

13. One Who Protects Dharma Will In Turn Be Protected By Dharma

When one is prosperous, one will not care for God. In that condition he will be a sinner and he will be moving about without caring for the Lord. On the other hand, he will open his eyes when his prosperity disappears. Listen to this plain truth, oh boys and girls of Bharath.

Pavitratma Swarupas

The *Veda* Brahman has many names and today we will take one particular name, *Chandas*, and try to understand Him through this name. This word *Chandas* is known in several ways. *Vedas* have been divided into four parts. Some parts constitute the *manthras* and the other parts constitute the *Brahmanas*.

These four parts have the names *Samhita*, *Aranyaka*, *Brahmana* and the *Upanishad*. *Samhita* has been taken to mean that part which contains *manthras* and the other three parts together have been given the other names. *Chandas* has been given different kinds of original or root meaning and it has also been described in many different ways. Not only this, sometimes the *Sruthi* which contains the *manthra* and the *Brahmana* have also been called *Chandas*. *Gayatri*, *Vishtubh*, *Anushtubh* and *Sishtubh* have also been called *Chandas*. The sacred *Sruthis* have been describing this *Chandas* in different ways they have been introducing this word into various descriptions and thus spreading prosperity to the rest of the world.

Although *Chandas* in a way is synonymous with the *manthras* and the *Brahmanas*, some people consider that this word has nothing to do with the *Vedas* or *Swadhyaya* or *Amnaya* and they have been arguing in a different way. Some also argued that this word *Chandas* can be applied only to *Gayatri* and that we cannot use this word in relation to the *manthras* and *Brahmanas*. Some have even undertaken to argue that it has no relation to the *Vedas* either. They have been arguing and criticising the views expressed earlier, in this manner. In

all these cases, the people who argue thus, do it on the strength of their own intelligence and the prejudices which they have in their minds. We have to say that these arguments have nothing to do with the actual merits of the problem. They are more related to their own individual prejudices. Not only in the various texts and branches of learning such as *Viseshika*, *Nyaya*, and so on, but in the *Mimamsikas* such as *Poorvamimamsa*, *Uttaramimamsa* and the *Darshanas*, they have explained that the word *Chandas* has the full meaning and significance as has been just described here.

Some who took a limited and restricted view of things were of the opinion that what is contained here may at best be described as *Puranas* and *Ithihasas*, but you cannot ascribe to it the authority of the *Vedas*. In one particular *Kosa* (*Vijnanamaya Kosa*) it has been maintained that the *Chandas* can be related to this *Kosa*. In *vyakarana* or grammar, a *rishi* by the name of *Aruni* has also been supporting this in several ways. In this way, by drawing authorities from the *Sruthi* and the *Smruthi*, they have been establishing that the word *Chandas* relates to the *Veda*.

In this context, it is necessary for us to understand as to how this word *Chandas* has come to represent the

important statements in the different *Vedas* and what exactly the origin of the word *Chandas* is. There are some authorities which tell us that particular *manthra* which makes you distant from death and which gives you immortality should be called *Chandas*. This is the reason why the great *rishis* who have understood and identified themselves with Brahman, while uttering the *manthras* in the three *Vedas*—*Rig*, *Yajur* and *Sama*—were seeking immortality for themselves. While offering the *Havis* (oblation) for the God of fire, these *rishis* were uttering the *manthras* which were life-giving *manthras*; and by uttering such *manthras*, they have given a distinctive meaning to the word *Chandas*.

Here we have to clearly understand the meaning of the words death and immortality. We regard death as synonymous with all kinds of strength in the body being lost. In other words, death is the ebbing away of the life force from the body. If the life force remains in the body forever, we regard that situation as immortality. These are not the correct meanings. It is a mistake to think of immortality as life remaining permanently in the body. To be able to completely identify one's self with the aspect of God and completely forget the aspect of the body is true immortality. If at all times we are totally

immersed only in the thought of the body and its comforts, and forget the aspect of Atma, that is death. It is only when we are able to clearly recognise the connection between birth and death that the sacred desire for securing immortality will sprout in us. There is birth and death for the body, but there is no birth or death for the Atma. To be able to understand this eternity of the Atma is the real meaning of attaining immortality. We must enquire about the process by which we can attain this immortality. Not only by doing good deeds, by keeping good company and by having good thoughts in the material world and in all matters relating to our daily life but also by imbibing the *sakthi* obtained from reciting the sacred *manthras* can we secure this aspect of immortality.

The *rishis* have shown us this alternative path. In the context of the daily life, the good work that we do is like a negative pole but the divine *sakthi* which we can get through the utterance of the *Veda manthras* is like a positive pole. In this process, both the negative and the positive will have to be in their appropriate strength. It is true that by doing good deeds we can keep this negative terminal in a good condition but, if we have no regard for the strength that we can get from the divine *manthras*, then there would be no positive terminal and we cannot

get the full strength. Here we have to recognise the close relationship between the negative and the positive principles.

