

15. Strength Arising From One's Own Righteous Conduct Is The Only Meaningful Strength

Without having any attachment to work and without swerving from the *dharmic* path, if you do all work in the name of God, then God will always be with you in good and bad, in happiness and sorrow. He will be the witness and a constant companion with you. It is quite natural that the infinite *Parabrahma* has a large number of names. It is also natural that one who has so many forms and names has an infinite number of eyes, legs, and heads. For such a *Parabrahma*, who answers these two descriptions, they have also given the names *prathamaja* and *poorvaja*. In addition, there is another meaningful name for Him and that is *Suparna*. It is essential for us to know the aspect of Brahman who answers such a description.

In order that man gets the fruit of the meaning of this description and to put the meaning into practice, to constantly think of this meaning is a sort of natural action. In common practice we know the nature of the writer who writes stories, books, and legends and we know how he works. If a writer wants to produce a story or a drama, he first creates a mental picture and then starts to write and finally builds a story with the picture as the basis. In the same manner, when God wanted to create the world in His aspect of the *Parabrahma*, He first created His basis and that basis was the sound. This primordial sound was the first picture which was created. Because it represents the sound, it has been called the *Vachaspati*, *Brihaspati*, *Prajapati*. Since this is the first aspect of creation, it has also been called *prathamaja*.

For *Vedas*, the first important thing is the sound and so it has been called *prathama*, or the first word has been called *prathamaja*. In the same manner, if we enquire about who was the basis for this *prathamaja*, we come to the conclusion that it is *Prajapati*. Since *Prajapati* is the earlier basis than *prathamaja*, He is also called *poorvaja*. These names *poorvaja* and *prathamaja* have thus been given to the *Vedas* and we must make an

attempt to find the basis for giving these names to the *Vedas*. The very first in creation, namely *Hiranyagrabha* (Cosmic womb), uttered the very first sound as “*Bhoo*”. After uttering this sound, He created the form *bhooradi* and so this created - earth is called *Bhoomi*. In the *Veda*, it has also been referred to as *bhoomamu*.

This has also been referred to by another name *Sthirapravaham*. This *bhoomi* or *bhoomamu* is called *Sthirapravaha* because it is a creation which has neither a beginning nor an end. *Bhoomamu* also means a *manthra* which is sacred and permanent. The inner meaning of this word is that *bhoomi* is born in the form of the *manthras* and the *Brahmanas*. This is the reason why the *Sastras* have been creating three different aspects—*manthra*, *yantra* and *tantra* in man. The *yantra* is the body itself, the *manthra* is the breath which we take in and give out, and the *tantra* is the heart inside.

We must understand how one’s breath itself becomes *manthra*. It is so because we have the word *Soham* in the breath itself and when we inhale and exhale the breath we continuously utter the word *Soham*. This word *Soham* means “I am God”, I am that and simply means *Thath thwam asi* or “That are thou.” Therefore, this *manthra* of breath represents the *swaswarupa*.

As soon as one is born and even before one is able to see anything and experience anything, this breath is the very first thing that a new-born baby will experience. This breath and *manthra* tells us the aspect of life and expounds it to the world through the sound *koham* which means “Who am I?” This word *koham* comes in the form of a *manthra* and takes the form of a question. With the question “Who am I?” everyone begins his life. Because one starts his life with this question in the first instance, *Brihaspati* can also be called *Prathama*.

Because *Brihaspati* and *Vachaspati* could answer this very first question, they turned into *Maharishis*. To this question the answer they gave towards the end of one’s life is *Soham*. If we really understand the work of the *rishis* we will find that these *rishis* have raised the question *koham* and provided the answer to this question. Because they were able to give the answer to this very basic question, they have passed this worldly test. Life is the very foundation for living and this is a thing which we know. Just as for living, life is the basis so also for question, *manthra* is the basis.

Neither creation nor life are in the control of man. Because man is fully in the control of *Paramatma*, He is

also called *Prajapati*. Such aspects of *Prajapati* are latent and are contained in man. That is the reason why the sound or speech is latent in man. We have said earlier “*Brahmanam Brahma Vahanam*,” that is, Brahma has the *manthras* as his *vahana* or carrier.

While we perform the *yagas* and *yajnas*, we come across the statement “*yagnanga yagnavahana*”. This *yagnavahana* has also been referred to as *vrishavahana*. This implies that it is a form of *dharma*. This *dharma* is understood as something which is standing on four different legs. The four legs on which it is supported are *sathya*, *yajna*, *thapas*, and *dana* (charity) and because *dharma* takes these four legs as the support, one also called *Paramatma* as the *Vrishavahana*. *Suparna* is a name for Garuda. When we call Vishnu as *Supranavahana*, it also means that Vishnu is *Garudavahana*, and in this context Garuda also means *manthras*.

