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Dialogue between the  
Vyādha & Brāhmana:  
**Svadharna**

Āranyaka Parva  
Chapter 198-199

Swami Tadatmananda  
Arsha Bodha Center

## मार्कण्डेय उवाच

Rishi Markandeya said,  
mārkaṇḍeya uvāca

इति सञ्चिन्त्य मनसा

Reflecting on

iti sañcintya manasā

श्रद्धधानः स्त्रिया वचः ।

the woman's words and trusting her,  
śraddadhānaḥ striyā vacaḥ

सम्प्रतस्थे स मिथिलां

the brahmana set out for Mithila  
sampratathe sa mithilām

कौतूहलसमन्वितः ॥

filled with curiosity.

kautūhala-samanvitaḥ (198.4)

अपश्यत्तत्र गत्वा तं

Reaching there, he saw --

apaśyat tatra gatvā taṁ

सूनामध्ये व्यवस्थितम् ।

standing in a slaughterhouse,  
sūnā-madhye vyavasthitam

मार्गमाहिषमांसानि

selling deer and buffalo meat --  
mārga-māhiṣa-māmsāni

विक्रीणन्तं तपस्विनम् ॥

an great ascetic.

vikrīṇantaṁ tapasvinam (198.10)

व्याध उवाच

The Vyadha said,  
vyādha uvāca

अभिवादये त्वा भगवन्

I salute you, Sir.  
abhivādaye tvā bhagavan

स्वागतं ते द्विजोत्तम ।

Welcome to you, Brahmana.  
svāgataṁ te dvijottama

एकपत्न्या यदुक्तोऽसि

You were told by someone's wife,  
eka-patnyā yad-ukto 'si

गच्छ त्वं मिथिलामिति ॥

“You should go to Mithila.”  
gaccha tvaṁ mithilām iti (198.12,13)

ब्राह्मण उवाच

The brahmana said,  
brāhmaṇa uvāca

कर्मैतद्वै न सदृशं

This work is not suitable  
karmaitad vai na sadṛśaṁ

भवतः प्रतिभाति मे ।

for you. Thus it seems to me.  
bhavataḥ pratibhāti me

अनुतप्ये भृशं तात

O friend, I am disturbed  
anutapye bhṛśaṁ tāta

तव घोरेण कर्मणा ॥

by this frightful work of yours.  
tava ghoreṇa karmaṇā (198.18)

व्याध उवाच

The Vyadha said,  
vyādha uvāca

कुलोचितमिदं कर्म

This work was suitable  
kulocitam idaṁ karma

पितृपैतामहं मम ।

for my father and grandfather.  
pitṛ-paitāmahaṁ mama

वर्तमानस्य मे धर्मे

About my current personal duty,  
vartamānasya me dharme

स्वे मन्युं मा कृथा द्विज ॥

don't be angry, O brahmana.  
sve manyuṁ mā kṛthā dvija (198.19)

धात्रा तु विहितं पूर्वं

Ordained by Ishvara long ago  
dhātrā tu vihitaṁ pūrvaṁ

कर्म स्वं पालयाम्यहम् ।

is my work which I carry out.  
karma svaṁ pālayāmy aham

कृतमन्वेति कर्तारं

This work is in keeping with Ishvara's  
kṛtam anveti kartāraṁ

पुरा कर्म द्विजोत्तम ॥

eternal order, O brahmana.  
purā karma dvijottama (198.20,22)

ये चैव मां प्रशंसन्ति

Those who praise me  
ye caiva māṁ praśaṁsanti

ये च निन्दन्ति मानवाः ।

and those who criticize me,  
ye ca nindanti mānavāḥ

सर्वान्सुपरिणीतेन

with my carefully performed  
sarvān supariṇītena

कर्मणा तोषयाम्यहम् ॥

work, I try to please them all.  
karmaṇā toṣayāmy aham (198.37)

अहिंसा परमो धर्मः

Ahimsa is the highest dharma,  
ahimsā paramo dharmah

स च सत्ये प्रतिष्ठितः ॥

and that is based on truth.  
sa ca satye pratiṣṭhitah

सत्ये कृत्वा प्रतिष्ठां तु

When based on truth,  
satye kṛtvā pratiṣṭhām tu

प्रवर्तन्ते प्रवृत्तयः ॥

all activities become fruitful.  
pravartante pravṛttayaḥ (198.69)

वेदोक्तः परमो धर्मो

The highest dharma taught by the Vedas,  
vedoktaḥ paramo dharmo

धर्मशास्त्रेषु चापरः ।

and that taught by other scriptures,  
dharma-śāstreṣu cāparaḥ

शिष्टाचीर्णश्च शिष्टानां

and the conduct of good people -  
śiṣṭācīrṇaś ca śiṣṭānām

त्रिविधं धर्मलक्षणम् ॥

these three define dharma.  
trividhaṁ dharma-lakṣaṇam (198.78)

