

36. Feast of Grace

THE Vedhas, which are the most ancient scriptures of man, have laid down that man has to utilise the special gifts that God has endowed him with, (namely, an intelligence that can look into the future and decide on a long-term basis what is profitable in the ultimate analysis, and a capacity to discard and keep away from satisfactions of a temporary nature so that one can pursue undisturbed the lasting satisfaction of eternal Bliss). That is the reason why this *Yajna Sapthaaha* (Week-long sacrificial ritual) is called *Vedhapurusha Sapthaaha Yajna*; the *Vedhapurusha* is to be propitiated by the adoration of the *Vedhic* Gods, especially the Sun and Fire, through ceremonial *Namaskaar* (for the Sun) and oblations of ritually sanctified ghee (for the God of Fire). *Rudhra* is adored by the worship of the thousand *Lingas* every day and the Mother aspect of God (which is most revered during the *Navaraathri* is adored by means of the *puuja* which you see performed with scrupulous correctness. The *Vedhas* are recited with authentic syllabic exactitude, just as it was recited centuries and millennia ago on the banks of the river Saraswathi or Yamuna, by the simple sages of Aaryaavartha. By this means, the reciters, the worshippers, the performers and the participants, listeners and those who are vibrating to the holiness of the place, wherever they may be, are filled with bliss and peace.

Yajna maintains order of the Universe

Yajna means sacrifice; the *manthras* emphasise this, the ritual symbolises this; the *namaskaar* (prostration) is but the physical act which highlights this; indeed, all life is a sacrifice of a portion of one's span of life every day to the Sun, of a portion of one's time and strength and attention to some one or thing every moment. There can be no progress without *yajna* (sacrifice). *Yajna* maintains the order of the Universe. Sacrifice pleases the gods; the gods send rain; the rain feeds the crops; the crops yield harvest, the harvest strengthens the limbs and widens the outlook; it broadens the heart, clarifies the vision, until man reaches the goal, where there is no more struggle or death.

The highest and the most fruitful sacrifice is that of the ego. Crucify it and be free. Dedicate it to God and be rich beyond all dreams. Prepare yourself for this supreme status, by engaging in holy *karma*, that is to say, *karma* cleansed in the crucible of *dharma*, and attain *Brahman* (the One Indivisible Absolute), which appears as all this multifarious Universe.

The Mahaabhaaratha is also eligible to the reverence due to the *Vedhas*; it is revered as the Fifth Vedha by those that know. There, we find the eldest of the Paandava (pure) brothers called Dharmaraaja (*dharma-born*).

But, all his success was due to the fact that he had, on his right hand, Bheema (the embodiment of strength) and on his left hand, Arjuna (unsullied virtue). The strength that comes from the mastery of the senses and the fortitude and equanimity won through the conquest over impulses, emotions and passions are both valuable reinforcement for *dharma* to scale the bastions of *Brahman*.

Five steps in the path of dedicated living

The *Vedhas* have prescribed five steps, to enable the individual to cultivate the spirit of *Yajna'* *Dheva yajna* (adoring God in the domestic altar); *Pithra yajna* (keeping in mind the debt one owes to the parents who endowed this body and fed the lamp of life); *Manushya yajna* (feeding guests and those who come seeking shelter and food); *Brahma yajna* (the study of the sacred

scriptures and the initiation into the spiritual path) and *Bhuutha yajna* (the feeding and fostering of pet animals, of cattle, of horse and sheep and dog which are the helpmates and comrades of man). The *Vedhas* insist on every householder to attend to these five rites, every day and thus, he is encouraged along the path of dedicated living to reach the goal of total surrender to God.

The cow grants man milk, butter, curds, ghee---all valuable nutrients; they consume only grass and drink that which is undrinkable by man; and they bestow on man, in return for the care and kindness he evinces, life-giving and strength-sustaining food! Gratefulness demands that man should not neglect or injure them. So too, man should not allow plants and trees that he has grown to suffer from hunger and thirst and go dry and wither. You must have seen people placing sugar or flour at the mouths of ant-hills. It is a flash on the universal compassion which must mark out the heart of man. It is as much *Bhuutha yajna* as the care of cows, though it does not reward the giver.

The One Willed to become many

Ignore the temporary and trivial Name and Form of the embodiment of the Divine spirit; then, all distinctions of worm and wolf, of atom and *avathaar*, disappear and the knowledge that basic Truth is One is realised. Creation or manifestation or the outburst of blossoming expansion started, as the *Upanishads* say, when the One willed, *Ekoham bahusyam*---"I am One; let Me become Many." So, it is the One that is all this. It is the integer (I) that fills the zeros after it with value and validity! The realisation of the function of the I and the ignoring of all the zeros that come after it, is the end and aim of human endeavour. When the mind is unruffled and the intelligence is sharpened, this realisation will take place, without further effort.

