

45. The Brahmin

You may not remember it now, but this meeting started at 4:15, and perhaps most of you were here by 3:30 at least, and now the time is 7:40. You have heard the lucid exposition of Uppuluri Ganapathi Shaasthry, who knows the different shades of meaning of every individual syllable of the entire *Veda*. That is his penance (*tapas*). And his love (*prema*) toward you is so great that he puts all that vast learning into such simple and sweet Telugu that even a child can understand. What is more, you become enthusiastic to know more. He has been helping you to understand the whys and wherefores of the various rites and rituals and mantras that are used in this sacrificial rite (*yajna*), for this is a sacrificial rite of spiritual wisdom (*jnana yajna*), and everyone must know the significance of everything done here.

He explained why earth from the royal stables, the royal elephant stables, and the palace gates is considered sacred for the sacrifice (*yajna*); why the earth from the ant hill is also used in preference to that from other places. I took special care to bring these materials in their genuineness and to give these people everything they needed. I told them not to be satisfied with substitutes and second-bests, for I know they too wish to seize this opportunity to perform a scrupulously correct sacrifice. I want to show you and them that a *vedic* sacrifice celebrated strictly according to *vedic* formulae will certainly grant the fruits promised by the Supreme Being (*Veda Purusha*).

Veda is a deep sea containing precious pearls

Remilla Suuryaprakaasha Shaastry spoke on Kumarilabhata, who preceded Sankaracharya and revived *vedic* learning and overwhelmed the opponents of *vedic* ritual in those days. They are now arranging here the serpent-like couch (*seshaparyanka*). The programme called the *Conquest of Three Worlds (Thribhuvana Vijayam)*, for which Kalluri Veerabhadra Shaastry and others have been planning, will start soon. I had no idea of speaking today but since you will all be disappointed if I do not, I shall fill up the interval.

The two Shaastrys spoke very well, because their authority for all their statements is the *Veda*, nothing less. Their purpose was also praiseworthy: to elevate man through the spread of the *vedic* teaching. When the mind is so pure and the brain so full, the words will certainly be sweet and nourishing. It is a very difficult task to dive into the deep sea, the beginningless and the endless *Veda*, and bring up such precious pearls — not because the pearls are few but because the sea is so deep. The *Veda* teaches man lessons that take him beyond the ken of the three qualities (*gunas*): the dull, the active, and the calm; the black, the red, and the white.

The *Veda* also speaks the language of symbols, and one has to be well versed in *vedic* vocabulary and the technique to be able to interpret it, as Ganapathi Shaastry and Remilla do. For example, in explaining a mantra, they said that all men are children of Surya (the Sun God). The meaning of that is: All those who have eyes to see are specially blessed by the sun, for the sun is the presiding deity of the inner and the outer vision. The mantra does not mean that all men belong to the Sun dynasty! There are seven suns and seven types of rays, and that is why you are advised to have half-closed eyes when you meditate on the form of the Lord. Then the first three rays will try to penetrate the upper eyelid and the last three the lower eyelid, but the eye will receive only the fourth ray, the fourth colour.

Such subtle secrets are also hidden in the hymns to the various Gods. It is not correct to say that each *vedic*

God represents a force of nature that is patent to man: the rain god, the thunder god, the sun god, the dawn goddess, etc. The glory and the majesty of the One God is visualised in various contexts and praised; that is all. The mantras have far deeper meanings.

This humanity is a motley crowd of pilgrims

It is often said that the *brahmin* caste, out of hatred and contempt, has denied to the other castes the chance to study the *Vedas*. If you go out to catch fish, you must equip yourself with the rod, the hook, and the bait to attract the fish. If you desire to master the *Vedas*, you must have the rod of *dharmic* living, the hook of *vedic* Sanskrit, and the bait, viz., the *brahmin* who is revered by the *Vedas* and who revered the *Vedas* in turn. The *brahmin* has been prepared by a series of purificatory rituals. This enables and entitles the *brahmin* to pronounce the mantras and to expound them.

