

43. Ghee And Sandalwood

Daily you are getting the “Essence of Divinity” from these scholars, who have come to this little village hidden behind the hills and forests. They are giving you medicine to reduce your fever and restore you to health. This stream of nectar of immortality (*amritha*) is coming to you because of your fortune, earned by goodness and good deeds. Of course, it is interesting to hear speeches from these *pandits* on subjects contained in the books that they have studied, but it is much more interesting and useful to hear what they themselves have experienced and practised on the basis of what they have studied. I tell you only what they have already said, but you like it nevertheless, probably because I try to make it simpler to suit your measure of understanding, which I happen to know more than they. They do not know you as well as I do or as long as I do.

There are, I know, many even in this gathering who whisper among their own group that this offering oblations to gods into the consecrated fire (*homa*) with fine cow’s ghee (clarified butter) and costly sandalwood chips is a big waste. But if you always dwell in the realm of accounts, of plus and minus, how can you ever get the joy of realising a wish that is unsatisfiable by mere money? These people struggle for ghee and for sandalwood fuel, not for the more precious joy of the performance of an ancient rite.

The questioners themselves have eaten bags of rice and drunk pots and pots of ghee since birth. Let me ask them whether they have had a single day of happiness or whether they have given joy at least to their kith and kin. This ritual of sacrifice (*yajna*) gives great joy to so many; I have not gone to anyone for funds for this; I and My people are very delighted by this celebration! What have others to do in this matter? They are concentrating on material utility. I want you to concentrate on spiritual significance. They struggle for a little ghee; they crave for a little fuel. You get incalculable joy.

Ritual sacrifice is correlated with human aspirations

The ritual sacrifice (*yajna*) has a deeper meaning, the meaning that symbols have, the meaning that is really valuable for human progress. Every rite is a symbolic act. *Yajna* is correlated at every step with human aspirations and spiritual practices. It is kept in touch with human life and aspirations in its minutest detail. Butter is the product of the churning of the emotions, impulses, impressions, and instincts of people; the purest and the most authentic essence of the divine in people. That butter, when it is still more clarified, becomes ghee, and that is what is offered to the Gods.

You may ask how it reaches the Gods. Well, the *Veda* itself is the authority for that belief. You cannot demand any other; for it will be as foolish as asking the eye to prove by some authority unconnected with the eye the validity of what it has seen. How can the ear give some other authority to prove the genuineness of the sound that it alone can hear? The eye is its own authority, the ear is its own testimony. The *Veda* that has probed into the science of propitiating the Gods says that the sacrificial fire conveys the subtler aspects of the offerings. And the *Veda* is its own testimony.

Strive to secure Grace, not any lesser fruit

Indra (Lord of celestial gods) is the presiding deity of the hand, and the *Indra Yajna* confers the communion

of human labour, the collective cooperation of human industry for the progress of the individual and of society. Also, Brihaspathi (the spiritual teacher of celestial gods) is the deity of the intellect, and the *yajna* associated with his name establishes cordiality and coordination. The Sacrifice for Moon (*Chandra Yajna*) similarly tends to develop the harmony of hearts and the Sacrifice for Sun (*Aadhithya Yajna*) the promotion of sameness of vision among all, for the sun is the deity that presides over the eye. Every *yajna* has a great unseen influence on human affairs, for these sacred formulas are potent sounds, charged with subtle mysteries.

Always concentrate on the lasting fruit; the universal, the spiritual. Do not pursue mean objectives; utilise the mind to follow the plan of the Lord to re-establish righteousness (*dharma*) in the world. What can you plan with your paltry intelligence?

A man once laughed at God for giving the majestic banyan tree a tiny molecular seed and conferred on the ash gourd a gigantic uncouth fruit. “No sense of proportion,” he said. However, he had to sleep once under the shade of a banyan tree and when he woke up after an hour or so, he saw a large quantity of seeds that had fallen on his body. If only the banyan tree had seeds in proportion to its size, a single seed falling from that height would have killed the critic in no time! He thanked God for his poor sense of logic and moved away perfectly safe.

Take everything as it comes, and cultivate contentment. Do not multiply your wants and foster greed and despair. You take off your warm clothing when you start feeling warm yourself. The coat of desire has to be taken off when the warmth of devotion increases. Strive to secure grace, do not strive to secure any lesser fruit.

Faith can compel the Lord to manifest Himself

A thief once listened quite accidentally to the recital of the charms of Krishna during childhood. He stopped for a moment and could not pull himself away. He heard the description of the ornaments Krishna wore and got a great desire to steal those precious treasures, so he asked the *pandit* exactly where Krishna would be tending the cows alone or with just his elder brother or with handful of comrades. The *pandit* told him rather curtly, “In Brindavan, on the Yamuna bank.”

Planning to catch Krishna alone and deprive him of the ornaments, he hurried off to Brindavan. Sure enough, he met the Boy alone next morning at the head of his herd of cows, but how could he take the ornaments off that Loveliness? He was afraid that the removal of even one ornament would reduce the lustre, and his heart did not allow him to do that. He looked on for hour, lost in ecstasy, till Krishna himself asked him, but he was too ashamed to mention it. Krishna knew it, however. He gave him all the jewels he wore. The thief was overcome with shame and joy; he fell at the boy’s Feet, but when he rose, Krishna was not to be seen.

He came to his village and consulted the *pandit*. “Are these the jewels of Krishna that you extolled the other day? I went to Brindavan and He gave them to me.” Needless to say, the *pandit* fell at robber’s feet. Faith can work wonders. It can compel the Lord to manifest Himself and give you what you believe he will give.

The priests and *pandits* pressed Me with the request to agree to their proposal to have some programme, which they called the *Conquest of Three Worlds (Thribhuvana Vijayam)*. That is a sign of their enthusiasm and faith. They wish Me to give them audience as Vishnu lying on the serpent with one thousand heads forming the couch (as *Seshasayee*), using the serpent-like couch (*sesha paryanka*) that was brought by a devotee from Bombay. It seems they, like the priests mentioned in the *Bhagavatha*, will represent to Me then the sad condition of

the scriptures (*sastras*) they study and practise, including the mother of all scriptures, the *Veda*. When this idea was first placed before Me, someone objected on the ground that I was asked to give audience (*darshan*) “like” Maha Vishnu. He did not like the idea of “like”. I also have an objection against “acting” in a “drama”. But I was so moved by the earnestness of their request that I agreed. Really speaking, this *Avatar* is itself acting a part. It is “putting on” a function and “assuming” a role, by the Function-less and the Role-less. As far as the *yajna* is concerned, I shall give you *darshan* of the *Veda* personified (*Veda swarupa*) before you disperse. Be assured of that.

Prasanthi Nilayam, 1962-10-04