

26. The seven-day sacrifice

THIS morning, we are celebrating the *samaapthi* of the *Sapthaaha yajna*, the valedictory function of the Seven-day *Yaaga*. *Sama* also means *Brahmam*, and *Aapthi* means attainment; so, it signifies not only the conclusion, but, the successful conclusion of the 'sacrifice.' The word *yajna* and the word *yaaga* are both translated as sacrifice; that is the primary purpose of the *yajna*. You sacrifice riches, comfort, power (all that promotes the ego) and merge in the Infinite. That is the attainment and the end. *Yajnas* are useful because they support the ideal of sacrifice, and condemn acquisition. They emphasise discipline, rather than distraction. They insist on the concentration of the mind, the tongue and the hand on Godhead. Cynics count the bags of grain, the kilograms of ghee, and the hundredweights of fuel, and ask for more bags and kilograms and hundredweights of contentment, happiness in return! The effects of *yajna* on the character and the consciousness cannot be measured or weighing in metres or grams. It is something immeasurable, though actual and experienceable. Moreover, the cynics do not calculate the ghee, grain, and fuel they have themselves consumed, with no compensating joy. The grain and ghee offered in the sacred fire to the accompaniment of *Vedhic* formulae give returns, thousandfold; they will cleanse and strengthen the atmosphere all over the world. Otherwise, the *Avathaar* will not encourage or revive these *Yajnas*!

Feel thankful to the Master of the Universe

You say, "Thank you," when someone offers you a cup of coffee; how much more grateful should you be to God, who gave you this wonder-filled world to live in and this elaborately equipped body to know it and use it, for realising the grandeur of the Creator of both. Don't you feel that the master of the house will be pleased when you give him due homage and reverence, obedience and honour? What, then, about the Master of the Universe; the vast unfathomable firmament and the vast inscrutable infinitesimal!

Consult your experience these seven days. That will convince you that the *Yajna* is a very beneficent ceremony. You sacrificed your comforts, you sat and slept in sun and rain; you yearned for the joy derived from pleasing the Gods and praising them. You bore it all, because you had the armour of *Prema*, to save you from the rigours. Similarly, bear gain and loss, grief and joy, with equanimity. Prahlada had faith so deeprooted in him, that he never squirmed during all the torture that was inflicted on him. He was so merged in God that he was not aware of anything else than God.

This *Yajna* was gone through for the sake of *Lokakalyana* (the welfare of the whole world). You should merge your welfare with the welfare of the world. How can you be happy when your neighbour is in misery? Therefore, I call upon you to give up praying for your own advancement; pray for the peace, prosperity and happiness of all humanity, irrespective of clime or colour.

Strive for the health of the humanity

Pray intensely and with faith. Then, Grace will be showered on you. When the heart is soaked in Love, it cannot be contaminated by egoism and its evil consequences. Just as you crave for physical health, which means health for the limbs of the body, you should strive for the health of humanity, which means peace and joy for all sections, in all nations. If you dwell in that wider outlook, you will start feeling less and less for your own troubles and worrying more and more for troubles of others. That is the initial offering of yourself in the great "*yajna*" called "living."

The Emperor Aja of the Ikshvaaku Dynasty fell in love with the angel from heaven, Indhumathi, and when she suddenly left for heaven after short time with him, he broke down and lamented his fate so agonisingly that the Royal preceptor, Vashishtha, had to console him, pointing out the absurdity of attachment, and of fascination for such fleeting joys. He spoke to him of appearance and reality, of the relative and the absolute, of matter and spirit, and brought him to sanity.

You must not be a bit of a blotting paper, absorbing all the passions and emotions, all the joys and griefs that the actress Nature demonstrates on the stage of Life. You must be a lotus unfolding its petals when the sun rises in the sky, unaffected by the slush where it is born or even the water, which sustains it!

Dhashara, Prashaanthi Nilayam, 7-10-1970