

22. Make every moment a yajna

How amazing is this! A person can get sacrifices galore performed through scholars versed in *Vedhic* ritual lore and himself perform them; A person can praise the holiness of diverse shrines and spots to inspire others to journey thereto and himself journey thither; a person can teach the eight *Vidhyas* to many and make them experts and himself master them all.

But, few are there who succeed in mastering their bodies, senses and wayward minds and turn inward to gain perpetual and unchanging equanimity.

Life is most precious. The breath (*praana*) which sustains it is even more precious. Nevertheless, it becomes often necessary to give up this precious *praana* while attempting to realise some goals. Human nature is such that man is never content with a single achievement. He feels "there is always room at the top." This urges him on and on towards higher and higher goals. He wins many victories and craves for more. He never attains satiety. To be ever discontented---that state alone gives him contentment!

Man embarks upon an undertaking with a purpose, goal, or an end in view. But, the endeavour is sublimated into a *yajna* (sacrificial rite which can draw down the Grace of God) only if the purpose, goal or end is the glorification of God, regardless of other considerations.

"*Yajno vai Vishnu*", say the *Vedhas*. God is the *yajna*, for He is the Goal. His Grace is the reward. His creation is used to propitiate Him; the performer is He, the receiver is He. When the ego of the sacrificer does not claim a place, the *yajna* is rendered Divine.

Without faith adoration is artificial

Aham hi, Aham hi, Sarvayajnaanam: "In all *yajnas*, I am the Doer, the Donor, the Consumer, the Acceptor." This is the reason the Chief Priest in a *yajna* such as the *Vedhapurusha Yajna* we are inaugurating now, is named *Brahma*. The priest nominated as *Brahma* has to guide the rest of the ritualists; he must have his wife by his side, or else, his credentials are inadequate. The wife represents faith (*shraddha*). Without faith, praise is hollow, adoration is artificial and sacrifice a barren exercise.

Really speaking, the heart is the ceremonial altar; the body is the fire place; the hair is the holy grass, *darbha*; wishes are the fuel-sticks with which the fire is fed; desire is the ghee that is poured into the fire to make it burst into flame; anger is the sacrificial animal; the fire is the *thapas* we accomplish. People sometimes interpret *thapas* as ascetic practices like standing on one leg or on the head. No. *Thapas* is not physical contortion. It is the complete and correct co-ordination of thought, word and deed. When this is achieved, the splendour of fire will manifest.

Talking of thought, word and deed in the context of the *Vedhapurusha Yajna*, I have to tell you that the *Rig Vedha* is *vaak* (speech) taken form. The *Saama Vedha* contains hymns that are sung. It is '*srothra*' (hearing) which has taken form. Whenever the speech is saturated with truth and compassion, or inspired by service to others, it becomes *Rig Vedha*. Good deeds are *Yajur Vedha*. There is no compulsion that you should have an external altar as here. Only, you should be vigilant about the purity of the words you utter or listen to and the deeds you engage in.

Five yajnas are prescribed for every human being.

Every act of yours from sunrise to the onset of sleep is a *yajna*, remember! There are five *yajnas* prescribed as mandatory for every human being:

- (1) *Rishi Yajna*---activities devoted to the study of scriptures.
- (2) *Pitr Yajna*---activities devoted to the parents who conferred the body and who fostered and guided you. Acts by which you express your gratitude and affection, adoration and appreciation are really *holy yajna*.
- (3) *Deva Yajna*--- acts done as reverential homage to God who endowed you with mind, intelligence, memory and consciousness and who is inherent in every cell as *rasa*, the vital energy. (*Raso Vai Sah*---He is flow of energy). He is *angirasa*, present in every *anga* or limb. So, *Deva Yajna* involves the right use of these instruments God has given you.
- (4) *Athithi Yajna*---adoration of guests. Every one has, sometime or the other, the chance to welcome a guest and treat him with affection and please him with sincere hospitality. They may be one's own kith and kin or strangers, but they are all to be honoured as if sent by God. Then, acts done to entertain them and to make them feel at home are raised to the status of *yajna*.
- (5) *Bhootha Yajna*---*unselfish* acts done while dealing with trees, plants, animals, birds and pets like cats and dogs.

There are also a few *more yajnas* prescribed in the scriptures. *Jnaana Yajna* is one of such. *Jnaana* is usually taken to mean knowledge gained from scholars and books and acting in accordance with that knowledge. But derived knowledge cannot *be jnaana*. Knowledge can never ripen into wisdom so long as the ego persists in craving for results which can satisfy desire. When the ego fades away, Knowledge can shine as Wisdom. *Jnaana* reveals that in the *Vedhapurusha* sacrifice performed here and in all other *yajnas* celebrated elsewhere, God is the Prompter, the Promoter, the Sacrificer, the Sacrifice, the Product achieved and the Recipient of the product.

Many people perform *yajnas* without cleansing themselves. Only those *yajnas* that have, like this one, the peace and prosperity of the world (*Loka-Kalyaan*) as the avowed purpose, can reach God. For He is *Yajnabhuk* (the consumer of the offering); He is *Yajna-bhrith* (guardian of the *yajna*) and *Yajna krith* (performer of the *yajna*). He is all; it is only when He is all that the act becomes genuinely *yajna*. If this attitude can soak into every activity, it will sanctify every moment of your life and make it a *yajna*.

People resort to Gurus to receive *manthras* (mystically powerful formulae to be recited by them for their spiritual uplift); others seek medicine men and holy monks to get *yanthras* (esoteric talismans to ward off evil forces); some others learn *from pandiths, thanthras* (secret rites for attaining superhuman powers). But all this is wasteful effort. One should accept the body as the *thanthra*, one's own breath as the *manthra* and one's heart as the *yanthra*. There is no need to seek them outside oneself. When all words emanating from you are sweet, your breath becomes *Rig Vedha*. When you restrict what you listen to and prefer only sweet speech, all that you hear becomes *Saama gaana*. When you do only sweet deeds, all that you do is *Yajur homa*. Then, you will be performing every day the *Vedhapurusha Yajna*, the *yajna* which propitiates the *Vedhic Spirit*.

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