

5. Krishna Was Always A Lover Of Peace And Never A Warmonger

Do you know why you have been given legs? Are these legs given to you to go round all the streets and the narrow lanes in a purposeless manner? No, they have been given so that you may visit the temple of God.

Prema Swarupas!

By superficial observers, Krishna is not regarded as a peace-loving person. People generally think of him as one who encouraged battles and fights. They also think that the bloodshed that was caused in the battle of *Mahabharatha* was due to Krishna's love for war. This is not a true picture of Krishna. In fact, he was very peace-loving; and the efforts he made and the trouble

he took to prevent war between the Pandavas and Kauravas and to establish security and peace in the country, at that time, will be evident if only we look at Vyasa's Sanskrit text.

Krishna started for Hastinapur in order to negotiate for peace. When Duryodhana, Dussasana, and other Kauravas learnt that Krishna was coming to negotiate peace, they made all preparations and arranged a reception and welcome for Krishna in the very outskirts of the city of Hastinapur. When the great chariot came, it was brought to the front of the city so that a fitting welcome could be given. As soon as Krishna got out of the chariot, Duryodhana and Dussasana met him and appraised him of the fact that a special welcome had been arranged for him and a spacious mansion had been prepared for his stay. They invited him for a special dinner on that day in the palace.

Krishna, who was the very embodiment of peace, appraised Duryodhana and Dussasana that he came there as an Ambassador to negotiate for peace and that it was not right for one who had come in the role of an Ambassador to accept their hospitality even before one's mission was completed. He said that he would gladly accept their hospitality after the mission was completed as it would be proper to do so. With these pleasing

words, he went to the house of Vidura. It was a great surprise to Vidura to see Krishna come to his house for he never even dreamt that Krishna would come to his house. He was overjoyed, and he thought that it was his great fortune, and he made all arrangements accordingly.

Vidura gave a hearty welcome to Krishna and they both sat down for a meal. After the meal, both Vidura and Krishna sat together for conversation. Then Vidura said that to him it did not appear proper that Krishna should come, for negotiating peace, to the house of bad people who may do him harm. He felt that knowing everything, Krishna should not have come there to negotiate for peace.

Then Krishna said that it was not as if he did not know that Kauravas were people with bad qualities and evil intentions. Despite this, he felt that when innocent people were being troubled and bloodshed was forthcoming, then everyone who had a responsibility should try his best to prevent injustice and bloodshed, and it was in this context that he was trying to negotiate.

If we really look at the inner significance of what Krishna had said at that time, we will find that Krishna was really concerned with the peace and security of the people; and we will understand that Krishna was truly

peace-loving and that he was not a warmonger. All these aspects and acts of Krishna, which were being done on a human plane, should be understood by us as having been done by a human being on a human plane and not by divinity.

Vidura then expressed his doubt and said that these peace negotiations were not going to reach a successful completion because he knew that the Kauravas had everything ready. All those who were connected with them were also invited to be ready. The weapons were made ready. Under these circumstances, he did not expect any peace.

Krishna then told Vidura that according to *Dharma*, which was only too well known to Vidura, all efforts should be made to establish peace. He said that irrespective of the success or failure, we must do our duty.

The day dawned and Krishna got into his chariot and moved into the city of Hastinapur. That day the city looked gay, the streets were decorated with arches, and all the streets were a pleasant sight to see. In Hastinapur, the people came forward to welcome him like the waves of an ocean would welcome the moon. In that environment, he moved on, smiling and looking at the people of Hastinapur. As soon as he came near

the Palace, Duryodhana and Karna were standing there to welcome him.

Women were bringing flowers so that they may be showered on Krishna. Fragrant flowers were showered on Krishna from the terraces. It appeared to Krishna that all this was prearranged by the Kauravas to please him. However, all these external symptoms did neither elate him nor bother him; and he entered the mansion. As Karna and Duryodhana were showing him the way to go into the assembly, Kritavarma was following Krishna. As soon as Krishna entered the assembly, all the kings and subordinate kings stood up and made obeisance to him.

As soon as Krishna entered the assembly, Dhritharashtra, with the help of others, came to greet him. He embraced Krishna and was moving ahead of Krishna with the help of Bhishma, and Drona requested Krishna to occupy the seat of honour. Krishna did not occupy the seat of honour and told Drona that, as he very well knew, there were very learned and eminent Maharishis and yogis who were gathered in that assembly to observe what was going to happen to the peace and prosperity of the country; and it was not proper to offer the seat of honour to him. In accordance with Krishna's instruction, Bhishma called various

persons and arranged to seat them in accordance with their importance.

