ball passes between the posts, a goal is scored. The two goal posts are worldly and spiritual knowledge. Our life is the ball. The six evil qualities (lust, anger, greed, envy, pride, attachment) are one team. *Sathya, Dharma, Santhi, Prema, Ahimsa*, and *Prak-ruthi Dharma* (worldly responsibility) form the other team. The ball of life is kicked by both teams. The ball should pass

between the two boundary posts to score a goal. Beyond the boundary posts, it is only “out,” not a goal.

Today, you are kicking the ball beyond the boundaries. Hence you are not succeeding. Act within limits, and you will be victorious. *Nah Sreyoh Niyainam Vinah*—Lasting happiness cannot be gained without limits and rules. Without limits, life is meaningless. For example, body temperature has a limit of 98.4°F. 99°F is considered a fever. Blood pressure is normal at 120/80. If it touches 90, it signals trouble.

Similarly, our eyes can see only a limited brightness. Too much brightness burns the retina. Life is a “limited company”. Do not cultivate ego. Earn respect by observing limits.

You will ruin your minds with unlimited desire. It is normal to have ambitions, but ensure that your ideals are pure. Note the difference between desires (*aasa*) and ideals (*aasaya*). It does not matter if desires are not realized, but take care that ideals are never violated. Students should be disciplined. Without discipline, life becomes an animal’s existence. Cultivate discipline in your daily lives and become ideal men and women.