

22. Light, love, joy

THE *yaaga* (spiritual worship) inaugurated today is prescribed by the *Karma Kaanda* (ritual action path) of the *Vedhas*, in order to sanctify Time and fulfill the goal of man, come embodied into the world. The practice of renunciation and dedication through the rite of the *yaaga* promotes worldly happiness as well as spiritual progress. It fosters charity and social cohesion. The *yajna* (ritual sacrifice) pleases the Gods presiding over the forces of Nature and so brings 'down rain, which helps growing crops, and increases food for man and beast. Activity that is divorced from spiritual goals, divorced from reverence and humility; leads to conceit and authoritarianism. It makes man arrogant and cruel; but, the sages of India laid down that all activity has to be done as a *yajna*, as offerings for the glory of God, in an atmosphere of thankfulness and awe, of humility and holiness. The goal of all activity was idealised as the happiness and peace of all mankind, indeed, of all living beings. Individual aggrandizement was thus ruled out and condemned.

It is this emphasis on saintliness and service that raised Bhaarath in the estimation of the world for centuries; "Immortality is achieved," the *Vedhas* declared, "not by adventurous deeds, not by brilliant progeny, not by vast treasures, but, only by the practice of renunciation and sharing." The purpose of collecting here, on this occasion, many who have faith in the *Vedhas*, is to draw your attention to these basic truths and these vital rites. For, as a result of the cynical disregard which people pour on these teachings and practices, Bhaaratheeya culture is being reduced to a mis-shapen jumble of half-truths.

***Dharma* is powerless without purity of character**

The Mahaabhaaratha is the epic that holds forth the grand ideals of the past, in a clear unmistakable manner. The five Paandava brothers triumphed over impossible odds, as a result of Divine Grace, which they won through the exercise of *Dharma* (Righteousness), personified by the eldest brother, named appropriately Dharmaraaja, supported by the strength of Dedication (the second brother, Bheema) and the strength of Purity (the third brother Arjuna, meaning Pure). At present, we have *Dharma*, in plenty, in books and perhaps, even in the words we speak. But, without the strength derived from dedication and faith, and from purity of character and conduct, *Dharma* is powerless to earn the Grace of God. That is the situation in which we are today.

But, there is no reason to lose heart. When the Sun sets, people lament that it has gone; but, the Sun never sets. It is the earth that has rolled by, and that will roll forward again to receive the illumination and the warmth. When the ignorance that has enveloped it is removed, *Dharma* will again shine forth and sustain the world. The *Vedhapurusha Jnaana Yajna* is one of the means to make *Dharma* shine.

Five types of *yajnas* prescribed for man

There are five types of *Yajnas* that have been prescribed for man, to make him approximate to God. For these, there is no need to have intermediary priests, or costly materials, or elaborate ceremonies. Every householder can perform these and achieve the fruits.

(1) *Dheva Yajna* (*Yajna* for the Gods) : This means the surrender of all one's acts at the feet of God; it means that one dedicates all his thoughts, words and deeds for the glorification of God.

(2) *Pithru Yajna* (*Yajna* for the manes) : The offering of food or consecrated water in the name of the deceased father, grandfather, great grandfather, and of the mother, grandmother and great

grandmother. There are those who laugh, ridiculing this rite, saying that such offerings cannot reach them. But, the *manthras* uttered during the offerings reveal that these deceased ancestors are addressed as identifiable with Gods (*Vasu, Rudhra* and *Aadhithya*) and the rite is highly sublimated. What is done is to express gratitude to the persons who brought us into this world and equipped us to play our roles. Offering the tribute of gratitude is the essence of the *Pithru Yajna*.

(3) *Brahma Yajna* (*Yajan* for the sages and spiritual lore): This is to be performed by the study of the scriptures, the *Shaasthras* or other sacred texts, which arouse the craving for liberation.

(4) *Manushya Yajna* (*Yajna* for mankind): This is done by means of hospitality to guests, the relief of sickness, pain and poverty.

(5) *Bhuutha Yajna* (*Yajna* for living beings): This entails kindness to animals, especially domestic animals that yield milk and serve for us in the field as draught animals. It includes pets, cats and dogs, sheep and all things that creep and crawl, including even ants. The heaping of grains over anthills in order to feed them is done as an expiation for the destruction of such ants as might have taken shelter in the fuel that we burn!

Sum and substance of all five types of *yajnas*

The *Vedhapursha Jnaana Yajna* is the sum and substance of all these five types of *Yajnas*, and elaborate paraphrase of the rite. Along with this *yajna* every evening, we have explanatory discourses from *Vedhic Pandiths* concerning the basic tenets of *Sanaathana Dharma* (eternal universal religion), with emphasis on the rites being done here.

Eight years ago, *Vedhic Pandiths* were brought together into an Organisation named All India Prashanthi Vidwanmahaasabha, with the late Dr. Boorghala Raamakrishna Rao, as President, in order to propagate the *Vedhic* way of life among the people of this land and outside. The fundamental lesson that the *Vedhas* seek to instill is that there is only One, not two, What appears as two is only One, seen twice, or as two. Even a hundred cannot happen without one happening. One happening a hundred times makes a hundred! The One is the basic thing. The child persists in the boy, the youth, the adult, the middle aged, the old, the senile. The One persists through all the modifications and additions. This day we have the Annual Day of the Sabha that seeks to propagate this Truth among the people, so that they may have Light, Love and Joy.

Dhashara, Prashanthi Nilayam, 3-10-1970