



Leela Of Bala Krishna Through Banker's Lens : Reading 'The Dance Of Govinda'

Dr. Indrajit Kumar Assistant Professor of English K.B.College, Bermo Vinoba Bhave University, Hazaribag, Jharkhand, indrajit26@yahoo.com

Abstract:-

There are several facets of Shri Krishna's personality. One of them is **Bala Krishna**, who performs pastimes in front of his mother, and another one is **Yogeshwara Krishna**, who gives the knowledge of the Gita to Arjuna. The most significant and attractive aspect of this personality is respect of the right decisions taken by others. Everyone has respect in Shri Krishna's love and respect for people is reflected through his actions. He has been considered one of the most beloved and adored deities of Hinduism. The main reason for the glory and reverence of Shri Krishna is his Bala Leela. It is depicted through various episodes based on right from his birth to till attaining the age of ten. Shri Krishna displays signs of his divine being from his birth. Kids love him, and adults venerate him. Shri Krishna's pastimes are not only beautiful and enticing, but they are also very pleasing to one's mind and soul. There are several episodes through which we come to know about his Bal Leela. Such episodes are overturning the cart, the killing of Demoness Putana, and many others. The Author, Ashok K. Banker, has done his work with utmost sincerity, and his portrayal of the Bala Leela of Shri Krishna is pictorial. Sur Das of Hindi literature has given vivid, crystal clear and attractive descriptions of Krishna's childhood life. The present paper focuses on the various Leelas of Shri Krishna's childhood as presented in Ashok K. Banker's Dance of Govinda. The purpose is to ascertain the fact that Shri Krishna is loved and revered in literary narrative. The study and analysis of the research paper is on textual interpretations of Ashok K. Banker.

Keywords:- Krishna, Pastimes, Putana, Bala Leela, Mata Yashoda.

Introduction:-

Shri Krishna is the eighth epitome of Lord Vishnu and he possesses all the powers as to Lord Vishnu by his birth. Shri Krishna is the God of love, tenderness, compassion, and protection; Parabrahman, Yogeshvara – Lord of Yoga or Yogis and finally Svayam Bhagavan. The reminiscences and statements of Shri Krishna's life are conventionally entitled as Krishna Leela. He plays a leading role in the Mahabharata, the Harivamsa, the Bhagavata Purana, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Brahma Vaivarta Purana. Shri Krishna is also introduced in various

Hindu mythological, theological, and philosophical texts. Each mythological text depicted him from numerous viewpoints: a godchild, a model lover, a prankster, a divine hero, and the universal supreme being. Shri Krishna's folklore mirrors these phenomena and shows him in contrasting juncture of his life, including a newborn eating butter, a stripling playing the flute, a young boy with Shrimati Radha Rani, encircled by female devotees, and a congenial charioteer giving guidance to Arjuna. His birthday is honoured every year by Hindus on Krishna Janmashtami. In the Author's note, Ashok K. Banker writes that there are many stories of Shri Krishna's adolescent tricks and pranks. He also has attempted to be as thorough as possible in mining the rich vein of Shrimad Bhagavatam, the Harivamsa sections of the Mahabharata, and the Vishnu Purana in seeking every known incident of Shri Krishna's childhood.

Conversation between Bala Krishna and Mata Yashoda in the Dance of Govinda

It was the day of naming ceremony of Bala Krishna; Mata Yashoda judged that there are many people were assembling to the part of the naming ceremony. Having a child was beyond belief for herself. Her intensity was undefinable, as she had never felt before. The closeness between mother and the newborn child develops an intense attachment. It makes any mother wants to shower her baby with love and affection and want to protect and take care of their little ones. However, in the case of little Krishna, it was different from any newborn child. Mata Yashoda could hear the voice of Bala Krishna in her mind. So she assures that she would never let any harm come to Bala Krishna. Bala Krishna also talks with her mother and tries to convince her. As he says:-

“Nor would I let any harm come to both of you, Maatr”(Banker 42)

This sentence of Bala Krishna brings a smile to Mata Yashoda's face. After hearing this sentence in her mind, she says that he will protect us from all dangers, but until he becomes big and more muscular, his father will ensure their safety. She also tells her that whoever loves him is present all around us, and these people can even risk their lives to protect him. As the author writes:-

“Yes, Maatr. I sense their love and fierce loyalty. It is very reassuring. I am indeed fortunate to be born into such a loyal and loving family.”(Banker 43)