Today, whatever good work we are undertaking in the world is being done in a casual manner without understanding its significance so that it may be imprinted in the heart. In the worldly aspect, we are doing several things either to attain a high position or to attain a reputation or just for the sake of exhibition or in the hope of getting some material gain. Each one can judge for himself whether he is undertaking a particular work to get some gain or not.

Of all things that we do, those intended for attaining self-satisfaction are very few. All kinds of work that we do, which are not intended for the satisfaction of the self (*Atma*), can be described as actions which are temporal or actions which are related to the material world. I have told you several times that we can get self-satisfaction only when we have confidence in our own self. It is only when there is self-confidence along with self-satisfaction will you get the capacity for self-sacrifice. It is only after you have the capacity for self-sacrifice, can you get self-realisation.

Thus, you attain immortality only out of sacrifice (*tyaga*). It is for this reason that all the *yajnas* and other rituals in this country have been intended to symbolise sacrifice. These *yajnas* are not undertaken just for their own sake. They have a definite purpose of promoting divine strength. Once upon a time even the *devas* lost the spirit of sacrifice. It was then realised that the *devas* of the *yajnas* could not be in their place and the goddess of the *yajna* took the form of a deer and left the place. The form of a deer is called the form of a *Krishnamriga*. When the goddess of *yajna* took the form of a deer and left the place, the *devas* could not bear this and so they also followed this animal. The *Devas* wanted to get the deer but they were unable to do so. They could get hold of the skin of the deer and so they brought back the skin. In the skin of the deer, there are three colours, namely *Sukla* (white), *Krishna* (dark), and *Babru* (brown). These three colours have been identified with the *Rig*, *Yajur*, and *Sama Vedas*. This is the reason why the master of ceremonies in a *yajna* sits on a deer skin. This is symbolic of the fact that the ceremony represents God, and thereby they want to get God's grace. Since God likes *Veda* and *manthra*, our *rishis* have regarded the skin of the deer as something which is pleasing to the Lord. It was their

belief that God is pleased with the deer skin and therefore by having the deer skin with them they thought that they would please God and obtain His grace.

So, those individuals who wish to acquire scholarship and knowledge of *Brahma Vidya* put a piece of the deer skin in their sacred thread before they begin studying *Brahma Vidya*. Since the deer skin has the three colours, *sukla*, *krishna*, and *babru*, it is considered to be symbolic of all the three *Vedas* and the trinity of the gods. Although in the common worldly parlance it may simply be viewed as a deer skin, in the *yajna* when it is used for the sacred purpose it is described by a special name *Sarma*. *Sarma* here stands for happiness or bliss. This kind of *Ananda*, which is beyond and above the sensual pleasures is called bliss. This bliss which is different from the ordinary pleasures can come to us only through *Brahma Vidya*.

What we generally call happiness relates to the bodily comforts and is transient. Such transient pleasure which relates only to the body comes to us in a few moments, but immediately afterwards it plunges us into deep a sorrow since it is only momentary. But the kind of bliss that one gets through the *Atma* is permanent, pure and selfless. This is the reason why *Brahma Vidya*

has been preaching to us that *prema* has to be cultivated for the sake of *prema* only.

You should not show *prema* for the sake of obtaining material benefits. If *prema* is shown for the sake of obtaining some material benefit, then it will last for a very short time and will wear out quickly. No material object is permanent and therefore *prema* shown for acquiring such object is also not permanent. *Atma* symbolises truth and hence is permanent. Therefore, *prema*, which is attached to *Atma* will also be true and permanent. This kind of *prema* and truth are present in every *jiva*. If we develop *prema* and truth for their own sake, then the *prema* and truth which each one develops and the *prema* and truth present in everyone will all join together and will become *prema* and truth in infinity. That is why it has been said in the Upanishads, “*Satyasya satyam*” or the truth of truth.

We should understand the purpose for which this life has been given to us. It is but proper that we devote our life for achieving that purpose. For every *manthra* an appropriate path has also been shown by that *manthra*. While uttering the *manthras* our ancestors took care to see that they were observing the cleanliness and the path

which was demanded by that particular *manthra*. Just as these root words *at*, *adyathe*, *aththa* represent eating, the act of eating, the subject who is eating and together they represent the unified aspect of food, the work that one is doing, the act of doing work, and the subject who is doing the work should all be unified. Then only will the work that you are doing be sacred.

Students can easily understand if these concepts are explained in terms of the subject, the object and the predicate. It is common knowledge that a proper sentence can be formed only when these three come together and when there is proper co-ordination between them. When there is no correlation between these three, there is room for several doubts and questions. If there is a sentence such as “Rama has beaten”, then, the one who has heard this sentence will ask who was beaten. This will further give rise to another question as to who has beaten whom. Then, the question will also arise about what has been beaten. If instead of all this, we say, “Rama has beaten the dog”, there will be no further questions. In the same manner, when the *manthra*, the utterance of the *manthra*, and the fruit of the *manthra* are all properly explained and co-ordinated, there will be no room for further doubt or question. It is because *Veda* had the strength of

establishing the *triputi* (Trinity of thought, word, and deed), it encompasses the three aspects—the subject, the object, and the predicate.

