

46. Valedictory Offering In The Sacred Fire

The *Bhagavatha* was the subject of the discourse by Kalluri Veerabhadra Shaastry today, but do not think that it has no relevancy to the seven-day *vedic* ritual of Sacrifice of Spiritual Wisdom for the Supreme Being of *Veda* (*Vedapurusha Sapthaaha Jnana Yajna*); for the *Bhagavatha* contains the essence of *Veda* itself. In hymn after hymn, the *Veda* speaks of the glory of God, known by various names as Indra, Varuna, Mithra, etc. It is all worship filled with devotion to God, whom the *Veda* itself declares as One, “though endowed with a variety of names”. The *Bhagavatha* is the essence of *Veda*, made available for easy assimilation by all. It is just a limb of the *vedic* literature, and as limb it is an inseparable part of the *vedic* tradition. The same blood flows in this limb too; it makes the *veda* beautiful and charming.

Just as juveniles are shown pictures and made to learn names of the objects that they represent, the *Bhagavatha* teaches the Imperishable through the perishable. You cannot attain the subtle without experiencing the gross, without the instrumentality of the gross. After rising to the heights of awareness (*chit*) with a dull-witted instrument, you have to also make the instrument so suffused by Supreme Consciousness (*Chaithanya*) that the difference does not persist! In meditation, the picture first felt has to be transformed into the picture of the purified imagination, and that again has to be rarified into the subtle abstract principle only. Then only can the Form being meditated on be transcended and the highest vision of universal beauty, wisdom, and strength obtained. The *Bhagavatha* helps in this spiritual education, taking the student through all the lessons from the primary to post-graduate levels.

Look for the real meaning of Vedas

Most of you always bypass the real meaning of the legends, tales, and descriptions given in the ancient scriptures. For example, Brahma’s lotus is not a stalk that grows in mud and rises above the waters to catch the rays of the sun and blossom but the many petalled lotus of the heart, each petal being the direction in which a particular tendency attracts the individual. The bull on which Siva is said to ride is not the animal called by that name but the symbol of righteousness (*dharma*), which has the four legs truth, righteousness, peace, and love. Gopala (Krishna) did not graze cattle but protected and fed living beings, known also as “Go”.

In the study of the *Veda*, look for the meaning that satisfies the heart, and do not rest content if the meaning satisfies the head! A sentence may be quite right grammatically but may still be sheer nonsense!

Ganapathy Shaasthy, for example, while describing the reason the earth from ant-hills is recommended for the sacrificial mound, said that white ants are deemed to have powerful latent skill, which is put at the service of the Gods, for they once ate up the cord of Vishnu’s bow! When Vishnu’s bow was thus released from tension, its end hit Him under the chin, and the impact removed His head and carried it aloft into the sky! Now, if you take that story as applying to Lord Vishnu, who is also known as Narayana, then it is something that belittles the glory of God. But take it as applicable to the all-powerful, all-embracing Narayana aspect of the Godhead.

How can we accept the explanation given for the white ants eating up the cord? The reason given is that the Gods wanted to prick the bubble of Vishnu’s pride. Now, how can Narayana be accused of pride? How can the

Gods conspire to depute white ants to manoeuvre in such a sly way to take off His head? No. The story obviously refers to a minor god, a *devatha*, one among the many in the *Vedic* heaven who bear the name Vishnu; that is all.

There is no need to besmirch the grandeur of Narayana by identifying the minor God Vishnu with the Chief of the Gods. Prefer the meaning that elevates and you will always be right.

Be proud of your ancestry

You have to trace your ancestry and be proud of it. From the Supreme Soul, i.e. the Source, nature descended with the emergence of illusion; and from the stuff of that illusion, space; from space, wind; from wind, fire; from fire, water; from water, earth. By a combination of the five elements, this tabernacle of the Divine (*Paramatma*), that is, you, was produced. The entire ladder has now to be climbed up in order to reach the Divine, the origin of all. There is a regular syllabus for the promotion of the spiritual aspirant, which is given in that form in the *Veda* and in an elaborate story form in *Bhagavatha*.

I will not accept it if you say that you are an atheist with no faith in the Lord. For what is the root of that faith in yourself? Who are you that you should believe yourself? No. You believe yourself because your Self is God, and you have an unshakable faith in God, deep down in you. Faith in yourself and faith in God are identical; you tap the strength of the God within when you stand at attention against an enemy without. That is why there is a persistent whisper, within to use that strength in the path of mercy, charity, helpfulness.

Offer your bad qualities into sacrificial fire

Everyone has to go from here when the provisions they have brought or secured have been spent. But by that time, attain the purpose of all this bother of arriving, traveling, accumulating, and spending: the realisation of supreme happiness by ending this circle of birth and death.

From this very moment, change your habits and conduct for the better. That is the measure of your sincerity. Have faith and steadfastness.

I cannot be deceived by mere play acting. Folding arms and shedding tears will not make Me take you as a devotee. If you try devious paths pretending to be what you genuinely are not, the punishment will be greater in order to cure you of that trait also.

Tomorrow, between eight and nine in the morning the valedictory offering in the sacred fire (*poornaahuthi*) will take place. That is a precious moment in every sacrificial rite (*yajna*); the full and final offering is considered the fulfilment of the ritual. But here, you must keep one fact in mind. I am not getting this *yajna* done; I am He who receives the offerings of the *yajna*.

I observe many of you are getting active to procure from Bangalore or Anantapur, in time for the *Poornaahuthi*, articles like sandalwood, gold, precious stones, etc. to be put into the sacrificial fire when the final invocation is made. I am not permitting anybody to do that. It is easy to throw away a few rupees and purchase a few material objects from some shop and bring them here and throw them into the fire and go about saying that you have done a great big act of sacrifice. I am going to set you a more difficult task; you cannot escape by doing the easy thing.

I want that you should all, when the valedictory offering is offered into the fire, stand up and reverentially

offer into the same fire every one of the bad qualities that you have — the faults, the failings, the temptations, the transgressions. Search for these today, unearth them from their hidden places, bring them with you here tomorrow, nicely packed, and with one final heave of mental exertion, throw them in when the flames of *Poornaahuthi* rise aloft. That is the share you have to secure in this sacrifice (*yajna*). That, nothing more and nothing less.

These *pandits* have done you a great service. You must be grateful to them for it. They have given you a clear picture of the glory and splendour of *Vedic* Mother. which is the real form of motherland. I shall tell them just one thing: when they have given Me bliss (*anandam*), they have given you bliss also, for I am in every one of you.

Prasanthi Nilayam, 1962-07-10