The *Puranas* tell us that while Vishnu was going to the rescue of Gajendra, Vishnu did not take his *vahana*. Lakshmi was afraid that there might be defeat for Vishnu because he had not taken the aspect of *manthras* with Him. Even in her excitement, Lakshmi realised that there was considerable strength in the *manthras* and that

Vishnu should not have left them behind. But, she was rather afraid to tell her husband to take these *manthras* along as his *vahana*. The poet has described her predicament in a beautiful manner. She wanted to move forward and ask a question of the Lord but she was afraid that the Lord might not reply and so she was going forward and backward. It becomes clear here that *manthra* is a very good support even for the Lord. Without the carrier of the *manthra*, even God cannot move forward and this is a moral which has been told to us in the story of Gajendramoksha.

We must take the inner meaning and the significance of the stories told in our *Puranas*. Instead of that, if we simply think literally that Garuda is a carrier and that Vishnu is being carried by Garuda, it is not correct. Garuda stands for *manthra* and *dharma* stands for *vrishaba* and because of this *Suparna* is a name given to our *Vedas*.

Yesterday we explained to you the significance of the use of the deer skin in the *yajnas*. In the same manner several words are used in the *Vedas* to signify different kinds of carriers. We should know the inner meaning of such words. Because the sacred meaning of the words that occur in our *Vedas* has not been properly

explained to the people by our scholars, it has become the practice for the youth to lose faith in our *Vedas* and *Sastras* and to think that they only lead us on the wrong path. This feeling has become common among the youth. This is only a result of the inability on the part of the scholars to explain the sacred inner meaning of the various words which appear in the *Vedas*.

You may be thinking that the *Vedas* and *Sastras* simply bind a man to several compulsory duties and that they do not give you any enlightenment. This is not correct. In fact, the *Vedas* and the *Sastras* do give knowledge to the ignorant people. One cannot come to the conclusion that our *Vedas* have told us to give up everything, sacrifice everything, run away from the family and retire into a forest. Our *Vedas* have taught us to regard all activities and all our duties as Brahman, do the duties that are enjoined on us and be in the worldly life in this manner. This has been taught to us by our scriptures. However much one may be in *upasana*, however much one may be after spiritual attainments, it is necessary for one to adjust his *upasana* to suit his country and the conditions in which he is living.

The *Mahabharatha* is something which has given us various stories and illustrations about *dharma*. The

Mahabharatha has shown several paths and several illustrations to lift man from the human level to the divine heights. For this reason our ancestors have referred to it as *Panchamaveda* or the fifth *Veda*. On one occasion, with a view to attaining victory and success in his efforts, Arjuna performed the *Aswametha yaga* (Horse sacrifice). According to the tradition, the person who captures the horse in such a *yaga* must be willing to pay the money for this or agree to fight and win. After the horse was thus traditionally released by Arjuna, it was captured by one called Maharaja Mayuradhawaja. According to the rules, Arjuna was preparing for a fight with this Rajah. It so happened that this Maharaja was a great devotee of Lord Krishna. When Arjuna met Krishna, he was told that it would be wise to first investigate the circumstances under which the horse was captured by the king and only then undertake to fight for the horse. Krishna said that the horse may even be released without a fight. Krishna did not stop at that. He told Arjuna that King Mayuradhawaja was a great devotee and it is not right for Arjuna to go and fight with him. He even warned Arjuna that it may not be possible to attain victory over a sincere devotee of the Lord. Krishna also told Arjuna that Mayura was a very

disciplined man. Not only did the King go through the prescribed *dharmic* paths, but he was also very well versed in the *Karma Kanda*, *Upasana* and *Jnana* and was thus a very capable person. When Krishna described Mayura in such glowing terms, Arjuna became somewhat jealous because he always thought that he was the greatest devotee of Krishna and was under the proud impression that there was none greater than him. However, Arjuna took Krishna and went to King Mayura.

On the way, Krishna hatched a small plan. Krishna told Arjuna that it is not correct to go in their normal forms because Mayura may not respect them. He advised Arjuna that it may be better to go disguised as two Brahmins. Krishna said that Mayura will then look after them better as they will then be guests in the house of King Mayura. As these two persons went as guests, Mayura also set aside his kingly status and became a normal householder. He received the two persons who had come to his house in the guise of two Brahmins as guests. It is the first duty of a householder to welcome guests without worrying about who they are. This is our tradition. In this context, when the two Brahmins were received well, treated well and given ample food, Krishna wanted to further play a small drama. Krishna wanted to

show Arjuna that he had unwarranted and unbecoming pride in thinking that he was the greatest of the devotees of Krishna, because Mayura also was a great devotee.