Mata Yashoda almost laughed after hearing this sentence again. Because she was talking loudly to her son, Mata Yashoda felt that she was talking to his newborn child's mind. Then she wonders whether she is talking to her son, born a day ago. Moreover, if so, how is that possible? Is she tired of everything? Then Bala Krishna replies wittingly by saying:-

“Do not be concerned, Maatr. You are quite well. This is not your imagination. I am indeed speaking to you within your mind.”(Banker 43)

Not only this, when he had broken the cart and scattered all the pots and goods kept in it, Mata Yashoda asked him repeatedly how he did do all this, but he was not answering any question correctly. When Bala Krishna narrated the whole story to Mata Yashoda, she could not believe that Krishna had done all this. Then Mata Yashoda asked Krishna why don't tell all this to his father by using his mind. So that he also can believe that Krishna had done everything. Then Bala Krishna replies:-

“I wish I could, Maatr. But it not be wise of me to talk to Putr the way I do to you. It would make him vulnerable if he encounters certain demons who may be able to read his mind.”(Banker 150)

Through all these incidents, we can understand how Shri Krishna spent his childhood with his mother and how he used to tease and please his mother. Since childhood, Shri Krishna had many powers because he had incarnated as Lord Vishnu, so obviously, he would have powers. So we can also say that reading one's mind is one of the first power of our Bala Krishna.

Episode of Overturning the Cart by a Hungry Bala Krishna in Dance of Govinda:-

The ceremony was almost over; Mata Yashoda had to perform all the other ritual formalities. She did not want to leave Krishna alone, but Mata Yashoda's sisters assured her that they would care for Krishna. The sun was vigorous at that time, so Mata Yashoda decided to keep him in the shade of the cart. Mata Yashoda put the cushions all around him so that he would not roll over and not get hurt. There were many metal utensils kept in the cart. Various types of liquid were stored in those metal utensils for the feast. The wheels were stuck to the stones so that the cart could not move. After doing that, Mata Yashoda was convinced that now this cart would not be able to move from here, so she was not worried about any kind. Mata Yashoda leaves from there, and while leaving, she also says that he has not had milk since morning, so she will see him all the time; she is leaving him here and will come back soon. He does not have to fret about anything, and he does not even need to go anywhere. After that, Mata Yashoda was wholly absorbed in her rituals. She was providing sweets to all the Brahmins herself so that no Brahmin would go hungry and they would get more than expected because she knew that Brahmins like sweets very much. Mata Yashoda thought she would not eat herself until she had fed all the guests. At the same time, Mata Yashoda hears a loud voice; she feels that the children were playing the Danda Game. She also feels that maybe some people were playing the danda game; that is why the sound is being heard so loudly. Danda Game was very popular in those days, and it was their favorite pastime. After sometime again, another sound starts coming out and starts reverberating all around the field. This time the voice was completely different from before. Then, Mata Yashoda feels that this sound is coming from where she had put Krishna to sleep. She immediately drops the plate of sweets and runs towards the side from where the sound comes. On reaching there, she finds that Krishna is not sleeping at his place, and things are

scattered all around. Mata Yashoda feels that Kamsa or his fellow demons must have done all this. She starts crying and praying to God to protect her son. Then Bala Krishna also gives his voice and tells where he is. As Krishna says:-

“A little to your right, further this way, now turn party to your left. Yes, look down now... no, under the big cross-shaped piece of wood stuck in the ground. Yes, Maatr. Can you see me now?”(Banker 147)

After hearing this, when Mata Yashoda bends down to lift Krishna, she finds that Krishnawas playing with a toy cart with a plough fixed behind it. She hugs Bala Krishna tightly and starts crying. Mata Yashoda keeps asking Krishna questions constantly. As she asks:-

“What happened here, my little Shyam-rang? How was the cart broken? Did someone come and do this? Did they have elephants with them?” (Banker 147)

This sentence shows how much Mata Yashoda is anxious about her son. It also shows Mata Yashoda’s deep love for her son. However, Bala Krishna does not simply answer the questions and keeps teasing his mother. After asking a lot, Shri Krishna says that he has done everything. As Ashok K. Banker writes:-