As soon as all these persons were seated, Krishna made obeisance to the members and then occupied his seat. After that Duryodhana, Karna, Bhishma, and Drona occupied their respective seats. After all these elders were seated, the other subordinate kings also took their seats, making obeisance to the assembly. In that assembly, everyone was anxious to hear what Krishna was going to say and know what message Krishna had brought. In their anxiety to listen to him and not miss anything, they all maintained pin-drop silence. Every individual in that assembly had probably looked at Krishna many times earlier, but they were all still looking at Krishna anxiously with wide-open eyes, expecting something very special from him. While his black curly hair and pearl-white teeth were attracting people, he turned towards Dhritharashtra.

The first words uttered by Krishna were that there should be peace between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. He then said, "Let the two families of Kauravas and Pandavas remain friendly forever and establish peace and prosperity in the world. The entire world wanted peace and this was the only word that they were looking for." He further said that he had come there as a

messenger and ambassador in the context of wanting peace. He did not stop at this. He went to Dhritharashtra and said that whatever was going to be decided in that assembly was a matter of great concern to him and that Dhritharashtra should think carefully before arriving at a decision. The Pandavas lost their father when they were children. Such innocent children were brought up by Dhritharashtra, and he was responsible for their well-being. The Pandavas were happy that, although their natural father was not alive, there was someone who was affectionate to them.

Krishna went on to say, “Like your natural sons, you have looked after these adopted sons as well as brought them up. It is not right for you to show hatred towards such children whom you have yourself brought up. In obedience to you, they were in a forest for twelve years; and they lived incognito for one year; and because you told them that you would give them their kingdom if they came back after those years, they have now come back.

I am now going to tell you what Dharmaraja told me before I came here. Dharmaraja asked me to convey to you, if they had committed any mistake knowingly or unknowingly, they should be forgiven and all that they were seeking was the affection of Dhritharashtra. He said that your love and affection were more important

to them than any kingdom which may or may not be given to them. Dharmaraja said that there were no reasons whatsoever for any hatred on the part of Dhritharashtra towards the Pandavas. If there were any, they were prepared to come and ask for pardon from Dhritharashtra. When we hear such words from the Pandavas, we see how good and how sacred they were. We will also realise that Krishna, the negotiator of peace, was in no way interested in promoting war.

People, particularly students like you, should understand how much trouble Krishna took, and to what extent he went in the promotion of peace. All the kings and monarchs assembled in the hall heard all this; and while reflecting on the circumstances of negotiations, their eyes were filled with tears of sorrow. All those who were sitting in the assembly were deeply moved at the noble qualities of Krishna who was showing great respect to the elders and great love to everyone. But what could they do in the presence and in the context of the evil-doers, the Kauravas? No one could object to what the Kauravas were doing. Every individual in that assembly developed good feeling towards the Pandavas.

In this manner, Krishna was telling Dhritharashtra in addition to negotiating for peace, various things

which will help the cause of the Pandavas. It is not as if Dhritharashtra did not know the truth and strength of what Krishna was saying, and it was not as if he did not understand the sacredness thereof. He also knew that his sons were undertaking something which was wrong. But he had no alternative. He had become a weakling and had to submit himself to the wickedness of his sons. Although Krishna told him in so many words to accept peace, he could not do so, because he was surrounded by his evil children.

When things became unbearable, Krishna told Dhritharashtra, “When a person had no right over a kingdom and still wanted to have the kingdom, he was to be regarded as a thief.” The meaning of the word Dhritharashtra is, “one who thinks that a kingdom which does not belong to him is his, and enjoys it.” He further told him, “As a consequence of what your sons are doing, the entire country was going to be thrown into confusion and bloodshed. A situation is coming when innocent women and children are going to be involved in this bloodshed. You are taking the world to a situation where the sages and the rishis, who are generally confined to the forest in their *thapas*, will also be drawn into this bloodshed.