Just before they started eating their food, Krishna told Mayura “We are two Brahmins, the second Brahmin is my friend. My friend has a son and we were going round with a view to settle the marriage of this son. On our way we saw a tiger which swallowed my friend’s son, but strangely, half the body of my friend’s son is in the tiger while the other half is outside. We wanted to release the boy from the tiger but the tiger did not yield. After some time the tiger uttered a sacred cry and said that it was willing to release the body if we were able to feed it with half the body of a person who strictly adheres to *dharma*. Krishna then said that he had enquired from the tiger who was such a righteous person, and the tiger had immediately replied that King Mayuradhwaja was the best person to satisfy her requirements. Krishna then said that they would be willing to eat food and accept the King’s hospitality only if King Mayura agreed to give up half of his body to feed the tiger. King Mayura readily agreed to this as he did not want to displease the guests who were about to eat their food in his house. But Arjuna did not believe

these promises and thought that this promise was made only to make them eat the food. It is understandable that Arjuna expressed such a doubt because no one will ordinarily believe such an impossible promise. Krishna was assuring Arjuna that Mayura was not an ordinary person and that he would certainly stick to his promise.

Immediately after the food, King Mayura started getting ready to give away half of his body to the guests. He had his wife on one side and his son on the other and was preparing to give his body. Even in this act of his, he asked his wife to stand behind him because according to our tradition no wife should see the face of her husband being split into two. He asked his son to stand by his side and asked his wife to stand behind him. Krishna and Arjuna who were in the disguise of Brahmins were seated and the process of cutting the body into two halves with a saw had started. After the saw had split the body to a certain extent, they noticed that there were tears in the left eye.

Here we will understand how hardhearted Krishna can be when he puts any devotee to a test although he is a very soft-hearted person in the context of the slightest trouble for others. Yet, when he undertakes to put

someone to a test, he will be hard as a diamond. While looking at this, Arjuna was trembling at the sight of Mayura being cut like this, but Krishna said that a sacrifice made with sorrow in one's heart and a tear in one's eye was not good and that he was not prepared to accept such a sacrifice. Mayura immediately said that he was not one who will fulfil his promise with sorrow and tears. To clear this, one has to understand why there were tears only in one eye and not in both eyes. He begged the guests to examine the situation in detail.

Krishna wanted to demonstrate the sacredness of Mayura to Arjuna and so conducted all this drama. He asked Mayura to explain the significance of tears appearing only in one eye. Mayura addressed Krishna and said that there were tears only in the left eye because the right half of the body is having the privilege of saving the life of the son of a sacred Brahmin guest while the left side would merely be eaten by crows and jackals when it is thrown away and this is the reason for the sorrow and tears on the left side. When the truth was revealed in this manner, Arjuna's heart melted. He realised with surprise that there were such great devotees of the Lord. He prayed to Lord Krishna to stop this extraordinary and severe test for his sacred devotee.

When Arjuna uttered these words, Krishna appeared before Mayura in his glorious divine form with all the insignia, namely *Sankha*, *Chakra*, *Padma*, and *Gada*, blessed him and said that he and his children will have Krishna permanently in their hearts. Krishna revealed that He had brought about this test with a view to showing to the world the great devotion of Mayura.

In this context, it is also necessary for us to understand the meaning of the insignia which were worn by Krishna. Youth must also understand the true meaning of the four symbols with which the Lord is associated. Here, *Sankha* or the Conch stands for the *sabda* or primordial sound. The meaning of this is that sound is generated from the *Paramatma* and the sound is under the control of the Lord. The *chakra* or the wheel, represents the wheel of time which signifies that time is under the full control of the Lord. *Gada* or the mace represents physical strength. *Padma* the lotus represents the heart of every individual. The meaning of this is that all these are under the full control of the Lord.

Our strength should not be regarded as animal strength. All physical strength should be understood as the divine strength derived from Brahman. So also, the time which we spend must be associated with Brahman

Himself and the lotus should be regarded as the Lord Himself. If we develop these ideas, we will be able to lead a happy and meaningful life in the world.

The Kauravas were completely defeated and destroyed because they relied on their physical strength and on their strength of wealth. The Pandavas were victorious because they relied on the strength of *dharma* and on God. Young people should know that the strength arising from one's own wealth and physical prowess is not real strength. The strength arising from one's own righteous conduct is the only meaningful strength.