Everyone has not won the same sublime impulses and impressions. All of you listen to Me, but do all of you understand what I say to the same extent? Or, do all of you practise what I suggest to the same extent? No. Each understands or practises according to the tendencies, the roots that those tendencies have laid in the mind. People are not so uniform. One person is not equipped like another. It is a motley crowd of pilgrims, this humanity.

The correct pronunciation of Vedas is essential

When born, the *brahmin* is a labourer (*sudra*); birth does not entitle him to take up the study of this Mystery, even if the boy happens to be the son of a great *vedic* scholar! It is only when he has been formally initiated by a special ceremony that he can start the study of the sacred scriptures. The ceremony makes him a *brahmin*; he is then born again into a sacred world of study and responsibility.

Many *brahmins* have fallen from this responsibility of maintaining a certain ascetic simplicity of life and a certain level of scholarship. When the pure metal has been turned into an alloy, it has to be put into the crucible again. Again, whenever we find genuine *vedic* vessels like these *pandits*, we have to protect and preserve them. If people sit quietly when stones are thrown on these vessels by little folk swayed by foolish hatred, the vessels will be broken and *Veda* will also become inaccessible.

If *brahmins* are driven into the forest, the *Vedas* will enter the forest with them, for they are the repositories of *Veda*. They study the correct pronunciation of each syllable and have, by a remarkable technique of keeping it in memory, preserved it through the ages, through all the calamities India had to endure.

A boy was reading his English lessons aloud at home, but he did them so wrongly that the parents were one day put into a great fright. MILK was what the boy was reading. He spelt it out first and then read the entire word. He shouted, *emmayelkay milk*, *emmayelkay milk*, *emmayelkay milk* so fast and so nervously that the parents felt he was shouting in fear, “*Amma, yeluka*” — *yeluka* meaning *rat* in Telugu. Correct pronunciation is essential.

Encourage the *brahmins* to dedicate their lives to the proper study of the scriptures; you too will benefit by that study, as you are benefitting these days here.

The Lord cares for single-minded yearning

Caste and conduct are based on each other, and there is no caste without its corresponding conduct, or con-

trolling restrictions. That is done for purposes of systematic training and for elevating the individual, not for suppressing or cheating him. If a boy is admitted into the primary school or nursery school instead of a college, you cannot say that he is cheated or treated with contempt. It is the first step toward college and a degree.

But remember, the Lord makes no difference between caste and caste. What He cares for is virtue and single-minded yearning. When the elephant Gajendra raised its trunk and surrendered to the Lord and prayed to Him for succour, it was no longer a beast; its beasthood had dropped off. A piece of paper, however soiled or directed, is valued and kept in the strong box as a precious possession once it has imprinted on it the insignia of the Reserve Bank and is called a hundred-rupee note. Devotion makes the lowest into the rarest of men.

There was a devotee called Sena in Delhi at the time of Akbar's reign. He was the royal masseur at the court of the emperor. Every morning at seven, the emperor expected him at his side and had ordered that he should massage his body for half an hour. One day, Sena entered his worship room as usual and, in the ecstasy of that Vision of Beauty, lost all sense of time! His wife ran about in panic outside the closed door, for she had no mind to disturb her husband's concentration. Meanwhile, Akbar was being massaged by Sena at the Palace, and the emperor was praising him, "Sena, I have never felt so happy all these days; your fingers are indeed divine." When the session was about to close, Akbar saw in the cup of oil on the teapot in front of him the reflection of the masseur's face, and he was surprised to find that the face was of Krishna! He turned to examine the face of his attendant, but he was no longer there!

The lord does not weigh the status or caste of the individual before bestowing His grace. He is all-merciful, and His grace, like rain or moonlight, falls on all. The *Vedas* themselves declare this. So, have faith in this and proceed to deserve it and to acquire it.

Prasanthi Nilayam, 1962-10-06

Each person carries their destiny in their own hands. You will not be bound because others are not freed. Strive for your salvation, at your own pace, from where you started when you born into this chance.

Sathya Sai Baba