There is a very appropriate incident in the *Mahabharatha* which illustrates this. While going about in the forest, the Pandavas had the desire of helping one Brahmin. They therefore started chasing one animal and in the process they were very tired and stopped under a tree for rest. All the five Pandavas were there. After some time, Dharmaraja was feeling thirsty and he asked his brother Bhima to look round and bring some water. Bhima, who went looking for water, did not return for quite some time. Bhima was a strong person and could defend himself, but even he had not returned and so Dharmaraja asked Nakula and Sahadeva to go together and look for Bhima as well as water. But Nakula and Sahadeva also did not return for quite some time. After this, he asked Arjuna to go and even he did not return for a very long time. Finally Dharmaraja went himself, looking for the other brothers. Under a tree near a small tank, he found all the four brothers lying in a state of unconsciousness. They were looking as if they had no life in them. Dharmaraja could not contain his thirst and he thought that he would drink some water and then do

something about his brothers. At that time, he heard some unseen celestial voice asking him questions. This voice said that Dharmaraja will get the right to drink water from the tank only after the questions have been answered. But, Dharmaraja said that he will be able to give replies to the questions only after he knows who the questioner was. Then the voice gave a reply that He was a Yaksha. These questions are referred to as *Yaksha-prasnas*. Dharmaraja replied to all these questions with good and appropriate meaning and he passed the test with flying colours.

The Yaksha was happy and pleased and permitted Dharmaraja to ask for any boon but with some conditions. According to the conditions Dharmaraja can ask for only one of his four dead brothers to be brought back to life if he so chose. At that time Dharmaraja started to think deeply. After having given deep thought, Dharmaraja said that Nakula might be brought back to life. At that, the Yaksha, in surprise asked another question. You are to face the battle of *Mahabharatha* in the near future and in that you will need the support of Bhima, who is full of strength and Arjuna who is well versed in the use of weapons. How is it that you have chosen Nakula instead of Bhima or Arjuna? Then Dharmaraja said that his father

had two wives—Kunthi and Madri. While he, Arjuna and Bhima were Kunthi's sons, Nakula and Sahadeva were Madri's sons. Since he was alive as a son of Kunthi, it is but appropriate that he asked for the life of one of the sons of Madri. He said that he could not ask for the life of another son of Kunthi while Madri is left without a son. Yaksha was very much pleased with this reasoning and he immediately said that he was giving life back to all the four brothers.

Following the true path of *dharma*, we will be in a position to receive much more benefit than what is anticipated. To Dharmaraja, who asked for the life of only one of his brothers by treading the path of *dharma*, the Yaksha was prepared to grant him the life of all the brothers. On the other hand, if we tread a path different from *dharma*, then we will find that if we have a thousand desires, not even one of those desires will be fulfilled. One who destroys *dharma* will in turn be destroyed by *dharma*, but one who protects *dharma* will in turn be protected by *dharma*. Whether it is punishment or protection it can arise only out of *dharma*. It is only by *dharma* that we can attain prosperity. We should try to follow the path followed by Dharmaraja at least to a certain extent.

It is natural that enmity and bitterness grows between the children of stepmothers but in these days of Kali, even the sons born of the same mother are quarrelling among themselves. In this Age, when there is so much hatred developed between two brothers born to the same mother, where is the question of anyone protecting the life of a brother born to a stepmother? When there is no unity between two brothers born to the same mother, is it possible for us to bring about unity amidst all persons in this world? In the discourses of platform speeches we hear every day people addressing others as brothers and sisters. It is necessary to ask ourselves whether such words are coming from the depths of our hearts or whether we are simply reading them from a piece of paper.

Students, boys and girls!

If you use the words “brothers and sisters” from the depths of your hearts, then there is no doubt whatsoever that you will merit the grace of the Lord and good consequences will follow. Just because you say “brothers and sisters”, you do not have to worry and fear that you may have to distribute your ancestral property to those brothers and sisters or that you may have to distribute your wealth and ornaments amongst

them. What you have to realise is the one common divinity that is present in all of you and that is the basis for accepting the brotherhood of all humanity. When you have recognised that the divine Atma present in each one is the same and when you have recognised that this is the only truth, then you will become truly brothers and sisters. It is because they entertained such good ideas and ideals that the scholars, the kings, the people, and the *rishis* of ancient days had one common idea. They thought as one body and enjoyed all the common aspects.

Students:

It is necessary for you to understand the good that is contained in the sacred Indian culture and *Vedas*, the *Ithihasas* and *Puranas*. With great care you should understand the sacred inner meaning of all these things. For the last ten days we have been trying to grasp the aspect of omnipresence of Brahman and learning that Brahman is not affected by changes in time or environment and that Brahman is present everywhere. If you understand this aspect, then there will be no room for differences between any two people, for Brahman is present in all. There is no room for cruel and bad ideas, and it is possible for everyone to lead a good and happy life.