“The battle is not going to be confined to the Kauravas and the Pandavas only. Every individual in

the kingdom will be drawn into the battle. The forest fire, when it starts raging, will not think that the mango trees should be saved from the fire because they give fruits. This fire of war is going to spread to the entire population and all the people will be burnt.” In this context, Krishna advised Dhritharashtra that he should not undertake this war. Dhritharashtra did not know how to meet this situation and what reply to give, and he asked for some time to take rest. Krishna who understood the inner meaning of Dhritharashtra wanting rest took him aside and explained to him the background of the situation.

Then Krishna consoled him and talked with him. In this context, Dhritharashtra said that he realised that his sons were bad people and that they had evil intentions; but being their father, he could not go against their wishes.

Krishna then thought that it was an opportune moment, and he was prepared to use some harsh words. He asked, “If bad things are emanating from our body, are we protecting them and keeping them simply because they have come from your own body? The excreta and urine are coming from our body and are we not throwing them away and cleaning ourselves? Simply because they have come from your own body, are you protecting them and keeping them with you?”

To that, Dhritrashtra said that excreta and urine were lifeless but his sons were living beings. Then Krishna asked, “If bad living bodies are born from us, are we going to keep them and protect them? Similarly, your living sons who were born out of your body are like evil bugs.” Because of these words of Krishna, the mind of Dhritrashtra changed a little.

The Kauravas guessed that Krishna was trying to change the mind of their father, and they were planning to catch hold of Krishna and bind him down so that he did not further attempt to influence their father. Vidhura was afraid that some physical harm may be done to Krishna, and he was making attempts to pull Krishna back from the assembly. But Krishna’s main purpose was to secure peace and prosperity for the people, and for this he was prepared to sacrifice even his life.

By just reading what people write in sundry books, without recognising the essential basis of all these negotiations, we think that Krishna was promoting war rather than peace. This is quite wrong. Unfortunately, because in our country there are no people who are willing to present even historical events in the proper perspective, we are prepared to regard Krishna, this embodiment of peace, as a warmonger. The generality of people unfortunately do not know Sanskrit and are,

therefore, not in a position to read the original text of the *Mahabharatha* as written by Vyasa.

There is one other instance which can be cited to illustrate the peace-loving nature of Krishna. The Pandavas prepared an assembly, and they were preparing to give the first respectful salutation to one who was most respected. The Pandavas did all preparations and wanted to choose one who was universally regarded as the top person in that assembly. Many of the elders in the assembly like Bhishma, Drona and others were all indicating that this honour was to go to Krishna. So Dharmaraja went to Krishna with a view to honouring him.

At that instant, Sisupala, who was sitting therein, got up to decry Krishna in many ways. He was preparing to talk in a very irresponsible and irrelevant manner. People sitting in the assembly could not even bear the harsh words which were being uttered by Sisupala. In a few moments, such irresponsible words spread throughout the assembly. However, Krishna was not at all affected by this tirade and he stood smiling. Sisupala did not stop at this. He got up and shouted, “For what great act of yours are you going to be honoured? Is it for stealing the clothes of the gopis when they were bathing? Is it for stealing the butter from the cowherds

that you are going to be honoured today?” Immediately he walked up to Bhishma and asked him to stop his praise of Krishna. At that point, Bhishma started to say something and Sisupala retorted, “Do not be arrogant. Shut your mouth.”

At this fearful and most disrespectful situation, all those sitting in the assembly were afraid that something serious was going to happen and they were all showing great concern. But Krishna was completely unperturbed and he was seen smiling. There was no anxiety in his face nor was there any hatred or fear seen in his face. He was regarding all that was going on as something that was being done by Sisupala out of ignorance. Arjuna and Bheema, from among the Pandavas, were very angry. Krishna, noticing that they were getting very excited, signalled to them not to get excited and that they should remain peaceful.

At this instance, the grand old man, Santanu, Bhishma’s father, got up and said that the only person in the assembly deserving the honour was Krishna. He said that Sisupala was so excited because of personal jealousy caused at the time of Rukmini’s marriage, and he challenged Sisupala to show even one person in the assembly who deserved the honour better than Krishna. Every king sitting in that assembly had already been subdued by Krishna. If you talk of good qualities, no

one else had better qualities than Krishna. If you take the question of learning of the *Vedas* or *Sastras* or even the sixty-four different types of art, no one can equal Krishna. If we talk of the practice of *Dharma*, Krishna is the embodiment of *Dharma*. If we talk of selfless service, Krishna stands right on the top. If we talk of *prema* and love, then the entire blood flowing in the body of Krishna exhibits peace and love at all times. Krishna who possesses all these good qualities is the only one in the entire assembly deserving this honour. Santanu again challenged Sisupala to show another individual who deserved this honour more than Krishna.

