

OBEY THE DIVINE COMMAND WITH TOTAL FAITH

Everyone has to face the consequences of one's own Karma. Who has made the bats to hang from the branches of a tree with their heads downwards? It is their fate. Likewise, nobody can escape from the consequences of Karma.

(Telugu poem)

Students!

Karma (destiny) has neither feet nor eyes nor mouth. But, man cannot escape from it. That is why our ancients declared that one cannot escape the consequences of one's own actions. Karma does not conform to your likes and dislikes. Something happens not merely because of your desire and similarly something is not averted because you do not desire it. Karma follows its own course. Your thoughts and desires cause the illusion that things happen because of your will.

The world is full of mystery and wonder. It is nothing but a manifestation of the five elements. It undergoes changes with the passage of time. Likewise, the physical body which is also made up of five elements is subject to changes. Only the Indweller is permanent.

Embodiments of Love!

It is not possible for anybody to go against the Will of God. The ways of God are beyond the grasp of human understanding. God can make things appear which do not exist in reality. Likewise, what appears to the eye may vanish in a trice by God's Will. How can anybody understand such mysterious happenings? It is not possible for anybody to protect the physical body for ever. It remains so long as it is destined to be. Once its purpose is served, the body will perish. Nobody has any control over death. It is decided at the time of birth itself. The date of departure is written on the body when it comes into the world. It is not possible for man to comprehend the way the universe functions. Each person's experience is unique. How is it that the bat hangs from the branch of a tree with its head

downwards? Nobody can explain this phenomenon. Who is responsible for such wonders and mysteries that we witness in this world? What each one has to do, when, where and how, all is predestined. Man has no control over it. Everything happens according to Divine Will and His command. It is the primary duty of man to obey the Divine command implicitly. Everything in this world, visible or imperceptible happens according to Divine Will. One need not pay heed to what others say when it comes to obeying God's command. You have to obey the divine command in letter and spirit without adding any commas and full stops by yourself. Unfortunately, today nobody is making any effort to understand the mysteries of God's creation. Scientists boast of having unravelled the mysteries of creation, but they do not have true experience of the reality behind the phenomena. Each and every activity that takes place in this universe is full of wonder. When you observe carefully you will be able to perceive the unseen hand of God at work.

Embodiments of Love!

One should obey the divine command with total faith and without any disputation *pro* and *contra*. Markandeya was born as the result of a boon granted by Easwara to his parents. Easwara asked his parents whether they wanted a virtuous son with a short life-span or a son not so virtuous but who would live long. The parents opted for a virtuous son. Accordingly, Markandeya was born. He was one of good thought, good behaviour and good conduct. Easwara informed his parents that he would live only for sixteen years. Nevertheless, the parents were overjoyed as they had been blessed with a virtuous son. Years rolled by and Markandeya entered his sixteenth year. Remembering

the words of Easwara, his parents became grief-stricken. His mother would often shed tears thinking of the imminent death of her son. Markandeya could not understand the cause of her grief and wondered why she was shedding tears. One day, he found his parents steeped in sorrow. On enquiry, they revealed that his death was imminent as per the Divine Will and that was the cause of their sorrow. Markandeya felt sorry that Easwara's Will was not revealed to him till then because of which he had wasted the precious time allotted to him. He did not want to waste time any longer. He had an early bath, went to the temple of Easwara and started chanting the sacred Siva Panchakshari Mantra, *Namah Sivaya*, with all sincerity and devotion. He lost himself in the contemplation of Easwara. He did not expect any reward for his prayers. He considered it as his primary duty to contemplate on God. The following day was supposed to be the last day of his earthly sojourn. Hence, he remained in the temple. As he had not returned home, His parents went to the temple and sat at its entrance. They were shedding tears thinking of the impending end of Markandeya's life. As willed by the Lord, Markandeya left his mortal coil the moment he completed his sixteenth year. His parents were in a sea of sorrow. As Markandeya left his mortal body in the external world, his Jiva (soul) reached Lord Siva in the divine world. The Lord was immensely pleased with the sincere devotion of Markandeya. He said, "Markandeya! Today marks the completion of your sixteenth year. You have come to Me in a happy frame of mind. You have bowed down to My Will with implicit faith and obedience. I am pleased with your devotion." As Easwara was speaking to Markandeya in this manner, Mother Parvati intervened and said, "Oh Lord! Why don't You send him back to his parents as he has obeyed Your command implicitly." Easwara wanted Parvati also to accompany Him. Together they infused life into the body of Markandeya. The parents' joy knew no bounds when they noticed some movement in Markandeya's body. He got up and said, "My dear mother and father, Lord Easwara

and Mother Parvati have brought me back to life. I will stay with you as long as you want me. Let us entertain noble thoughts and undertake good deeds. I will discharge my duties as your son and give you happiness." Accompanying his parents, Markandeya went home. The people of the village were struck with wonder when they came to know that Markandeya was brought back to life by Lord Easwara and Mother Parvati. Markandeya narrated to them in detail all that had happened in the divine world.