Through the *saadhana* of *seva* (discipline of selfless service), it is possible to cognise the One of which the many are appearances. He who serves a master with his eye on the pay packet cannot be called a *sevak*. He is the servant of the pay packet. That type of service will only bind him to the profit or loss that it entails, and bring about disappointment or elation. Service has to be rendered either from a supreme sense of duty or as a humble dedicatory offering to the Highest, or in a spirit of total surrender to the Will of God leaving all thought of the consequence to His Grace. Done with these pure motives, the act of service will develop detachments, but, will not encourage sloppishness.

Shiva is praised as *Thryambakam*, that is, three-eyed; the eyes are held to be eyes that see into the past and the future, as well as the present; but, they represent also the three urges namely, desire, activity and knowledge---thirsts that move men and decide his fate. These three urges make all beings kin in the Divine bond; those who serve beings with love and reverence can contact this core of being and save themselves. They will see in all, the unmistakable reflections and images of the God whom they have enshrined in their hearts.

Man has forgotten the task for which he is born

When you desire to transform a silver idol of Ganesh into an idol Krishna, you cannot succeed by simply covering the Ganesh with a cloth and uncovering it, after a few seconds! You have to break it into pieces and melt the bits and pour the silver into the Krishna mould! So too, when you yearn to transform the human into the Divine, you must pull down the pieces through detachment, melt them in the fire of *jnaana*, and pour the mind stuff into the mould *bhakthi*. Then, the entire consciousness takes on the Divine Name, Form and Substance. Then, whatever is spoken or done or thought assumes the splendour and purity of the Divine.

I have often told you that My Life is My Message. *Avathaars* proclaim so and demonstrate their Divinity that way. They are children among children, men among men, women among women, so that they may respond to their joy and sorrow and console them and infuse confidence and courage into their drooping hearts. The *Avathaars* appear among humans since birds, beasts, trees and the like have not slid into the un-natural and the strange. It is only man, who pursuing the will-o'-the-wisp of worldly happiness and sensual pleasure, has forgotten the task for which he has come to earth. Since God assumes human form in order to restore *Dharma* and lead man back into the path of virtue and wisdom, nothing can please God more than rigorous adherence to *Dharma*. One can stick to the path of *Dharma* if one is conscious of the Divine in every thing that he sees or hears, touches or tastes. That will fill every moment of his life with the thrill of self-realisation.

God listens to the agony of the heart

Have faith in God; He sees everything; He is everywhere; He is all-powerful. When queen Dhrou-padhi was dragged into the open court by the wicked cousins of her consorts, and they threatened to insult and dishonour her, she did not call on her human lords---Dharmaraaja the great master and practitioner of *Dharma*, Bheema the redoubtable warrior, Arjuna the unexcelled bowman, Sahadheva the knower of everyone's future, Nakula the embodiment of bravery---she sought succour and prayed to Krishna, the Lord and protector of righteousness, God who listens to the agony of the heart.

He is in every heart. He is all this. You know He has said in the Geetha,

Manmanaa bhaava, madbhaktho

Mad yaaji maam namaskuru

Mamevaishyasi yukthaivam

Aathmaanaam mathparaayanah.

"Have your mind fixed on Me; be devoted to Me; worship Me; prostrate before Me; Have Me alone as the Goal; when you are fixed in faith in Me, you can attain Me." Here, I and Me refer to the I and Me that is in every being, namely, the *Aathma* which is the real I of the atom and the *avathaar*. Even the person who is contemplating suicide declares, "I must die so that I can be happy, rid of all these worries!" The I which will be relieved when the body falls off is the *Aathma*.

The individual I believes it is limited; but, that is an illusion. It is the same Universal Spirit, imagining itself to be limited. This awareness can come to man either through a flash of intellectual analysis or a flash of Universal Love. The awareness is an act of identification which involves and insists on Love.

Love is God; Love is the means and end. That is why there are no atheists, for, there is no being without love of some kind or other. And, love of any kind, of any measure, is but a spark of Divinity. Love knows no fear, it promotes truth, it finds peace, it builds faith, it promotes concord.

November; 1970

In spiritual matters, faith is the basic requisite for progress. That faith has to be guarded carefully.

Yield to the Lord, who is more kin to you than your own parents, yield to no other.

Do not allow your faith to falter with every passing gust of wind. Believe that all the three worlds cannot unseat Truth, all the fourteen lokas cannot seat falsehood on the throne.

Your duty is to carry on saadhana undisturbed by what others may say, holding fast to the certitude of your own experience.

Sathya Sai Baaba