To these words, all the kings sitting in the assembly nodded their agreement; and Drona and Bhishma also said that there was no one who deserved this honour more than Krishna. Sisupala was very disturbed and behaved madly, because his end was drawing near. He was still wanting to talk like a madman. Because his end was drawing near, he challenged Krishna to a duel and pulled at Krishna’s hand. Even then, Krishna was completely unperturbed and was smiling. But time was passing and Sisupala’s conduct was becoming more and more unacceptable.

Noticing this, Arjuna started moving closer to Krishna. At that time, Krishna told Arjuna that he

should not get excited and should not worry about what Sisupala said, particularly because that was an assembly and not a battlefield. Their reputation was not going to be lowered just because of what Sisupala says.

But if we read the modern text and the description of this event therein, we learn that Krishna was very angry and that he simply threw the disc in his hand at Sisupala and killed him. This is very untrue. In fact the peace-loving nature and the composure which Krishna showed were indeed a surprise to many of the people in the assembly. Here again, the unperturbed attitude exhibited by Krishna, under those trying conditions as a human being, is an ideal example to the world.

In another situation, one other king wanted to imitate Krishna in many ways and his name was Poundarika Vasudeva. He thought that, after all, Krishna was not the only Vasudeva and that he was also a Vasudeva; and in that belief, he used to behave and dress himself exactly like Krishna. He was going everywhere where Krishna went and was saying that he was Krishna. He was behaving as an exact prototype of Krishna. He did not stop there and he was creating a lot of confusion. He was saying that he was the real Krishna and that the real Krishna was, in fact, putting on a show as an imitation. This was the confusion that he was creating.

This was going beyond all limits and many people came to ask Krishna about the meaning and purpose of all this. Krishna gave them a reply in perfect composure and was not in the least perturbed. “Who has the right to say that the kind of dress that I wear should not be worn by me and who has the right to say that I should not do such and such a thing? So, if someone is wearing exactly the same dress as I am wearing and has the same appearance as I have, I have no right to tell him not to do that. Each one has the liberty to wear such dress on his body as he chooses.” He told those people that in a matter like that, it was not good to take any action. It was for the people who were undertaking such imitation to see that they should not do so, and it was for them to take proper steps.

But this situation was trespassing all limits, and it came to a stage when the imitator went to the extent of saying that Sathyabhama and Rukmini belonged to him. Even then, Krishna was very calm and unperturbed. He only said that it was not correct for one to interfere in the affairs of another’s family. Krishna said that one may do what one likes with regard to one’s own self and his family, but it was not right for him to interfere in another’s family, particularly with regard to the women members. Krishna thus warned him that he should exercise great care in such matters. It was only in an extreme situation that Krishna interfered.

In this manner, Krishna always demonstrated perfect composure and a peace-loving attitude. It is only when we understand the ideal nature and qualities of Krishna in the proper perspective, that we will be in a position to get a correct assessment of the ideals of our country in such matters. Young people as you are, on whom rests the future of our country, it is very important for you to understand these aspects of Krishna. Living a selfless life, desiring only the welfare of the country, and taking care of the people amidst kings who were terrorising the people, he wanted to hand over the kingdom to good and honest people. Thus he never wore a crown and was the uncrowned king doing all this good.

Young students, if you really want to understand the true nature of Krishna, you can do so only by travelling backwards in time to the situation when Krishna was living and doing his work, in the conditions which existed at that time. But for us to try and understand the aspects of Krishna from our present position is not possible. What I am now telling you is contained in what I have often been stating in the words, “You may worship a picture as a God but never worship God as a picture.” What you should do is to elevate whatever you see to the position of God. Thus you may worship this tumbler, this table, or this cloth

as God; but do not attempt to lower God to the stage of this table or tumbler. You must elevate all things to the high position of God.

If you understand the ideals for which Krishna stood, what you should do is to make a journey and put yourselves in the context of where Krishna lived. If you want to remain where you are and understand various aspects of Krishna, who lived five thousand years ago, it is not the correct way. If you want to understand an ideal, it will be possible only when you make a journey, mentally, to a period when the person who demonstrated those ideals lived.

