

28. Poornaahuthi and Sharanaagathi

On Vijayadashami day, the seven-day long *Vedhic* ritual, performed for the promotion of peace and prosperity among all men in all lands and called *Vedhapurusha Yajna*, (sacrifice dedicated of *Vedhic* divinity) concludes with the valedictory offering to the Gods who preside over various facets of nature. This is called *Poornaahuthi* (the fullest Invocation) and usually a number of valuable things are poured and placed in the sacrificial fire, adored and fed during the entire week. The closing ritual is named *Samaapthi*, a word usually translated as the End. But its real meaning is *Samaapthi*, or the attainment of *Sama* and *Brahma* (*Braahmic* vision). The final offering is of one's self, which is the culmination of the sacrifices rendered all along. The significance of *Poornaahuthi* is fulfilling one's earthly life by dedicating one's self to the Omni-Will or *Brahman*. This is also known as surrender or *Sharanaagathi*.

What exactly is *Poornaahuthi* or *Sharanaagathi*? The meaning that is most current is to declare: "My body, my mind, my possessions, my all, I offer to you." This is an incorrect interpretation. This interpretation is a sign of total ignorance. It concedes that you and God are distinct entities, But that is not true. God is not separate from you, for God is in all, everywhere, at all times. *"Ishwarassarva-bhoothaanaam. "How then can you be apart? How can God be separate entity? Water, wave and foam are only apparently distinct. All three are the same; only their names and forms create the illusion of diversity.*

You cannot give what you do not own

Of course, you can and do announce, "I surrender my mind, my thoughts, my feelings and imaginings, to God" But your monkey-mind escapes from your hold; how, then, can you capture it and claim it and surrender it to God? What authority do you possess to offer something you are not master of?. The whole process reminds one of the Thelugu proverb about gift by son-in-law of the property owned by the mother-in-law. How can anyone give another what he does not own? Is your body under full control? When blood starts flowing out of a vein on your hand, you cannot stop the flow. You rush to a hospital and call out, "Doctor! Doctor! Tie a bandage!" When you suffer from a stroke and limbs on one side are paralysed, you are helplessly unable to repair them. How can you dedicate your body, which you cannot rule over?

Such statements like surrendering body, mind and heart are only rhetoric sanctioned by tradition and long usage. The act of surrender is often highlighted as *Aathma-arpana*. The expression is even more ridiculous. When you are *aathma* in essence, how can *aathma* (Self) offer it to itself? The body is a composite of the five elements; it cannot avoid disintegration, but the dweller within the body has no birth or death, no desire or despair, no attachment or bondage. In truth, that dweller is the God of Gods who resides as *aathma* in you. This is what the seers have experienced. So *aathma-arpana* is a meaningless expression. You have nothing in you or belonging to you that you can claim as yours to offer to God.

Then, what does surrender of the self signify or imply? To experience God as Omnipresent, to be aware of nothing other than God---this is true surrender. To see God in everything, everywhere, at all times, is true *Sharanaagathi*. He gives, He enjoys, He experiences. If you offer, and God accepts, you become superior; how can God be all-powerful? You should not reduce the glory of God through such high-sounding statements.

You may be an erudite scholar who can interpret the scriptures. You may read or recite the Bhagavad geetha scores of times. Of course, these are good attainments and practices. But, one

has to carry out one's duty with devotion and discipline. It is not devotion to parade the ochre robe; sins won't fade away when *manthras* (holy formulae) roll out of the tongue; spiritual merit cannot accrue in heaps when the Geetha is held in the hand and loudly acclaimed in speech. The real *saadhu* is he whose deeds are in accordance with the words of advice he utters. Devotion cannot tolerate in the devotee the slightest trace of envy or jealousy. Make your daily life holy and pure. Render your life worth-while through service to man and service to society. That is the most important aspect of surrendering the self.

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Learn to speak little and to speak soft. That will reduce the chances of getting angry. Seek the good in others and the evil in yourself.

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