

Shri Gururajo Vijayate

Shrimadhanumadbhimamadhvantargata

Shri RamaKrishnaVedaVyasatmaka Shri Lakshmi Hayagrivaya Namah

Shri Gurubhyo Namah, Hari OM

POWER OF MANTRAS – 2

The instance narrated in the subsequent paragraphs is taken from Mahabharatha.

After the famous Mahabharatha war, Yudhistira ruled the kingdom and subsequently they all ascended to heaven. Before they departed, they installed Parikshit, the grandson of Arjuna, on the throne.

When Parikshit was born, the astrologers predicted that he would be one of the powerful rulers and that he will die of snake bite at the age of 60. As he grew old, he was always alert and looking for snakes.

As he was ruling in the capital Hastinapur, one day he went for hunting. After conclusion of the hunting sport, as he was returning to the capital, he felt thirsty on the way. He looked around and saw a hermitage. He went to the hermitage and asked for water. He further went inside and observed one sage in a squatting position and he was in deep meditation. (Asamprajnaata Samadhi). There was no response to Parikshit's call, as the sage was in deep meditation.

Parikshit, in a fit of disappointment, for not satisfying his thirst, he saw a dead snake nearby, took it from his bow and placed it around the neck of the sage like a garland and proceeded towards his capital.

Within a short time, some urchins playing around, saw this incident and informed about this to the sage's son Sringi. He also came to the hermitage, saw his father in that condition. As soon as he saw his father, he was so furious that he cursed King Parikshit. Sringi cursed the king that he would be bitten by Takshaka (serpent) and die within 7 days.

As Sringi wept before Shamik, he was disturbed from his meditation, and inquired why he was weeping. On gaining consciousness, he took the snake and threw it away. Sringi said that he had cursed the king for his disrespect shown towards the sage.

Shamik sent word to King Parikshit through his disciple Gourmukh that his son Sringi had exercised the curse in that way.

As King Parikshit plodded towards his palace, regretted his sinful act and wondered why he did it. When he was informed about the curse, he accepted the punishment as expected. He then adjourned to the banks of the Ganges, along with a group of well learned people. Since there was hardly one week time left, he invited all the scholars to the banks of the Ganges. Of all the scholars

who assembled there, sage Shuka was one among them. Parikshit narrated his condition and the curse to Shukacharya and requested sage Shuka as to what should be done in these 7 days. Sage Shuka advised him to listen to Bhagavat. Shukacharya commenced the narration of Bhagavatha at the earliest. The whole assembly listened to the Bhagavat.

As the days passed on and the final day was approaching, Takshak from heaven started his preparation. He came down to the earth and took the form of a Brahmin and proceeded towards the palace where Parikshit was undergoing fast and listening to Bhagavatha.

As he was proceeding towards Parikshit, he met another brahmin by name Kaushik, who was also heading towards the same place. Takshaka (Brahmin) having seen another Brahmin walking fast, enquired him as to where he was heading in such a hurry. Kaushik Brahmin answered Takshaka that he has heard that King Parikshit has been cursed and that he would be bitten by a snake and would be killed. He also told him that he would revive him after the snake bite.

To this Takshaka (Brahmin) said "Perhaps you are not aware of Takshaka's poison and daring to revive him". Kaushik replied, "However strong the venom may be, I can deal with it".

Takshaka said, instead of going there, "Let us exchange our might here itself". Both of them accepted the challenge.

Takshaka injected his poison into a big tree nearby. As a result, in about 10 minutes the whole tree crumbled and reduced into a heap of ashes. Then came the turn of the other Brahmin who had the mastery over nullifying the effect of venom. The Kaushika started his action. He started chanting his "Vishahara mantras" and sprinkling water on the ashes. In the next 15 minutes, out of the ashes, there sprouted a sapling. He continued his application of the mantras and the sapling grew into the original tree with all its contents (birds, their eggs and nest etc). Having seen this, Takshaka was alarmed and appreciated Kaushika's mantra siddhi.

Takshaka soon realized that as long as Kaushika is in the vicinity and interfered with his work he could not accomplish the task of biting King Parikshit and ensure his death as per Sringi's curse.

Takshaka asked Kaushik, "Sir, suppose you revive King Parikshit after my bite, what is the reward you expect from the king?" Kaushik stated a figure say a number 'X'. Is that all? Exclaimed Takshak. Takshak said that he would give twice the amount that he expected from the king. Accepting the amount he may go away, so that Sringi's curse could be fulfilled. Kaushika received the amount and parted.

Next, Takshak reached the venue where the assembly had gathered. On the 7th day Bhagavat discourse was completed. At the conclusion (Mangala) ceremony, sage Shuka gave a fruit to King Parikshit (as phala) as per procedure. Takshaka had entered the fruit in the form of a small worm. As the fruit was handed to King Parikshit, Takshaka who had entered the fruit in the form of worm bit the king and the king instantly died.

It is further interesting, as to how the secret transaction which took place away from the city between Takshak and Kaushik, reached the palace. There was nobody nearby.

But a woodcutter was on the tree who was watching all the transactions between Takshaka and Kaushik. In that challenge, when the tree was reduced to ashes, the woodcutter was also reduced to ashes. The woodcutter was killed in the challenge by Takshak and also revived by Kaushik. This utmost astonishing happening was conveyed to the royal palace later by the woodcutter, who was witness to the entire scene.

King Janamejaya son of King Parikshit heard all this and the subsequent story continues in Mahabharat.