There is a small example for this. A boy of eleven years of age was married to a girl of nine years of age, but unfortunately the boy died in an accident. The girl had a photograph of the eleven-year-old boy. As time went on, the girl grew up and attained the age of seventy. This seventy-year-old woman takes the photograph of the eleven-year-old boy and says that he is her husband. This statement looks ridiculous if you look at the form of the seventy-year-old woman. When she says that the eleven-year-old boy is her husband, the statement has meaning only when she regards herself as the nine-year-old girl. It is not as if the seventy-year-old woman was married to an eleven-year-old boy. The

nine-year-old girl was married to a boy who was eleven years old. In the same context, the statement has a meaning only if she puts herself back in time in the position of a nine-year-old girl. In the same manner, those of us who are born now, if we want to understand the ideals of Krishna, we will be able to do so only if we take ourselves back to the times of Krishna.

Whatever ideals which he demonstrated to the world, be they in the political sphere, or the economic sphere, or the social sphere, will be appreciated only if we take ourselves back to the environment and time—politically, socially, and economically when Krishna lived. Therefore, young people like you should make an attempt to read and understand the sacred text of the *Mahabharatha* in the proper perspective. As a result of our foolishness and lack of understanding, we regard *Mahabharatha* as a very insignificant text and compare it with the ordinary food like a Vadai that we eat.

There is a proverb which says, “If you listen to a text, you must listen to the text of *Mahabharatha*; and if we eat anything, we must eat a Vadai.” This comparison is ridiculous. If you really want to understand the level at which the *Mahabharatha* was written, you should recognise the sacred contents. One who cannot understand the value of the *Mahabharatha* and of its sacred contents is ignorant and foolish.

There is one small example for this. A shepherd took his sheep and goats and went into the forest. One day, when he was looking after the sheep and goats, there was a heavy rain. As a result of this, some stones on the hill became loose and started rolling down. He found that a particular stone was shining very brilliantly. That particular place was known to be a place where diamonds were found. But the shepherd did not know anything about diamonds. He took this bright stone and tied a string round it and put this bright shiny diamond round the neck of a black goat. This bright stone round the neck of the black goat was shining and the goat was attracting him very much. He frequently went to this goat and was looking at it affectionately.

While showing such affection to this goat, he was sitting under a tree and relaxing when a group of people were passing that way. Among those passers-by was one individual who knew the value of diamonds. This person was a diamond merchant, and he quickly realised the value of the diamond tied round the neck of the goat. He recognised the fact that this stone was worth several lakhs of rupees. He thought that poor shepherd boy would not know the value of the stone and he offered him ten rupees in return for the diamond. The shepherd boy said that this bright stone was very beautiful round the neck of the goat, and that he was

not going to part with it. The diamond merchant tempted him and offered him a hundred rupees. The shepherd boy thought that with a hundred rupees he could buy a hundred such stones and tie each stone around the neck of each goat and he agreed to part with the stone for a hundred rupees.

We see that in the hands of the shepherd who did not know the value of the diamond, it was happy, safe, and sound. The moment this stone came into the hands of the diamond merchant, he thought that he had secured a valuable thing; and as soon as this thought came into his mind, the stone suddenly broke into several pieces. When the stone broke into so many pieces and fell to the ground, the merchant was surprised. This diamond, in a formless divine voice, said that as long as it was in the hands of person who did not know its value, it was satisfied; but when a person who knew its worth paid only one hundred rupees, its heart broke into pieces at the unjust act.

As in this analogy, in the vicinity of a person who does not understand divinity, it does not matter how things are; but if, knowing the nature of divinity, we begin to communicate and trade with it in a cheap manner, how can we obtain God's grace? How can God's grace come to individuals if we do not conduct

ourselves well? Thus, after knowing the greatness and value of Krishna's ideals if we do not put them into practice, we will really be making a mistake. When one is moving with you, you regard him as an ordinary man and only when you see something extraordinary, you ascribe divinity to him. When you recognise divinity, you should make all efforts to follow the divine injunctions. When we read the lives of *Avatars* and when we are told such stories, we should learn their ideals and put them into practice. Only then will we be responding to divinity. But merely to read any text which comes our way and not put it into practice is not the right thing for educated people to do. In *Mahabharatha*, we must understand the human aspects of Krishna. I am hoping that by understanding this true form of Krishna, you will also follow the ideals of Krishna. I am blessing you in this manner and bringing this discourse to a close.