God responds to the prayers of devotees and comes to their rescue only when they have purity of heart. One with a pure heart can even alter the Sankalpa of God. The story of Markandeya bears ample testimony to this. Markandeya had no desires. He made sacred use of the time granted to him. It is the primary duty of devotees to cultivate noble thoughts and perform sacred actions. Markandeya remained a Chiranjeevi (immortal), served his parents and gave them immense happiness. In the normal course, God's Will cannot be altered. But, sometimes God does change His Sankalpa in answer to the prayers of a devotee who is sincere and pure at heart. The devotee has the power to change the Will of God. Devotion does not mean mere vocal expression of prayers; one should have purity of heart.

Adi Sankara was born in Kerala during the 7th century A.D. and propagated the essence of all scriptures to mankind. But he left his body at an early age of 32 years. Ramanujacharya was born in 11th century A.D. and propagated the efficacy of the Divine Name. That was the time when devotion to God was on the decline. It was because of Ramanujacharya's teachings that people developed devotion and a sense of surrender to God. Madhwacharya was born during 13th century A.D. and propagated the principle of Dvaita (Dualism). Even He taught that the Jiva (individual soul) and Deva (universal soul) are not different from each other in essence. However, the underlying principle in all the three systems of philosophy as propagated by Adi Sankara, Ramanujacharya and Madhwacharya is one and the same. The same principle of Atma is present in all beings. It is referred to as Easwaratwa (divinity). The divine incarnations such as Rama and Krishna can be

recognised by their Divine forms. Every incarnation has a particular form. But Easwaratwa has no form. It represents the principle of truth that is present in all beings. It is responsible for Srushti, Sthiti and Laya (creation, sustenance and dissolution).

Easwaratwa, which has no specific form is symbolised in the form of a Linga. It is usually placed on a horizontal base which is known as *Panavatta*. Do you know how it looks like? (At this, Bhagawan with a wave of His hand materialised a Linga with *Panavatta*.) Lord Easwara exhorted Markandeya and his parents to sanctify their time in the contemplation of God. He materialised a Linga like this and gave it to Markandeya's parents. They sanctified their lives by worshipping the Linga. Linga represents the Atmic principle which is present in all. It is not possible for anyone to understand or estimate the divine power. The principle of Atma is changeless. It can assume any form in accordance with the feelings of devotees. Linga is not something which man has made for worship. It is the direct manifestation of Divinity (*Sakshat-akara*). This truth was very well understood by Markandeya and his father Mrukanda and hence they worshipped divinity in the form of a Linga.

Every living being comprises three aspects – Sthula, Sukshma and Karana (gross, subtle and causal). The physical form represents the gross aspect. The same principle of divinity is present in all the three levels. Without thread, there can be no cloth. Without silver, there can be no plate. Without clay, pot cannot be made. Likewise, without Brahma (Divinity), there can be no world. Without the creator, there can be no creation. The creator can be compared to thread and the creation to cloth. The creator is the embodiment of gross, subtle and causal aspects. When you contemplate on God, you should transcend the mind. By merely having threads, one cannot make cloth. They have to be interwoven. Likewise, self-effort and divine grace, both are essential in order to achieve the desired result.

Sukshma Sarira (subtle body) is the source from which our words and deeds originate. Our students

are chanting the Vedas everyday. Each Mantra is attributed to a particular form of divinity. It is necessary that one knows all the Mantras. If one wants to purify his thoughts and understand his true Self, he should take Vedas as the basis. Unable to understand this truth, many students are behaving like thieves when it comes to chanting the Vedic Mantras. One who does something wrong and feigns ignorance is a thief. Likewise, one who has the ability to chant the Vedas but does not do so full-throated and wholeheartedly can also be called a thief. All students can chant the Vedas, but some of them are not joining others in chanting. They are not making proper use of whatever they have learnt. They are keeping to themselves all that they have learnt. I am observing the students as they chant the Vedas. Having learnt the Mantras, they are expected to chant them. But, some of them are keeping silent. In a way, they are resorting to vidya choratwam and daiva droham (theft of knowledge and betrayal of God). In this manner, the educated are becoming traitors and betrayers. Only those who chant wholeheartedly whatever they have learnt are eligible for Sakshatkara (God-realisation). When the students chant the Mantras, ladies sitting on the other side also join them. They have every right to chant the Vedas. None can deny them their right. They feel inspired to chant the Vedas when they see our students chant. There are many small children sitting here. Who has taught them the Vedas? They hear attentively while the senior students chant the Mantras and learn them by heart. However, there are some educated persons who sit by the side of Veda chanting boys and yet remain tight-lipped. I am observing them. What is the use of sitting with Veda group if they do not make efforts to learn and chant them? They are bigger thieves. They listen to Vedic chants but do not participate in them. One should listen and also chant the Mantras in order to experience divinity.