“Yes, Maatr. I only meant to push it away a little, that’s all. But it cracked and broke and everything started to fall down and all those pots would have spilled on me and I didn’t want that, so the second time I kicked it a little harder to push the whole thing away, and everything went flying. I didn’t mean to destroy anything, Maatr. I just wanted a little more space so I could sit up to play with my little plough-cart.”(Banker 149-50)

After this, Bala Krishna tells his mother thatshe should not be upset with him. Because he had not deliberately broken the cart, his father is also upset with him because he has broken the cart;Krishna will do everything as before because he cannot see his parents upset. Krishna grabs his mother’s saree tightly and tries to raise himself and kiss his mother. He says:-

“Please, Maatr. Can I have my milk now? I’m very very hungry! Playing is such thirsty work”.(Banker 153)

So, we can infer from this episode that Shri Krishna was not an ordinary infant. The things that giant elephants could not do had done by his little feet. Mata Yashoda also knew that her son was not an ordinary child.

Killing of Demoness Putana by Bala Krishna in Dance of Govinda:-

When it comes to the pastimes of Bala Krishna, the description of the Demoness Putana definitely comes. Putana was the maidservant of Kamsa. Putana was a mighty demonic figure. The myth of Shri Krishna and Putana has been narrated in many Hindu Mythological

texts: the Vishnu Purana, the Brahma Vaivarta Purana, Bhagavata Purana, the Harivamsa, the Prem Sagar, and the Garga Samhita.

Putana took the form of a charming woman wearing a monstrous disguise and reached Gokul by the sky. Putana had captivated the whole of Gokul with her beauty. Putana had reached Nanda's house, and was looking for an opportunity to meet Shri Krishna alone so that she would not face any difficulty. When Putana reaches Bala Krishna, she introduces herself as Putana. That is when Shri Krishna calls her Putana-maasi! Shri Krishna says to Putana that he feels pity for her. He can assess the evil deeds, and she will get the punishment for her actions. She has always supported evil deeds and used her powers to cause trouble for people, so now her last time has come. Putana lifts Krishna in her lap and starts breastfeeding; she is surprised because Bala Krishna quickly walks into Putana's lap and starts drinking milk. As she says:-

“I’m very disappointed. I expected much more of a fight from you. If you really are Vishnu's avatar as the prophecy claims, this must surely be your weakest one yet. You didn’t even put up a struggle! And now, in moments, you’ll be dead and your mission here a complete and utter failure.”(Banker 247)

When Mata Yashoda wakes up, she does not find Krishna on her bed. Then, she gets anxious about him. She hears the voice of loud shouting coming from outside, and Mata Yashoda starts going in the same direction. Those prick-like sounds permeate the whole atmosphere in a quiet city like Gokul. When the people of Gokul reach there, they find that there is a giant demoness, and her height was increasing continuously. Everyone had recognized that it was the elusive Putana who had come to Nanda's house in the form of a beautiful woman. Nevertheless, at the same time, everyone also sees that the Bala Krishna is growing bigger. Bala Krishna clinging to Putana's chest, and it seemed that Putana was giving her poisonous milk to him. Krishna is now three times the size of a grown man, and two of them were caught in an uncomfortable duel because of their increased size. It seems to everyone that Putana is now in trouble, and somewhere it seems that Krishna is sucking Putana's life. He sucked every last drop of poison from her body. Putana then takes her last breath and falls on the ground and she dies. When Nanda approaches to the giantess, he sees Krishna is standing on her chest. Krishna reincarnates in his infant form and starts chortling, chuckling, and laughing. In this way, Bala Krishna kills a giantess named, Putana.

The narrative technique of Ashok K. Banker is superb. His selection of diction is colloquial and easy to understand. His setting of locations, artistic descriptions, comparisons and interpretations are apt and convincing. It is vivid and picturesque. Reading of Banker keeps readers in trans. There is a very thin line as reflected between mythological imaginary descriptions and reality. It seems that he has attained authority in maintaining balances. He keeps his readers engaged, entertained and inspired.

Conclusion:-

In nutshell, the research paper finds that the Child-Form [Bal-Leela] of Shri Krishna is incredibly adorable. He can enchant anyone through his Leela - Whether a deity or a demon. No one is spared. As Krishna grows, his pastimes increase further. The author has described only three or four Leela's of Bala Krishna, but whatever he has done, he has done it very well. It seems that he has witnessed all activities of Krishna. It comes to us as live-streaming.

References:-

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