

43. Ghee and sandal

DAILY you are getting the "Essence of Divinity" from these scholars, who have come to this little village hidden behind the hills and forests; they are giving you medicine to reduce your fever and restore you to health. This stream of *amritha* (nectar of immortality) is coming to you because of your fortune, earned by goodness, and good deeds. Of course, it is interesting to hear from them speeches on subjects contained in the books which these *Pandiths* have studied; but it is much more interesting and useful to hear what they have themselves experienced and practised on the basis of what they have studied. I tell you only what they have already said, but you like it nevertheless, probably because I try to make it simpler to suit your measure of understanding, which I happen to know more than they; they do not know you as well as I do, or as long as I do.

There are, I know, many even in this gathering who whisper among their own group that this *Homa* (offering oblations to gods into the consecrated fire) with fine cow's ghee and costly sandalwood chips is a big waste. But if you always dwell in the realm of accounts, of plus and minus, how can you ever get the joy of realising a wish that is unsatisfiable by mere money? These people struggle for ghee and for sandal fuel; not for the more precious joy of the performance of an ancient rite.

The questioners themselves have eaten bags of rice and drunk pots and pots of ghee since birth. Let me ask them whether they have had a single day of happiness or whether they have given joy at least to their kith and kin. This *yajna* (*Vedhic* ritual of sacrifice) gives great joy to so many; I have not gone to any one for funds for this; I and My people are very delighted by this celebration! What have others to do in this matter? They are concentrating on material utility. I want you to concentrate on spiritual significance. They struggle for a little ghee; they crave for a little fuel. You get incalculable joy.

Yajna is correlated with human aspirations

The *yajna* has a deeper meaning, the meaning that symbols have, the meaning that is really valuable for human progress. Every rite is a symbolic act. *Yajna* is correlated at every step with human aspirations and *saadhana*. It is kept in touch with human life and aspirations in its minutest detail. Butter is the product of the churning of the emotions, impulses, impressions and instincts of man; the purest and the most authentic essence of the divine in man. That butter, when it is still more clarified, becomes ghee; it is that which is offered to the Gods.

You may ask how it reaches the Gods. Well, the *Vedha* itself is the authority for that belief. You cannot demand any other; for it will be as foolish as asking the eye to prove by some authority unconnected with the eye, the validity of what it has seen. How can the ear give some other authority to prove the genuineness of the sound which it alone can hear? The eye is its own authority, the ear is its own *pramaana* (testimony). The *Vedha* which has probed into the science of propitiating the Gods says that the Sacrificial Fire conveys the subtler aspects of the offerings. And the *Vedha* is its own testimony.

Strive to secure Grace, not any lesser' fruit

Indhra (Lord of celestial gods) is the presiding Deity of the Hand and the *Indhra yajna* confers the communion of human labour; the collective co-operation of human industry for the progress of the individual and of society. Also, *Brihaspathi* (Spiritual teacher of celestial gods) is the Deity of the Intellect and the *yajna* associated with his name establishes cordiality and co-

ordination. The *Chandra Yajna* (Sacrifice for Moon) similarly tends to develop the harmony of hearts and the *Aadhithya Yajna* (Sacrifice for Sun) the promotion of sameness of vision among all, for the Sun is the Deity presiding over the Eye. Every *yajna* has a great unseen influence on human affairs, for these *Manthras* (sacred formulas) are potent sounds, charged with subtle mysteries.

Always concentrate on the lasting fruit; the universal, the spiritual. Do not pursue mean objectives; utilise the mind to follow the Plan of the Lord to re-establish *Dharma* in the world. What can you plan with your paltry intelligence? There was a man once who laughed at God for giving the majestic banyan tree a tiny molecular seed and conferred on the ash gourd a gigantic uncouth fruit. "No sense of proportion," he said. However, he had to sleep once under the shade of a banyan tree and when he woke up after an hour or so, he saw a large quantity of seeds that had fallen on his body. If only the banyan tree had seeds in proportion to its size, a single seed falling from that height would have killed the critic in no time! Therefore, he thanked God for his poor sense of logic and moved away perfectly safe.

Take everything as it comes; cultivate contentment; do not multiply your wants and foster greed and despair. You take off your warm clothing when you start feeling warm yourself. The coat of desire has to be taken off when the warmth of *bhakti* increases. Strive to secure Grace, do not strive to secure any lesser fruit.

Faith can compel the Lord to manifest Himself

There was a thief who listened quite accidentally to the recital or the charms of Krishna during childhood; he stopped for a moment, but could not pull himself away. He heard the description of the ornaments he wore and got a great desire to rob those precious treasures, he asked the *Pandith* where exactly Krishna would be tending the cows alone or with just his elder brother or with handful of comrades. The *Pandith* told him rather curtly, "In Brindaavan, on the Yamuna bank."

Planning to catch Krishna alone and deprive him of the ornaments, he hurried off to Brindaavan. Sure enough, he met the Boy alone next morning at the head of his herd of cows, but how could he take off the ornaments from that Loveliness? He was afraid that the removal of even one ornament would reduce the lustre and his heart did not allow him to do that. He looked on for hour, lost in ecstasy, till Krishna himself asked him, but he was too ashamed to mention it. Krishna knew it however. He gave him all the jewels he wore. The thief was overcome with shame and joy; he fell at the Boy's Feet, but when he rose, Krishna was not to be seen.

He came to his village and consulted the *Pandith*. "Are these the jewels of Krishna that you extolled the other day? I went to Brindaavan and He gave them to me." Needless to add, the *Pandith* fell at robber's feet. Faith can work wonders, it can compel the Lord to manifest Himself and give you what you believe he will give.

The *Rithwiks* (priests) and *Pandiths* (Vedic scholars) pressed Me with the request that I should agree to their proposal to have some programme which they called *Thribhuvana Vijayam* (conquest of three worlds). That is a sign of their enthusiasm and their faith. They wish that I should agree to give them audience as *Seshasayee* (Vishnu lying on the serpent with one thousand heads forming the couch), using the *Sesha paryanka* (serpent-like couch) that has been brought by a devotee from Bombay; it seems they, like the *rishis* mentioned in the *Bhaagavatha*, will represent to Me then the sad condition of the *Shaasthras* (scriptures) they study and practise,

including the Mother of all *Shaasthras*, the *Vedha*. When this idea was first placed before Me, some one objected on the ground that I was asked to give *darshan* (audience) "like" Mahaa Vishnu. He did not like the idea of "like." I have also an objection against "acting" in a "drama." But I was so moved by the earnestness of their request that I agreed. Really speaking, this *Avathaar* is itself acting a part. It is 'putting on' a function and 'assuming' a role, by the Function-less and the Role-less. As far as the *yajna* is concerned, I shall give you the *darshan* of the *Vedha swaruupa* (*Vedha* personified) before you disperse. Be assured of that.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 4-10-1962.