The Vedas are the very form of God. There are many Mantras to propitiate the Pancha Bhutas (five elements). The five elements are our very life-breath. They sustain our life. The world itself is a manifestation of the five elements. But people forget to express their gratitude to the five elements. What a sin it is! We fill

our minds with unnecessary information and consequently fail to give due respect to the five elements. Everyone should necessarily learn the Vedas, contemplate on them and chant them wholeheartedly. There is no point in merely learning the Vedas if you do not chant them. There are some who chant the Mantras when they are here but forget them when they go outside. You may go anywhere but you should repeat the Mantras at least in your mind. You should never become a vidya drohi (one who does not do justice to the knowledge acquired). A vidya drohi will become Daiva drohi also and will ultimately miss the chance to become recipient of God's grace.

Students may commit mistakes without their knowledge. But, once they realise their mistake they should not repeat it. Whatever Mantras you hear today, you should be able to chant them tomorrow. When all people chant the Mantras in unison and in perfect harmony, Brahman will manifest right in front of you. Our ancient sages and seers declared: *Vedahametham Purusham Mahantham Adityavarnam Thamasam Parasthath* (I have visualised that Supreme Being who shines with the effulgence of a billion suns and who is beyond Thamas - the darkness of ignorance). The sound of the Vedas is highly sacred. It is extolled as Sabda Brahmamayi, Characharamayi, Jyotirmayi, Vangmayi, Nityanandamayi, Paratparamayi, Mayamayi and Sreemayi (embodiment of sound, mobility and immobility, light, speech, eternal bliss, perfection, delusion and wealth). It is compulsory for everyone to learn the Vedas. If it is not possible, at least one should chant the Name of God. Whatever Vedic Mantras you learn, you should be able to chant them properly. Otherwise, you don't need to learn them at all! I have seen many boys, who learn the Vedas here, but forget them when they go to Bangalore. They chant one or two Mantras to satisfy the elders who visit that place. It is not for publicity, but it is for your own benefit of experiencing bliss that you should chant the Vedas. The three aspects, namely, Karma, Upasana and Jnana (work, worship and wisdom) may be compared to chanting, practising and

experiencing bliss. You should transcend Vijnanamaya Kosha (wisdom sheath) and enter Anandamaya Kosha (bliss sheath). Karma leads to Upasana which in turn leads to Jnana (wisdom). Once you attain Jnana, you will experience peace and bliss. Everything depends on Karma. You should not chant the Mantras in a mechanical way just because others are chanting. You should assimilate and digest them. Why do you eat food? Is it to preserve it in the stomach? No. The food partaken should be digested and the essence should be supplied to all parts of the body. In the same manner, you should understand and assimilate the Vedic knowledge and derive strength from it. It should be expressed in your thoughts, words and deeds. You should take part in the propagation of the Vedas and share your joy with others. People say God is all-pervasive. He is present everywhere in the form of five elements. Each element represents a form of divinity. All the five elements together constitute the form of the Atma. When you realise this truth, you will experience divine bliss.

Embodiments of Love! Students!

Whatever you have learnt here, share it with others. It is not enough if you share it with others, you too should put your knowledge into practice and derive benefit therefrom. We prepare many delicious items at home and serve them to the guests. Is it not necessary that we should also partake of them? Likewise, we should digest the Vedic knowledge we have acquired and also share it with others. All types of knowledge have originated from the Vedas. That is why the Veda is extolled as Sarva Vijnana Sampatti (the treasure chest of knowledge). But unfortunately, we are not making proper use of such a treasure. Share your knowledge to the extent you have acquired. Never forget what you have learnt. With sincere effort, you will certainly be able to attain Sakshatkara. How did Markandeya attain Sakshatkara? He repeated the Panchakshari Mantra forgetting himself. As a result, Lord Easwara appeared before him and showered His grace. Those of you who wish to have the vision of God should digest the Vedic wisdom you have acquired and share it with others.