सत्यमेव गरीयस्तु

Truth is best  
satyam eva garīyas tu

शिष्टाचारनिषेवितम् ।

when accompanied by proper conduct.  
śiṣṭācāra-niṣevitam

आचारश्च सतां धर्मः

Dharma is the conduct of good people.  
ācāraś ca satām dharmah

सन्तश्चाचारलक्षणाः ॥

Good people define proper conduct.  
santaś cācāra-lakṣaṇāḥ (198.70)

यदहं ह्याचरे कर्म

The work that I do  
yad ahaṁ hyācare karma

घोरमेतदसंशयम् ।

is certainly frightful.  
ghoram etad asaṁśayam

विधिस्तु बलवान्ब्रह्मन्

But, O brahmana, strong are the results of karmas  
vidhis tu balavān brahman

दुस्तरं हि पुराकृतम् ॥

done before, difficult indeed to avoid.  
dustaramṁ hi purā-kṛtam (199.1,2)

स्वधर्म इति कृत्वा तु

Having understood this to be my duty,  
svadharma iti kṛtvā tu

न त्यजामि द्विजोत्तम ।

I will not abandon it, O brahmana.  
na tyajāmi dvijottama

पुराकृतमिति ज्ञात्वा

Knowing it to be the result of my past actions,  
purā-kṛtam iti jñātvā

जीवाम्येतेन कर्मणा ॥

I support myself with this work.  
jīvāmy etena karmaṇā (199.14)

कृषिं साध्विति मन्यन्ते

“Farming is virtuous,” thus it is thought.  
kṛṣim sādhviti manyante

तत्र हिंसा परा स्मृता ।

But even there, great harm is caused  
tatra hiṁsā parā smṛtā

कर्षन्तो लाङ्गलैः पुंसो

by those who pull plows,  
karṣanto lāṅgalaiḥ puṁso

घ्नन्ति भूमिशयान्बहून् ॥

killing many creatures in the earth.  
ghnanti bhūmi-śayān bahūn (199.19)

स्वकर्म त्यजतो ब्रह्मन्

O brahmana, one who abandons his own work  
svakarma tyajato brahman

अधर्म इह दृश्यते ।

is seen to be sinful,  
adharma iha dṛśyate

स्वकर्मनिरतो यस्तु

unlike one committed to his duty  
svakarma-nirato yas tu

स धर्म इति निश्चयः ॥

having ascertained it as his dharma.  
sa dharma iti niścayaḥ (199.15)

धान्यबीजानि यान्याहुर्

They say that even seeds of grain  
dhānya-bījāni yāny āhur

व्रीह्यादीनि द्विजोत्तम ।

like rice, O brahmana,  
vrīhyādīni dvijottama

सर्वाण्येतानि जीवानि

are all considered living things.  
sarvāṅy etāni jīvāni

तत्र किं प्रतिभाति ते ॥

Does it not seem so to you?  
tatra kiṁ pratibhāti te (199.20)

सत्त्वैः सत्त्वानि जीवन्ति

Living beings live upon living beings  
sattvaiḥ sattvāni jīvanti

बहुधा द्विजसत्तम |

in many ways, O brahmana.  
bahudhā dvija-sattama

प्राणिनोऽन्योन्यभक्षाश्च

Living beings live upon each other.  
prāṇino 'nyonya-bhakṣāś ca

तत्र किं प्रतिभाति ते ||

Does it not seem so to you?  
tatra kiṁ pratibhāti te (199.24)

चङ्क्रम्यमाणा जीवांश्च

And when people walk,  
caṅkramyamāṇā jīvāṁś ca

धरणीसंश्रितान्बहून् |

many living beings on the ground  
dharanī-saṁśritān bahūn

पद्भ्यां घ्नन्ति नरा विप्र

are killed by their feet, O brahmana.  
padbhyāṁ ghnanti narā vipra

तत्र किं प्रतिभाति ते ||

Does it not seem so to you?  
tatra kiṁ pratibhāti te (199.25)

अहिंसेति यदुक्तं हि

“ahimsa paramo dharma” was uttered  
ahimseti yad-uktaṁ hi

पुरुषैर्विस्मितैः पुरा |

by remarkable people long ago.  
puruṣair vismitaiḥ purā

के न हिंसन्ति जीवन्वै

But who can avoid causing harm while living  
ke na hiṁsanti jīvan vai

लोकेऽस्मिन्द्विजसत्तम |

in today's world, O brahmana?  
loke 'smin dvija-sattama

बहु सञ्चिन्त्य इह वै

Having thought about this extensively,  
bahu sañcintya iha vai

नास्ति कश्चिदहिंसकः ||

(I think) no one can avoid causing harm.  
nāsti kaścid ahimsakaḥ (199.28)

वक्तुं बहुविधं शक्यं

One can talk at length

vaktuṁ bahu-vidhaṁ śakyaṁ

धर्माधर्मेषु कर्मसु |

about which deeds are righteous or not.

dharmādharmeṣu karmasu

स्वकर्मनिरतो यो हि

But one committed to his own duty

svakarma-nirato yo hi

स यशः प्राप्नुयान्महत् ||

attains great glory.

sa yaśaḥ prāpnuyān mahat (199.34)